

Workshop and Roundtable

Mi 19 July 2017
15:00 - 20:00

Venue:
Forum Transregionale Studien
Wallotstr. 14
14193 Berlin

Please register at:
prisma@trafo-berlin.de

For more information and the full
program, please see
www.prisma-ukraina.de

Culture as Politics



The Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra performs "Pray for Palmyra" concert in May 2016 in Palmyra.

Culture has become not only an important economic factor but also an essential instrument for the state to manage the social order, for the reproduction of symbolic hegemony and for identity politics. Looking at the examples of Russia, Poland and others, this workshop asks whether culture still has any emancipatory potential when it has largely been appropriated by conservative discourse, populist politics and the neoliberal market. The concluding panel discussion will examine the uses of 'culture' in strengthening (or inhibiting) currently growing political authoritarian tendencies in India, Russia and Turkey.

15:00-18:00 Workshop

What does Culture Matter? From its Politicization to Problematizing its Language

Speakers: Susanne Frank (HU Berlin), Ilya Kalinin (Prisma Ukraïna Fellow 2017; State University St. Petersburg), Vyacheslav Morozov (University of Tartu), Andrii Portnov (Prisma Ukraïna; Forum Transregionale Studien), Tomasz Zarycki (University of Warsaw)

18:00-20:00 Roundtable

Double East: Culture as Politics in India, Russia and Turkey

Speakers: Ilya Kalinin (Prisma Ukraïna Fellow 2017; State University St. Petersburg), Banu Karaca (EUME Fellow 2016/17), Venugopal Maddipati (Art Histories Fellow 2016/17; Ambedkar University, Delhi); Moderator: Georges Khalil (Forum Transregionale Studien)

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PRISMA UKRAÏNA ist ein Forschungsverbund unter Mitwirkung von:



Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin



Zentrum für Literatur- und
Kulturforschung Berlin



Zentrum für Ost- und Südosteuropäische
Forschung



Workshop: “What does Culture Matter? From its Politicization to Problematizing its Language”

15:00 – 15:15

Welcome and Introduction

Ilya Kalinin, Andrii Portnov

15:15 – 16:15

Uses of Culture: Difference, protest, power.

Deconstructing ‘Culture’ as an Ontological Category in Postcolonial Studies and Beyond

Viacheslav Morozov (University of Tartu)

Culture/Art as a form of political protest vs. governmentalization of culture

Susanne Frank (Humboldt University Berlin)

Moderator: Ilya Kalinin

16:15 – 17:45

Language, culture and the critical potential of cultural elites

Culture and the intelligentsia hegemony in Poland

Tomasz Zarycki (University of Warsaw)

The Protest Movement in Russia (2011-2012). Cultural distinctions and political similarities: dialectics of the defeat

Ilya Kalinin (Prisma Ukraïna Fellow 2017; State University St. Petersburg)

How History Becomes Politics Through Film: ‘Wolyn’ by Wojtek Smarzowski and Its Reception

Andrii Portnov (Prisma Ukraïna/Forum Transregionale Studien)

Moderator: Susanne Frank

Roundtable: “Double East: Culture as Politics in India, Russia and Turkey”

18:00-20:00

Participants: Ilya Kalinin (Prisma Ukraïna Fellow 2017; State University St. Petersburg), Banu Karaca (EUME Fellow 2016/17), Venugopal Maddipati (Art Histories Fellow 2016/17; Ambedkar University, Delhi)

Moderator: Georges Kahlil

Abstracts and Bios

Susanne Frank is Chair of Eastern Slavic Literatures and Cultures at the Institute for Slavic Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin. She studied in Vienna, Konstanz and Moscow and graduated from the University of Konstanz in 1988 with a Master of Arts in Slavic Studies and History. She received her PhD in 1996 in Russian Literature and habilitated in 2004, working on Slavic and comparative literatures. Her fields of research include geopoetics and geopolitics, Russian and Russian-language literatures, literatures in (post)imperial contexts, magical realism as post-colonial mode of writing and ecological approaches to cultural semantics.

