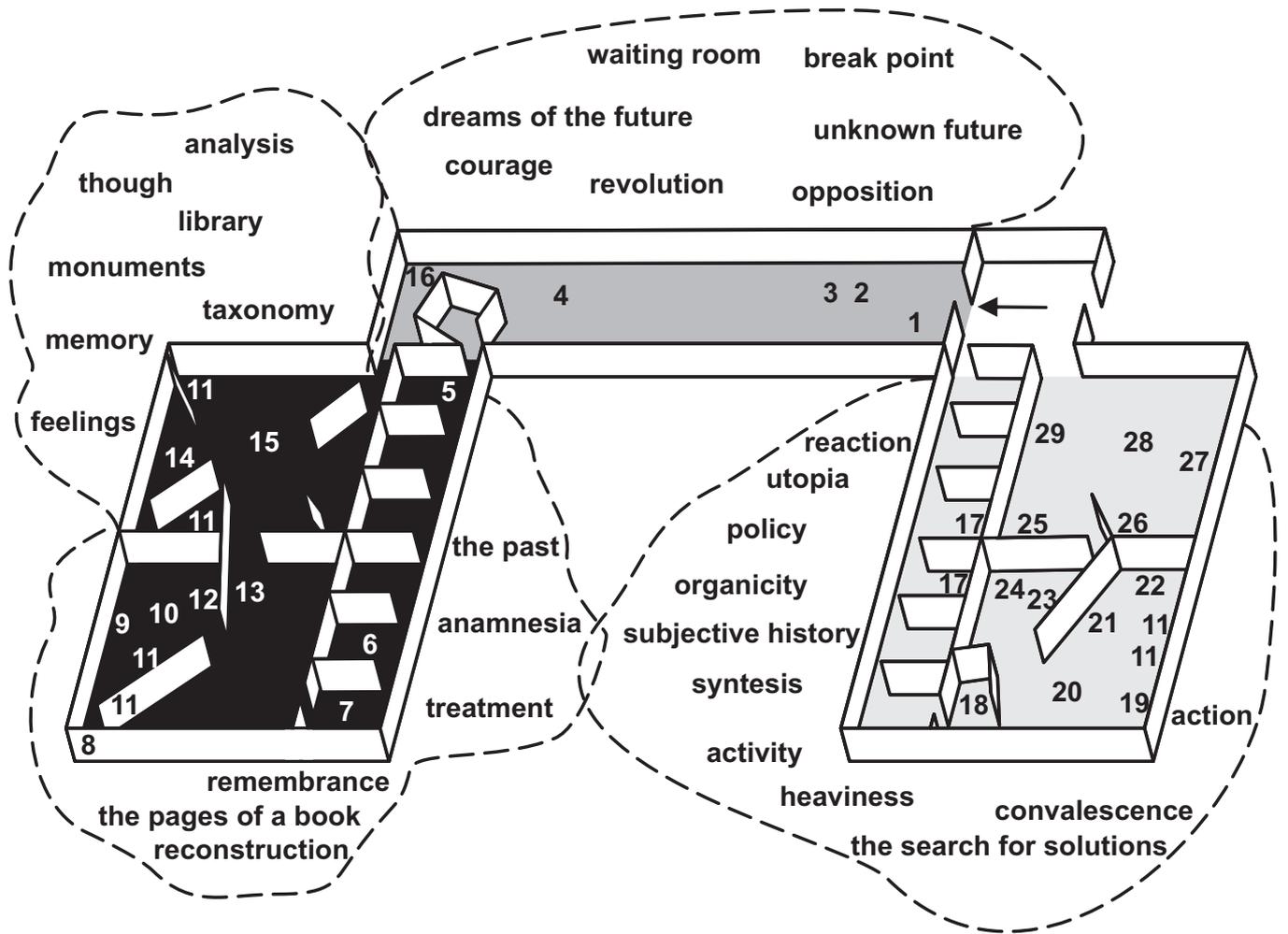


EXHIBITION PLAN



NOTES ON SELECTED ARTWORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

1

BANNERS AND PLACARDS FROM THE NORMALIZATION PERIOD AND NOVEMBER 1989

(PRAGUE NATIONAL MUSEUM)

The exhibition begins with propaganda texts from the late 1980s. Gradually, as the viewer is submerged in a “jungle” of banners and placards, their contents change and they are transformed into handwritten appeals for regime change and free elections. For the first time after the 1989 revolution, we have the opportunity to see a comprehensive collection representing traces of the demonstrations against the communist regime.

