

Trotz seines großen historischen Werts ist das Buch eher essayistisch geschrieben, was auch darin zum Ausdruck kommt, dass die Kapitelüberschriften (ebenso wie der Titel) aus kurzen, pointierten Wendungen bestehen, aus denen man nur sehr bedingt auf den Inhalt schließen kann. So fällt die Orientierung im Text nicht leicht und das ebenso vor wie während der Lektüre. Ansonsten ist der Text aber gut lesbar und entschädigt durch seine hohe Dichte an Informationen, die zu diesem Thema anderswo kaum zu haben ist.

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State Construction and Art in East Central Europe, 1918–2018. Hrsg. von Agnieszka Chmielewska, Irena Kossowska und Marcin Lachowski. (Routledge Research in Art History.) Routledge. New York – London 2022. 316 S., Ill. ISBN 978-1-032-19587-2. (€ 44,80.)

This anthology of 23 texts dedicated to the relationship between artistic practice and processes of (re)building states and nations in the historically and politically complex region of East Central Europe is the result of an international conference held in Warsaw in 2018. The volume claims to take into account the past 100 years of East Central Europe's troubled history—from the emergence of independent nation-states after World War I, through the communist era, to the period of political transformation after 1989 and our globalized present. In fact, the question of how identity politics and nationalism shape the region today is raised only occasionally.

The editors still consider the history of East Central Europe “to be overlooked or misrepresented” within the broader field of global art history. Their detailed introduction favors an anti-Eurocentric perspective inspired by postcolonial theory. The editors refer to the various colonization processes to which East Central Europe was exposed as “intra-European” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, “neo-colonialism” emanating from the West in the post-Cold War era, as well as processes of “self-colonization” (Alexander Kiossev) (p. 2). Following Piotr Piotrowski's concept of “horizontal art history,” they advocate an investigation of the artistic milieus that does away with the center-periphery dichotomy and takes into account the local diversity and complexity of the East Central European context. They agree with Béata Hock and other proponents of a transnational perspective in East Central European studies, even though Hock herself professes to have little interest in “popular thought patterns” such as “regional specificity” or “Eastern European collective identity.”¹

The first chapter of this book, however, does just that: it focuses on the “Cultural Specificity of East Central Europe.” Éva Forgács sees a specific commonality in the changeable history and political instability of the Central and East European countries, and she examines how it affected the Hungarian art scene. Agnieszka Chmielewska sees a common characteristic of the geopolitically peripheral countries in their desire for differentiation and “necessity to develop a national artistic capital” (p. 39). Referring to the discourse of post-dependence studies and Pascale Casanova's concept of an “international literary space,” Chmielewska outlines how visual art in interwar Poland was oriented towards a universal modern art defined by the center mixed with the development of a distinct national art. Nadja Gnamuš concludes the chapter with a critique of the notion of “Eastern European art,” which she sees as “an ideological construct,” even a label, that fuels the “capitalist colonisation of the East” on the contemporary global art market (p. 42). She regards the activities of Moderna galerija Ljubljana and the Slovenian artists' group IRWIN as promoting, at least to some extent, the institutionalization of Eastern European art and analyzes their methods of “self-historicization” as active instruments in the construction of history.

¹ BEÁTA HOCK: Introduction, in: BEÁTA HOCK, ANU ALLAS (eds.): *Globalizing East European Art Histories: Past and Present*, New York—London 2018, pp. 1–22, here p. 7.