Abstract: Susanne Frank's contribution will focus on strategies of using art/culture as a political statement, either as a means of protest or as a means of reclaiming power. As a point of departure she will take the poster illustration (Concert at Palmyra) and compare it with (1.) visualizations of the role of the Soviet Army during World War II; and (2.) with recent forms of protest during the demonstrations in Sofia (2013) and on the Euromaidan (2014). In order to investigate differences on the level of aesthetic strategies and/or demonstrate how close aesthetic gestures and visualizations can be even though they claim completely different meaning, she will take into account further examples of 'art/culture as protest' from Soviet history that did not conceive of themselves as political, but actually were – as for example the so called 'Bulldozer exhibitions'. She juxtaposes them not only with contemporary forms of protest art, but also with political strategies to neutralize forms of (former) protest art by canonizing it as national heritage. She would also like to discuss the role of the humanities in this process.

Ilya Kalinin is an Associate Professor at Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences at St.-Petersburg State University. His Phd thesis "Russian Literary Utopia, XVIII-XX Centuries: The Philosophy and Poetics of the Genre" was upheld at Saint Petersburg State University (2002). His researches focus on early Soviet Russian intellectual and cultural history, practices of self-fashioning of the Soviet Subject and on the historical and cultural politics of contemporary Russia. He is editor-in-chief of the Moscow-based intellectual journal *Emergency Rations: Debates on Politics and Culture (Neprikosnovennyj Zapas: Debaty o politike i culture)* and two series of books. He has published in a wide range of journals including *Ab Imperio*, *Baltic Worlds*, *Sign Systems Studies*, *Social Sciences*, and others. His book *History as Art of Articulation. Russian Formalists and Revolution* is forthcoming at the New Literary Observer Publishing House (Moscow).

Abstract: The cultural logic of the protests in Russia in 2011-2012 placed its fundamental hopes for emancipation on the production of new forms of representation and artistic creativity. It very quickly encountered its own internal limits of development. Even more importantly, the stylistic and cultural elements of the protest movement, interpreted by the "creative class" as its main achievement, were highly idiosyncratic (both in stylistic and in social terms). Ilya Kalinin will argue that it was this cultural specificity that largely prevented the movement from developing into a truly mass social protest. Oppositional liberal discourse explained

the decline of the movement as a reflection of the cultural “backwardness of the electorate, hypnotized by official mass media,” while official discourse simply proclaimed that the program of the protest movement was “extraordinarily distant from the people.” The description of the protest movement was conceived not by the regime, but by the liberal, culturally enlightened community. While the liberal opposition spoke of two culturally increasingly distant Russias, the regime referred to a “united Russia,” bound together by a common national cultural tradition. The opposition emphasized “two Russias” and their cultural division instead of appropriating the more accepted term of a “united Russia”, thus depriving the regime of its use.

Banu Karaca is a sociocultural anthropologist working at the intersection of political anthropology, art and aesthetics, nationalism and cultural policy, museums and commemorative practices. Her ongoing research centers on the practice of writing art history by trying to account for ‘lost,’ dispossessed and misattributed artworks from the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic. Her manuscript *Decivilizing Art: Cultural Policy and Nationalism in Turkey and Germany* examines the entrenchment of the art world in state violence. Some of her recent publications interrogate the politics of artistic exchange programs, freedom of expression in the arts, and gendered memories of war and political violence. She is currently co-editing a volume with Marianne Hirsch, Jean Howard and Soledad Falabella considering feminist practices in literature, art and architecture that disrupt authoritarian and nationalist uses of memory (Columbia University Press). She is the co-founder of *Siyah Bant*, a research platform that documents censorship in the arts in Turkey.

Venugopal Maddipati holds a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and is Assistant Professor at the School of Design at Ambedkar University, Delhi. He is currently working on a monograph titled *Architecture as Weak Thought: Gandhi, Wardha and Presentism in Colonial and Post Colonial India*, which will explore the intersections, over the course of the twentieth century, between Gandhism, architecture and contemporaneity in the district of Wardha in Central India. His current work relates to the intersections between traditions of water-harvesting, architecture and visibility in contemporary Indian art. He is working on an edited volume on *Liquescent Materiality: Water in Global South Asia, 1500-2000* (with Dr. Sugata Ray, University of California, Berkeley). He is also working on a second monograph on architecture and geology in late nineteenth century South Asia.

