

The (Re)Socialisation of Art

theses and questions for artists and participants
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The project examines the political function of contemporary art and determines positions from Eastern and Western European perspectives. The (Re)Socialisation Of Art operates inside society as part of the artist's action. Re-socialisation can be understood as re-politicisation. The project calls for a reclaim of the relation between art and social reality as a condition for political actionability and social liberty. It postulates responsible action and critical awareness of the activists. The (Re)Socialisation Of Art forms an utopian imaginative space in order to be an object of reflection for society.

„The utopian space is a place, where we try to develop alternatives, which are able to reform politics. But we can not have politics, without imagination of an entire way of life.“ (Frederic Jameson)

The current global financial and economic crisis occurs in the western industrialized states especially as an identity crisis of economic and political institutions. The situation in many Eastern European and post-Soviet states is, in contrast to that, more existential. The „turbo“-capitalist development in its post-socialist form led to increasing gaps of prosperity. The hardly adopted democracy and free market economy are on the test bed now. The question is which values gain importance when the western ideology of growth fails as well as the utopia of the class-free society? The financial and economic crisis offers multifaceted possibilities for a new positioning especially in the art world.

Which effects do these economic and political aspects have in the field of contemporary art? Since the 1990s the art market has experienced a global growth spurt and was pumped up by an increasing capital flow. Contemporary art was „en vogue“ and part of the internationally uniform understatement. During this period the emphasis was put more on money than on art contents. This led to banality and over valuation by art dealers. The requirements and possibilities of state, private and civil art institutions in Western Europe and in the Ukraine could not be more unequal. While Western Europe has a relatively compact network of different institutions and art associations, communal galleries and public museums, there are only a few places that represent Contemporary Art in the Ukraine. The increasing influence of oligarchs in the Ukraine upon the issue what is defined as contemporary art and what is not remains questionable. There is a deficit of public and civil discourses on that issue. The basis for a transparent and open dialogue in order to form a critical and public opinion is missing because of this structural weakness. Artists are asked to determine their role in this context. It is of importance for all participants to become aware of the social responsibility of art.

The exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Odessa shows positions of artists who are committed to present social questions. The international conference offers the possibility to compare developments in Western and Eastern European countries as well as to raise questions on contradictions and antagonisms. The following questions should be answered by the participants of The (Re)Socialisation Of Art. The answers are the theoretical link between the exhibition and the conference.

1. Does contemporary art have a social function? If yes, how can it be defined?
2. Do social developments (like for instance the current financial and economic crisis) affect art production? If yes, in which way?
3. How can contemporary art contribute to a cross-social debate about common values in society?
4. How can working and living conditions of visual artists be improved in the Ukraine?
5. Which part should art play in the process of social transformation in the Ukraine?
6. In which direction should Ukrainian contemporary art develop?
7. Should there be an adoption or simulation of western art movements or does reality of the Ukraine offer the conditions for own developments that reflect problems and challenges and test alternatives playfully?