Chapters 2 and 3 strongly overlap thematically. They bring together a series of case studies that explore the significance of artistic discourse in processes of nation- and state-building and deal more generally with ideological and political aspects of aesthetic practice. It is here that the book's theme becomes most tangible and concrete: Sofia Korol, for example, examines works of art by soldiers of the so-called Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, visual testimonies of everyday life on the front, which took on special significance as an artistic legacy in the foundation of an independent Ukrainian nation-state after the First World War. In Milan Pech's study of anti-Semitic drawings in the Czechoslovak nationalist press between 1918 and 1948, and the trope of a worldwide Jewish Bolshevik conspiracy thus propagated, Pech considers the portrayal of Jews as disloyal to the new Czechoslovak nation-state as a significant aspect in the "construction of a local and national community" (p. 88). Lefteris Spyrou provides an interesting contribution on the active role art historical research played in defining a Greek national identity in the 1950s and 1960s that sought to balance "the notions of *ethnocentrism* and *Europeanisation*" (p. 103). He shows how the construction of a canon of modern Greek art was intertwined with processes of state reconstruction.

The fourth chapter "Art Exhibitions as Political Instrument" includes a variety of interesting studies within so-called Exhibition Histories, which in recent years have increasingly devoted themselves to the exhibition culture of post-communist states. These include the online archive Parallel Chronologies, the project Socialist Exhibition Cultures, or, just recently, the third Resonances conference "The Exhibition as Medium in the Bloc" in Prague, organized by Pavlína Morganová. In the present volume, she considers an exhibition of non-conformist art in Prague in 1969 against the background of political upheaval. In her study of an export exhibition of Soviet art in Warsaw in 1933, on the other hand, Irena Kossowska, analyzes how exhibitions could be instrumentalized as a "tool of 'soft power'" (p. 158) for communist propaganda. Mária Orišková addresses in turn the format of cultural-political international exhibitions from an explicitly global perspective and examines a series of state-sponsored exhibitions of "Czechoslovak art" that took place both in the West and in the socialist states of the global South, more precisely in Vietnam and Cuba. Orišková evaluates the idea of national art effectively advertised there as a strategy with which the ČSSR sought to break away from Soviet ideological dominance. Importantly, Patricia García-Montón González brings up the problematic aspect of "geographical anachronism" (p. 175) in her study of Old Master exhibitions during the Cold War. And Cristian Nae's contribution stands out for reflecting on the very concept of the exhibition itself in his analysis of state-organized large-scale art exhibitions in Romania under Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime of national communism. Drawing on Tony Bennet's notion of "governmental assemblages," Nae views exhibitions as institutionally structured and regulated, and "involved in multiple configurations of power" (p. 196). As far-reaching propaganda tools, they built a stage for an "'imagined' national history" (p. 198) of the Romanian people.

The volume concludes with the fifth chapter on "Architecture as a Vehicle of State Cultural Policy." Giedrė Jankevičiūtė and Veronika Rollová analyze the symbolic potential of architectural buildings—Jankevičiūtė that of two buildings in the "city crown" of interwar Lithuanian Kaunas that embodied the idea of state and nationhood, Rollová that of Prague Castle and how the communist leadership used it for purposes of propaganda. Marcus van der Meulen undertakes an interesting comparative study of the cities of East Berlin and Warsaw in their phase of reconstruction, highlighting how the treatment of religious buildings varied between demolition, sight-blocking, and reconstruction.

The thematically wide-ranging contributions in this book focus to very different degrees on the relationship between artistic production and processes of state construction. It is certainly the challenge of any conference volume to bring the diversity of subjects and aspects raised into context. Had the introduction here done so, it could have provided a very needed contribution towards transregional entangled history. Instead, its strength lies

in its instructive and informed perspective on the state of research, methodology, and positioning in the field of East Central European studies; the book's greatest potential lies in the variety of interesting case studies that help patch some gaps in the cultural map of East Central Europe.