2

DAVID ČERNÝ

RŮŽOVÝ TANK (PINK TANK)

A rare reprint, being screened for the first time at this exhibition, of the 16mm documentary which describes how David Černý and his friends painted the first Soviet tank in Smíchov pink.

3

A series of banners and placards from revolutionary times is juxtaposed with a series of videos by 10 Indonesians capturing the Indonesian revolution from various perspectives using different methods. As in Prague, their revolution began with student unrest and culminated in the overthrow of the Suharto regime and the transformation of Indonesian society (1999). This section is a metaphorical entry into the exhibition and a reminder of a turning point, comparing our local, emotional memory of the revolutionary period in Czechoslovakia with another in the culturally and geographically distant Indonesia. The affinity and ready recognizability of these far-flung experiences of revolution in two concrete places is paradoxical.

4

ROMAN MASKALEV

SUPERMAN

In his video titled *Superman*, Kyrgyz artist Roman Maskalev sits at a table facing the camera and recounts the American film *Superman* in its entirety. A fascination with American culture is contrasted ironically with his own nomad culture and its traditional forms of storytelling.

5

ANRI SALA

INTERVISTA (INTERVIEW)

While moving into a new house, Albanian student Anri Sala found a 16-year-old 16mm film recording of a communist party congress in which a young woman, the leader of the Young Communist League of Albania, makes a speech and then gives an interview. It was his mother, Valdet. However, as the film lacks sound and Valdet cannot remember the words she spoke then, Anri began investigating himself. He visited contemporary witnesses and the sound engineers who worked on the film, to no avail. In the end, he took the film to a school for the deaf in Tirana, where they were able to reconstruct his mother's words in the film by reading her lips. *Intervista* captures the moment when Anri Sala shows his mother the video he created based on the old footage with the newly recovered words. The mother confronts her younger self and her erstwhile communist ideals collide with the present-day instability in Albania.

6

VAHRAM AGRAHSYAN

GHOST CITY

With its population of 149,000, Gyumri is the second largest city in Armenia. In 1988 it was stricken by a severe earthquake which left many of its inhabitants homeless. With the aim of helping these people, the government built a new residential quarter named Mush. Construction began that very year, but the quarter's buildings were never completed. Mush is located relatively close to the town centre, so it isn't hard to visit the strange place, which offers a view of a series of buildings built in a modernist spirit yawning emptily and left to their inevitable destruction by the forces of time and the elements. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to reflect on the bright future once intended for the quarter a sort of Utopian aura surrounding the buildings.

7

PEGGY MEINFELDER

100 WESTERN MARKS

Peggy Meinfelder – intrigued by the memory that just after the border between what were formerly East (GDR) and West (FRG) Germany was opened, East Germans crossing the frontier received a “welcoming sum” of 100 western marks – created an ever-growing collection (of over 2,000 items, a small fraction of which is on display here) of objects which they bought with their first western 100-mark note. Each object is described in a short story or a memory of the “dreamed of” item they bought.

8

SANJA IVEKOVIC

TRIANGLE

The collection titled Triangle was created during a visit by Yugoslav president Josip Tito in Zagreb, 1979. Despite a ban on appearing on balconies while the president went by, Ivekovic went out onto her balcony, where she read, sipped some whiskey and pretended to masturbate. Three figures are essential to the way the situation develops: the artist on her balcony, a policeman in the street and an individual on a rooftop across the street. The policeman can't see who's on the balcony, but gets information from the rooftop observer. After a while, he rings the doorbell to the flat and orders that the occupier remove all objects and herself from the balcony. Sanja Ivekovic's work sheds light on the ways public life encroaches upon private life – not only in the sense of intruding in the home, but also by scrutinizing the most intimate, sexual practices.

