

ПРОБЛЕМИ НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

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ЗА ТЕОРИЯ, ИСТОРИЯ И КРИТИКА НА ИЗКУСТВОТО

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1

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SUMMARIES

ART: HISTORY AND HISTORIES PERCEPTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES Claude Frontisi

Art history, a rich and stimulating field of study, owes no doubt the gist of its appeal to the exceptional objects it studies and to their specific and changing nature. It finds itself, however, in a paradoxical situation: being an objective science, its almost boundless range compels it to make choices that are frequently arbitrary and subject to the whims of personal taste and fashion; being a crossroads discipline, it tends to resist interdisciplinary exchanges; open by vocation to the least conformist human inventions, it often confines itself to the prudent academicism of accumulated erudition. As a result, its break-up into competing, even hostile special fields, especially exacerbated in France, handicaps the efforts and research work.

The reflections set out here follow from this realization. They deal with the various aspects of the institutions, the field, the approaches, the very nature of art; the problems related to diachrony and synchrony, the “long” and “brief” histories and, finally, the recurrent question of the discourse. Far from being exhaustive, this study confines itself to pointing out some of the onto-epistemological difficulties inherent in this practice, according to perspectives, which open up many prospects for research. What matters now is to confront them with others in order to carry out, as far as possible, common investigations of problems conducted within the dynamic pluralism of the histories of art.

ИЗКУСТВОТО: ИСТОРИЯ И ИСТОРИИ. ПОГЛЕДИ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ

Клод Фронтизи

Богата и стимулираща материя, историята на изкуството несъмнено извлича основното за себе си както от изключителните обекти, които изучава, така и от специфичната и променливата им природа. При все това тя се оказва в парадоксална ситуация: бидейки обективна наука, нейното почти необозримо поле я принуждава да осъществява често пъти произволен избор, подчинен на капризите на личния вкус и на модата; кръстопътна дисциплина, тя все пак устоява на натиска на интердисциплинарния обмен; по призвание отворена към най-малко конформистките човешки инвенции, тя често намира пренос в предпазливия академизъм на ерудираните натрупвания. Най-накрая, пръсването ѝ във Франция между конкурентни, дори враждебни специалности препявата усилията и проучванията на специалистите.

Разсъжденията, които предлагаме, произтичат от тази констатация. Те касат различни пунктове на институциите, на полето, на подходите, на самата природа на изкуството; проблемите, свързани с диахронията и синхронията, на “продължителната” и “късата” истории; най-накрая и настоящия въпрос за дискурса. Далеч от това да бъде изчерпателен, настоящият материал се задоволява да открие някои от онтологико-епистемологичните трудности, присъщи на изкуствоведската практика според перспективите, които откриват пред тях пътища за нови изследвания. Сега е важно да ги конфронтираме с други, за да успеем, в рамките на възможното, да осъществим общи проблемни проучвания, провеждани в динамичния плурализъм на историите на изкуството.

АВТОНОМИЯ И РАЗСЕЙВАНЕ Ерик Мишо

Историята на т.н. “исторически” авангарди през втората половина на XX в. е предмет на особена реинтерпретация: техните революционни аспирации, формулирани след 1910 г. както посредством самите творби, така и в теоретичен план, понесени след това от политическите и социалните революции в Европа, стават жертва на завръщането към политическия ред.

Ново придобитите формални свободи, които правят от изкуството “обещание за щастие” влизат в осезаемо противоречие с принудите на социалната сфера, в която възникват. От тук следва, че изкуството става “обещание за щастие, което се развива”, както казва Адорно към края на 60-те г. в своята *Естетическа теория*. През 90-те години все повече се възприема широко идеята за “привал” на авангардите (Ерик J. Hobsbawm, Т. J. Clark), неспособни да се изправят лице в лице с икономическото и идеологическото всемогъщество на една “система”, която ги осъжда било на компромиса, било на връщане назад, неутрализирайки тяхното подривно предизвикателство.

Всички тези претенции се базират на увереността, че изкуството, в процеса на своето историческо развитие, е придобило своята “автономност”. Но какво да разбираме под това? Най-малко пет значения на този термин са се появили от началото на XIX в. Първото визира еманципацията, от Ренесанса насетне, на *свободните изкуства (arts liberaux)*, или изящни изкуства (*beaux-arts*), по отношение на механичните изкуства (*arts mécaniques*). Второто предполага еманципирането на изкуството от религиозното и политическото опекуство, идентифицирайки неговото прогресивно освобождаване с освобождаването на индивида: “неограничената свобода”, отдавана на изкуството фактически санкционира своето навлизане в силно конкурентната пазарната икономика. Почти едновременно с това се появява идеята, че изкуството е независимо от историческите и социалните условия: така теорията на *изкуство за изкуство (l'art pour l'art)*, която прави от творбата чиста монада, съответства на теорията за *социалното изкуство*, която развиват сен-симонистите във Франция и в Европа, приписвайки му осъществяването на Златния век тук долу на земята. Четвърта концепция за автономията, по-“формалистична”, отбелязва скъсването на изкуството, от края на XIX в., с класическата традиция на *мимезиса*, което от тук нататък ще определя единствено собствените си закони. Към това четвърто значение се присъединява и последното, което гласи, че художествената дейност и нейните продукти са абсолютно независими от публиката и от условията за тяхното възприемане.

