

# AUTORITÉS DE L'HISTOIRE DE L'ART AUTORITÄTEN DER KUNSTGESCHICHTE ART HISTORY AUTHORITIES

Cycle of symposia organized in Paris in 2016-2017  
by the German Center for Art History Paris  
and the Polish Institute in Paris

Contemporary methodological and interpretative approaches to art history have, for the most part, been based on a critique of the discourses inherited from the scientific culture of the 19th century: since the 1960s, they have questioned classifications based on national school and style, challenged the dichotomy between high art and popular expression, identified and analyzed colonialist hegemonies, studied phenomena of *métissage* brought about by the circulation of artworks. They thus called into question long-entrenched norms, orders and hierarchies that had characterized art history. However, they in turn instituted new hierarchies, new relegations, often based on binary oppositions (such as reactionary/progressive, commitment/autonomy, universal/international, local/global) and on other, largely unquestioned, ideological considerations.

Some decades later, we can now take a critical look at these approaches, contextualizing them in the Cold War in which they arose, and which left a lasting mark on them. The allegiance of artists, critics and historians to the Eastern or Western blocs, to the non-aligned or so-called third-world countries, determined the use and meaning of their concepts. The fall of the Berlin Wall established the authority of certain discourses over others, bringing about a leveling. The rise of global perspectives, implying a commonality of interests and shared references, reinforced this trend toward uniformization, objectively belied, however, by the growth in inequalities and resurgent nationalisms.

We would like to assess these heritages and question the orders they helped to establish, in order to open up new perspectives. A critical examination of the political and historical underpinnings of our current categories requires, however, cooperation between researchers from different academic horizons, and an awareness of the singular trajectory from which each point of view has been formed. Only by sharing the various historiographical approaches can we apprehend the overlapping and divergent use of concepts, the ideological biases, the formation of institutions, the interpretation and presentation of art during the Cold War and after 1989.

In this perspective, we have decided to invite several personalities renowned for their importance in art history and in museums, from different areas and traditions, to contextualize as precisely as possible the significations, formations and institutional categorizations they esteem most characteristic of their field of activity. Following on the "*À chacun son réel*" research project, which studied the "notion of the real in the visual arts in France, the FRG, the DDR and Poland from 1960 to 1989", the cycle of symposia that we are organizing will focus on the French, German and Polish contexts. The intention is also to enrich the line of research currently developed by the German Center for Art History, to go beyond the framework of national and comparative studies and to tackle methodological problems from the perspective of a critical historiography. Our main intention is to listen to people relate their own itinerary, to elicit unprecedented debates, to create a space for trans-regional reflection where several art histories may co-exist.

Mathilde Arnoux, Lena Bader, Clément Layet, Matylda Taszycka



All sessions will take place at the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art, 45 rue des Petits-Champs, 75001 Paris.

### **Introduction (21 octobre)**

From 16h to 18h.

Session organized in partnership with Professor Ségolène Le Men (department of History of art at University of Nanterre).

## **I. REPRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Formation of the Categories East/West (4 November 2016)**

From 15h45 to 19h45.

Session organized in partnership with Professor Ségolène Le Men (department of History of art at University of Nanterre).

#### *Objectives:*

- Recall how the geographical, cultural, political categories "East" and "West" were historically determined
- Emphasize the divergence between categories on either side of the Iron Curtain during the Cold War
- Contextualize their use by artists, art critics and art historians

#### *Participants:*

- Jérôme Bazin (University Paris Est Créteil), Pascal Dubourg-Glatigny (EHESS)
- Agata Jakubowska (University Poznań)
- Cécile Pichon-Bonin (CNRS)
- Gregor Wedekind (University Mainz)

### **2. Repositioning the Categories (18 November)**

From 14h to 18h.

Session organized in partnership with Professor Ségolène Le Men (department of History of art at University of Nanterre).

#### *Objectives:*

- Observe the persistence of these spatial and political categories in post-1989 art history
- Study the problems caused by their use and the need, as well as the difficulty, of overcoming them
- Compare them with the issues inherent in national categories

#### *Participants:*

- Maria Hlavajova (Bridging Art and Knowledge, Utrecht)
- Monica Juneja (University Heidelberg)

### **3. From 1968 to 1989 (14 December)**

From 14h to 18h.

*Objectives:*

- Compare the political turn taken by art history ca. 1968 with the rupture represented by 1989
- Study different manifestations thereof, through the development of the cultural history of relations, the Marxist critique of socialism, the relations between art criticism and the political question, the extension of Marxist perspectives into the field of anthropology

*Participants:*

- Jean-Louis Cohen (Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU)
- Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper (Institut für Stadt- und Regionalplanung der TU Berlin)
- Jacques Leenhardt (EHESS)
- Maria Poprzęcka (University Warsaw)

## **II. PERSPECTIVES**

### **1. Arts and Societies (3 February 2017)**

From 14h to 18h.

*Objectives:*

- Characterize the diversity of methods followed by art history since the 1960s and 1970s, e.g. cultural studies, gender perspectives or social history, and raise the question of their possible unity
- Consider the question whether the social history of art leads to the relativization of esthetic experience
- Assess the influence of these methods on artistic practices in the East

*Participants:*

- Peter Geimer (Freie Universität, Berlin)
- Constance Moréteau (Terra Foundation, Paris), Neil McWilliam (Duke University)
- Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius (Birkbeck University of London)

### **2. The Loci of Criticism and Emergence of the Political (24 March)**

From 14h to 18h.

*Objectives:*

- Understand why criticism and theory sought new loci of expression around the 1970s, outside the traditional institutions
- Discuss the institutionalization of these loci and thought
- Consider how artists created a space for living and thinking irreducible to the East-West divide, but nonetheless deeply marked by regional determinations
- Examine the fate of the notion and forms of community in different groups of artists

*Participants:*

- Jacopo Galimberti (Collège international de philosophie, Paris)
- Vincent Kaufmann (University St-Gallen)
- Klara Kemp Welch (The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)
- Anda Rottenberg (art historian, art critic, curator, Warsaw)

### **III. OBJECTS**

#### **1. The contemporary reception of commissioned artworks from the socialist countries (21 April)**

From 14h to 18h.

*Objectives:*

- Study collections and exhibitions of artworks from the socialist countries
- Compare the respective situations in the countries formerly located in the East and the West

*Participants:*

- Szymon Kubiak (Muzeum Narodowe, Szczecin)
- Silke Wagler (Kunstfonds, Dresden)
- Angelika Weissbach (Kunstarchiv, Beeskow)

#### **2. Museums and the Cold War (19 May)**

From 14h to 18h.

*Objectives:*

- Discuss current attitudes toward collections of artworks from the Cold War in Europe, and the ways the presentation of works before 1989 is conditioned by that of post-1989 works
- Compare the modes of narration proposed
- Analyze the conservation and exhibition of very recently constituted collections, whose history was written as the collections were being created
- Examine how museums of contemporary art use (or do not use) the Cold War as a factor accounting for the situation we are in today

*Participants:*

- Catherine David (Musée national d'art moderne, Paris)
- Magda Lipska (Muzeum sztuki nowoczesnej, Warsaw)