9

SASA[44], MEENA PARK

PINNACLES OF DISCOMFITURE

Sasa44 and MeeNa Park, the only South Korean artists who rarely exhibit their work in Europe, put together – just for this Prague exhibition – an expansive collection of objects providing commentary on the pop-cultural, political and social transformation currently underway in South Korea.

10

VANGELIS VLAHOS

GREEK RENOVATION OF THE BOSNIAN PARLIAMENT BUILDING IN SARAJEVO, 1992

Two architectural models depict the parliament building in Sarajevo. The first was constructed using nothing but images found on the Internet (mainly pictures in which the building has suffered damage due to bombing during the Balkan Wars), whereas that of the second derives from the actual architectural blueprints and illustrations representing the way the building is to look following reconstruction (which the architects provided to the construction firm responsible for the renovation). The architectural models are accompanied by an archival installation comprising materials from different sources (the media, the Internet, state archives, etc.). Concretely, it includes images that were discovered of the building, blueprints and technical drawings which document different approaches to the reconstruction work, monthly progress reports, bulletins and texts dealing with the reconstruction agreement between Greece and Bosnia, as well as news articles and texts on the role of Greece in the Balkans which inform not only on economic treaties, but also on the activities of the Greek foreign ministry in the field from 1992 to the present.

11

ERICK BELTRÁN, LIA PERJOVSCHI, RICARDO BASBAUM

DIAGRAMS

In his diagrams, Erick Beltrán tries to understand how we look at the world and understand it. The “What is Discourse?” project is one of the broadest attempts to make as universal a picture of the world as possible.

In her graphics, Lia Perjovschi works with associative thought and leaves behind a ramified structural picture of the intensities of important concepts.

In his diagrams, Ricardo Basbaum deals with the theme of the ineffable world of relationships between individuals and their emotions.

Ayreen Anastas and René Gabri collaborated long term on Atlas transformace (Transformation Atlas), the book which accompanies the exhibition, and the result is a detailed reflection on the dictionary entries in the form of diagrams which illustrate the contexts behind the transformations of Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

12

BABI BADALOV

SCHIZOPOETRY

This is the way Azerbaijani artist Babi Badalov blends popular culture, Russia’s imperial past and the communist legacy with local traditions in Central Asia, combining the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets, English and Russian, and photography and drawings to create a forceful, poetic portrait of the schizophrenic cultural situation in Central Asia. The result is a series of poetic drawings (maps) of the post-communist state of affairs presented with a peculiar, straightforward power.

13

NIKOLAY OLEYNIKOV

HEROES

According to Nikolay Oleynikov, the best way of describing the feelings of his generation and what has happened to it is by using its dreams as metaphors. In drawings and texts, feelings of melancholy and hope clash with passivity and the economic realities of contemporary Russia. Oleynikov provides subtle commentary on the situation there and provides a window onto the feelings of his generation which are so hard to communicate to others.

14

WALID RAAD / THE ATLAS GROUP

LET'S BE HONEST. THE WEATHER HELPED.

The aim of the Atlas Group project, launched in 1999, is to study, localize and document the history of Lebanon through the production of audio-visual and literary artifacts. In the early 1980s, Walid Raad collected bullets and shrapnel (from walls, cars and trees) in the streets of Beirut, carefully documenting the circumstances in which the items discovered. Then, in black-and-white photos of each site, he marked the bullet holes with differently coloured dots corresponding to the place where each was produced. The collection thus represents a catalogue of 23 countries which took part in arming the militias and the armed forces during the Lebanese Civil War, including the USA, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Israel, France, Switzerland and China.

I ONLY WISH THAT I COULD WEEP

This fictional documentary is made up of the found film material of a secret agent who is supposed to observe suspicious individuals on a beach but neglects his duties because he is too fascinated with the view of the sun setting on the sea – which, as an inhabitant of eastern Beirut, he has never seen before.