Viacheslav Morozov is Professor of EU–Russia Studies at the University of Tartu and chairs the Council of the UT’s Centre for EU–Russia Studies (CEURUS). Before moving to Estonia in 2010, he taught for 13 years at St. Petersburg State University in Russia. His current research explores how Russia’s political and social development has been conditioned by the country’s position in the international system. This approach has been laid out in his most recent monograph *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity: A Subaltern Empire in a Eurocentric World* (Palgrave, 2015), while the comparative

dimension is explored, inter alia, in the edited volume *Decentring the West: The Idea of Democracy and the Struggle for Hegemony* (Ashgate, 2013). He is a member of the Program on New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (PONARS Eurasia). From 2007–2010, he was a member of the Executive Council of the Central and East European International Studies Association (CEEISA).

Abstract: Cultural difference is a key ontological category for postcolonialism: the postcolony cannot be mapped without postulating a cultural difference between the colonised and the colonisers. In the broader context of Russian and post-Soviet studies, culture continues to play the role of a foundational category in a much wider domain, including such positivism-inspired disciplines like comparative politics and quantitative sociology. The indispensable role of culture has a number of negative consequences, not least as it opens the way towards a right-wing conservative appropriation of postcolonial critique. Viacheslav Morozov's paper demonstrates that the use of 'culture' as a marker of borders is not just politically harmful but also theoretically unsustainable. What he offers instead is a neo-Gramscian ontology of hierarchically organised, and uneven, hegemonic spaces. The main advantage of this approach is that it helps to reconcile the triviality of difference with the constitutive significance of differentiation for political community of any kind, and thus opens a way towards a re-conceptualisation of the postcolonial subject.

Andrii Portnov is a historian and director of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA – Research Network Eastern Europe at the Forum Transregionale Studien. He is a Guest Professor at the Free University of Berlin, a former Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the Humboldt University and Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin.

Abstract: Wojtek Smarzowski's Movie 'Wolyn' (2016) deals with the story of the mass killings of the civilian Polish population in the Volhynian region, which took place in 1943 under Nazi occupation and were planned and perpetrated by the Ukrainian nationalist underground. In post-socialist Poland, 'Wolyn-43' gradually became one of the most important places of memory of the Second World War and of Polish martyrdom. In his talk, Andrii Portnov wants to address a number of issues: How has film influenced the 'Volhynian debate' and the perception of the events of 1943 as a 'genocide of the Poles'? How has the topic of the 'Volhynian genocide' gradually moved from the far-right of the political and intellectual spectrum into the very centre of Polish memorial culture and politics? How have film-makers, historians and public intellectuals that are considered to be 'liberal' helped 'Wolyn-43' to become mainstream in Polish public sphere?

Tomasz Zarycki is Associate Professor and Director of the Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland. He holds a habilitation degree in sociology from the Institute for Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. His research focuses on the sociology of politics, sociology of culture, sociology of knowledge, critical sociology and discourse analysis with a particular focus on Polish and Eastern European societies. His latest book in English is *Ideologies of Eastness in Central and Eastern Europe* (Routledge, 2014).

Abstract: Poland may be seen as a unique country in which the role of the intelligentsia, a specific East and Central European type of social elite, remained very strong after the fall of communism. The intelligentsia in Poland can even be seen as stronger than business and purely political elites. In effect, politics has always been strongly culturalized in Poland, while economic questions have been seen as relatively depoliticized. The intelligentsia, which can be defined as an elite of 'cultural capital', may currently be divided politically into liberals and conservatives, but as a group, it still enjoys what I see as symbolic hegemony. Left intellectuals in Poland, as in several other countries, complain that much of the national culture and the Western critical discourse and theories have been 'taken over' by the conservatives. I would argue, however, that neither left nor right critiques in Poland ever challenged the domination of the intelligentsia. However, both tend to culturalize economic and social issues in a manner typical for the intelligentsia as a whole.

ABOUT US:

PRISMA UKRAÏNA – Research Network Eastern Europe links academics from numerous universities and research institutions in Berlin and Brandenburg who focus in their work on Ukraine and Eastern Europe. It has been initiated and is being headed by the historian and long-term Fellow of the Forum Transregionale Studien Dr. Andrii Portnov and continues the work of the Berlin-Brandenburg Ukraine Initiative (BBUI). The main aim of the PRISMA UKRAÏNA – Research Network Eastern Europe is to challenge concepts and vocabularies that make all too easy use of a simplifying rhetoric of "ethnic zones" and "historical right" in order to explain transformations and conflict. We combine interdisciplinary research with comparative approaches and thus seek to contribute to a language that does justice to the complexity of the region as a whole and opens up transregional perspectives.