Wien

Aneta Zahradnik

Béatrice von Hirschhausen: Les provinces du temps. Frontières fantômes et expériences de l'histoire. CNRS-Éditions. Paris 2023. 397 S. ISBN 978-2-271-14536-9. (€ 26,—)

Das hier besprochene Buch beschäftigt sich mit „Phantomgrenzen“ und der Konstruktion von sozialem Raum; die Autorin Béatrice von Hirschhausen, Spezialistin zur Geschichte des ehemaligen Habsburger-Raums, d. h. der verschiedenen Staaten in Osteuropa, die 1919 entstanden bzw. nach 1990 wieder entstanden sind, forscht am Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), dem französischen Pendant zum deutschen Max-Planck-Institut, und leitete darüber hinaus von 2011 bis 2017 das Interdisziplinäre Kompetenznetzwerk „Phantomgrenzen in Ostmitteleuropa“. In der vorliegenden Publikation werden offenbar die Ergebnisse dieser Forschungen, die bisher vor allem auf Deutsch veröffentlicht wurden,¹ in monografischer Form auf Französisch publiziert. Die Vf. stellt zu Beginn mithilfe von Karten Beispiele für solche sog. Phantomgrenzen dar, etwa das Präsidentschaftswahlverhalten in Polen 2015 (Kandidaten waren Andrzej Duda und Bronisław Komorowski). Die geografische Verteilung der Wählermehrheiten lässt längst verschwundene Grenzen wieder erscheinen: Grenzen, die einstmals existiert haben und eine vergangene Realität widerspiegeln, die aber eben nicht völlig verschwunden sind, somit also „Phantomgrenzen“ abbilden.

Ein weiteres Beispiel – von den zahlreichen, die H. anführt – für eine „Phantomgrenze“ stellt laut H. das Wahlverhalten auf dem Territorium der ehemaligen DDR dar, das nun schon relativ lange integraler Bestandteil der BRD ist: dort wird mehrheitlich nicht „bundesrepublikanisch“ gewählt, sondern vielmehr AfD bzw. Die Linke, die in der „alten“ BRD eher schwach vertreten sind, obwohl die neuen Bundesländer sich der „alten“ BRD rein wirtschaftlich bereits stark angenähert haben.²

Nach einer ausgiebigen Analyse und Diskussion der Autoren, die sich mit ähnlichen Themen bereits beschäftigt haben (seit den 1970er-Jahren sind „geohistorische“ Themen offenbar vielfach in der Forschungsliteratur zu finden), wählt die Vf. als theoretischen

¹ BÉATRICE VON HIRSCHHAUSEN, HANNES GRANDITS, CLAUDIA KRAFT, DIETMAR MÜLLER, THOMAS SERRIER: Phantomgrenzen – Räume und Akteure in der Zeit neu denken, Göttingen 2015; MICHAEL G. ESCH, BÉATRICE VON HIRSCHHAUSEN (Hrsg.): Wahrnehmen, Erfahren, Gestalten. Phantomgrenzen und soziale Raumproduktion, Göttingen 2017; BÉATRICE VON HIRSCHHAUSEN: Leçon des frontières fantômes. Les traces du passé nous viennent (aussi) du futur, in: L'Espace géographique 46 (2017), 2, S. 97–105. – Da der Rezensent keinen Zugriff auf diese Publikationen hatte, ist er nicht in der Lage zu vergleichen, inwiefern das hier besprochene Buch den auf Deutsch erschienenen Bänden der Autorin und anderer Teilnehmer an dem Projekt ganz oder teilweise entspricht.

² Der Rezensent mag in diesem Fall der Autorin nicht folgen. Die ablehnende Haltung vieler DDR-Bürger gegenüber den Parteien der „alten BRD“ scheint sich ihm nicht mit *georécit* (in etwa: „Geoerzählung“ – einem von mehreren von H. eingeführten Neologismen, mit dem sie den geohistorischen Aspekt ihrer Studie betont) erklären zu lassen: Das ursprüngliche Wahlverhalten der „Neubürger“ aus der DDR entsprach nicht unbedingt dem heutigen Verhalten, sondern folgte mehr oder weniger dem Wahlverhalten des „Kolonisators“, als welche die BRD heute bisweilen gesehen wird. Daran ändert auch die Tatsache nichts, dass die AfD mittlerweile auch im „Westen“ in Wahlumfragen bei etwa 20 % liegt – im Gegenteil.