15

LITTLE WARSAW

ABANDONED MONUMENT

Abandoned Monument is a work by the Little Warsaw group working out of Budapest. In 2004 they found a monument, removed all traces identifying who it had been dedicated to, and refashioned it using artificial sandstone.

16

HARUN FAROCKI, ANDREI UJICA

VIDEOGRAMS OF A REVOLUTION

The story of the fall, escape and execution of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu and his wife Elena in December 1989. The two filmmakers combine official television footage with amateur material and analyse the way images of the revolution were constructed in the media.

17

PATRICIA ESQUIVIAS

FOLKLORE I, FOLKLORE II

Folklore I and II are the first in a series of video lectures on the history and image of Spain. By connecting two seemingly unrelated facts, Esquivias presents the creation of history as a democratic, participatory activity. History is seen here through the eyes of the lecturer, who selects and links various visual materials with commentary while constantly following the time going

by. In Folklore I, Esquivias takes up two storylines: that of Franco protégé Jesús Gil, who, after amassing a small fortune, bought a football club and died after betting that he could eat twenty fried eggs in one sitting. The second storyline tells of the evolution of the Valencian rave music scene, whose popularity began to grow a few years following Franco's death in 1975. Folklore II compares events from the reign of Spanish King Philip II (1527–1598) and tabloid news stories on the private life of Julio Iglesias.

18

STEFANOS TSIVOPOULOS

REMAKE

Remake is a reconstruction of the preparation behind and first few minutes of television broadcasting in Greece. The scenery is composed of authentic, museum-borrowed objects and almost perfect mock-ups. Tsivopoulos attempts, on several levels, to explore the possibilities offered up by the reconstruction of the events, which were a showcase for the dictatorial regime of the time.

19

MARK LOMBARDI

WORLD FINANCE CORPORATION AND ASSOCIATES,
C. 1970 - 1984: MIAMI, AJMAN, AND BOGOTA-CARACAS
(BRIGADA 2506: CUBAN ANTI-CASTRO BAY OF PIGS VETERAN)
(7th VERSION)

NEIL BUSH, SILVERADO, MDC (2nd VERSION)

The diagrams of Mark Lombardi are the result of his many years of research into classified information, conspiracies and scandalous revelations. At first, he would record the information he got from newspapers, television and other sources on index cards, assembling thousands over the years. Then he moved on to illustrating them with drawings, or “sociograms”. He created his “narrative structures” (as he called his graphics) using pencil or red pencil on paper, visualising the money flows and other invisible relationships in the economic and political spheres as an inextricable part of globalised society.

20

VJACHESLAV AKHUNOV

1m²

Akhunov refers to himself as a singular conceptual artist of the Uzbek underground in the 1970s and 1980s. Inspired by Marcel Duchamp and other avant-garde artists, he created his own monographic “pocket” exhibition, he placed reproductions of drawings and plans for conceptual projects in matchboxes, representing albums created before the fall of the USSR in Uzbekistan. In Akhunov's words, the installation is one of the largest monographic exhibitions in the world to be situated in such a small space.

21

TALLER POPULAR DE SERIGRAFÍA

INTERNATIONAL UNION MOVEMENT

The Taller Popular de Serigrafía (Popular Screen-Printing Workshop) is an example of an artistic group which arose as a reaction to the economic recession following demonstrations against president Fernando de la Rúa in 2001. By means of screen-printing and other inexpensive printing techniques, the group created banners and fliers in support of the protest movement's demonstrations. They worked mainly with labour unions and the unemployed. Their aim is to give protest movements a visual manifestation and help them to articulate their demands.

22

ARTUR ZMIJEWSKI

THEM

Them is a video documenting an experiment in which Artur Zmijewski confronts several social groups – conservatives, Catholics, young nationalist Poles, socialists, democrats and freedom fighters – in a series of workshops. Each group is enjoined to create a symbolic centre and react to the creations of the other groups.

23

IVAN GRUBANOV

AFTERIMAGES

Afterimages is a series of drawings whose title refers not only to what remains of images on the retina moments after we turn away from a light source, but also to drawings used in archaeology. The term refers to the contours of fragments found during excavations, whose positions relative to other fragments are noted, along with their distance from the surface. Ivan Grubanov's drawings are based on photographs of various religious sites in the Balkans. The deconstruction of the photographic images through the drawing process reveals the very skeleton of the process of depiction and along with the fragmentation of images, gradually distorts their original contexts, which becoming lose their value in the end.

24

DOMINIC HISLOP, MIKLÓS ERHARDT (BIG HOPE)

INSIDE OUT

The Inside Out project brought together about 30 homeless people living in shelters or the streets of Budapest, who photographed and commented on their lives and experiences. The resulting photos were made public in a variety of ways – in art galleries, on television, in newspapers, in exhibition catalogues and in a series of colour postcards. It is all documented comprehensively at www.bighope.hu/insideout/index.html. The project's main goal was to provoke a general discussion and raise awareness of the plight of the homeless by giving them the concrete opportunity to present their experiences themselves. Over the past ten years, Inside Out has become a reference project in Hungary in the fields of sociological education and research, inspiring many other programmes and workshops in the social sciences.

25

ZDENĚK KOŠEK

POČASÍ, METEOROLOGIE A SOUVISLOSTI

(WEATHER, METEOROLOGY AND CIRCUMSTANCES)

In 1991, Košek made dozens of records in school notebooks in an attempt to document all the circumstances connected with the feeling that he was able to control the weather and, in some way, the whole of the universe. Thanks to his unique drawings, viewers can explore this unexpected world of human thought.

26

Yael BARTANA

MARY KOSZMARY

Mary Koszmary is a poignant film confession and accusation by Israeli artist Yael Bartana. The young left-wing activist and chief editor of *Krytika*

Politychna Sławomir Sierakowski, popular in Poland, is filmed in the middle of an empty Warsaw football stadium which served as a collecting point from which Polish Jews were transported during WWII. In his monologue, he captures and comments on a Polish national trauma – the relationship between Polish Catholic society and the Jewish minority.

27

SHARON HAYES

10 MINUTES OF COLLECTIVE ACTIVITY

This film is based on 22 people who watched archival footage of a ten-minute speech given by Connecticut senator Abraham Ribicoff in Chicago, 1968. Ribicoff was reacting to a situation brought about by the nomination of George McGovern, an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War, as senator. The mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley, called out the National Guard to help the police disperse the demonstrators gathered before the building where the democratic convention was being held. The footage shows police beating protesters in front of the building. *10 Minutes of Collective Activity* reflects Sharon Hayes' concern for exploring the relationships between history, memory and space.

28

TOMÁŠ SVOBODA

Svoboda approached 100 leading companies in the Czech Republic, offering them advertising space in his own flat. The installation documents the course of the communication between Svoboda and the companies from the moment they are first contacted to the end result.

29

CIPRIAN MUREȘAN

COMMUNISM NEVER EXISTED

In *Communism Never Existed*, Ciprian Mureșan describes aspects of complex forms of anachronism, the relationships between time and history which accelerate and decelerate alongside each other, in which former and later instances of bloodletting are unbelievably abundant. It is a final answer to Winston Churchill's comment that Eastern Europe had produced more history than it could consume and, at the same time, proclaims that Eastern Europe will never stop aspiring to a place from which it can project itself onto a larger, more elaborate map of geopolitical affairs. The relations between facts, statistics and painful memories reflect the relations between communism, liberalism and the idea of historic catastrophe in the Eastern political imagination. In connection with the certainty that communism did, doubtless, exist, he reflects the complex manners in which post-communism and globalisation mutually affect each other – by influencing political agendas or announcing the gala opening of a shopping centre. It is a pure, relentless revisionism which requires no further proof besides the sully of memory and an untrammelled proprietary excess. It creates new martyrs and new types of martyrdom – or perhaps a new generation of artists which will no longer reflect on traumas and dwell upon their geographic or historical marginality as if reflecting one of Zeno's paradoxes. It is a slogan which sidesteps political arguments on the left and on individual histories: if more people agree that "communism never existed", the possibility of a community discreetly arises.