Ако вече всички тези значения могат да се намерят в *Естетическата теория* на Адорно, последната е завършена към 30-те години, по времето на дебата, който го противопоставя на неговия приятел Валтер Бенямин, по повод на неговото есе *Художественото произведение в епохата на неговата техническа възпроизводимост*. Тезите на Бенямин са по-скоро антропологични, отколкото политически. Откакто изкуството, казва той, се е откъснало от магическия или религиозния култ, утвърждавайки така своята автономност, неговите обекти не изискват повече нито вглъбяване, нито съзерцание: те произвеждат своя ефект в *разсейването*, или още по-точно, в *разсейната си употреба*. Но придавайки своя ритъм и на най-незначителните ритуали на ежедневния живот, тези произведени обекти осигуряват на изкуството същностната му функция на *тренировка* и на *самодисциплиниране* на човечеството. Едно човечество все по-изложено на опасностите, които поражда модерният живот произвежда изкуство, способно да подготвя хората за все нови и нови опасности.

Тезите на Адорно за автономността на изкуството (“относителна”), които ще залегнат в основата на неговата *Естетическа теория* и които ще подхванат по свой начин преобладаващите разговори през последните тридесет години, очевидно са в тотална опозиция спрямо антропологичната концепция, която защитава Бенямин и която предполага разтрогването от класическата концепция за изкуството като обособена социална дейност. На песимистичната и високомерна визия на Теодор Адорно, Бенямин предварително противопостави точното и техническото наблюдение за трансформациите на миметичното поведение, което се извършваше пред очите му и завърши с разрушаването, след епохата на боговете, на епохата на изкуството.

AUTONOMY AND DISTRACTION Eric Michaud

The history of the so-called ‘historical’ avant-gardes, during the second half of the XXth century, was the object of a specific reinterpretation: their revolutionary aspirations, - formulated since 1910, both by the works of art and by the theoretical texts, and later supported by the political and social European revolutions-, would have made of them the victims of all the returns to the political order. The formal freedoms recently acquired, and that made of art a ‘hope of happiness,’ would have then come into contradiction with the constraints of the social field in which they had emerged. Therefore art became ‘the promise of a happiness which breaks up’, as Adorno claimed in his *Aesthetic Theory* at the end of the 1960ies. During the 1990thies the idea of a ‘failure’ of the avant-gardes became increasingly accepted (Eric J. Hobsbawm, T. J. Clark). Confronted by the overwhelming power of an economical and ideological ‘system,’ according to this interpretation, art would have been condemned to either compromises or ‘recuperations’ that would necessarily neutralized its subversive challenge.

Now, all these claims were grounded on the certitude that art, during its historical development, had acquired its ‘autonomy’. But how should we understand ‘autonomy’? At least five different meanings have emerged since the beginning of the XIXth century. The first referred to the emancipation of the liberal arts, or Fine Arts, from the mechanical arts that had occurred since the Renaissance. The second meaning of the autonomy of art implied that it was emancipated from the authority of religious and political powers and coupled this progressive liberation with that of the individual subject. The ‘unlimited freedom’ granted to art sanctioned the fact of its entry into the highly competitive realm of the market economy. While, almost at the same time, appeared the idea that art was independent from its historical and social conditions: the theory of *l'art pour l'art*. The theory of the work of art as a pure monad thus answered the one of a social art, advanced in France and Europe by the Saint-simoniens who wanted the task of art to be the one realizing the Golden Age on Earth. A fourth conception of the autonomy of art was more formalistic: it celebrated, since the end of the XIXth century, the divorce of art from the classical tradition of mimesis and its quest for its own laws. To this conception was linked a last one, according to which artistic activity and its productions were absolutely independent from the public and the conditions of reception.

If all these acceptations of the autonomy of art are to be found in Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory*, then this last was elaborated already in the 1930thies at the time of the debate that opposed Adorno to his friend Walter Benjamin on the occasion of Benjamin’s essay on the *Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility*. Benjamin’s thesis were anthropological rather than political. For him, ever since art had been detached from magical or religious cult, seeming to thereby affirming its autonomy, its objects no longer demanded meditation or contemplation. These objects produced their effect in distraction, or, better yet, in distracted use. But these fabricated objects, giving their rhythm to the minute rituals of everyday life, conserved for art its own essential function of humanity’s self instigation and training. A humanity increasingly exposed to the dangers provoked by modern life would secrete an art capable of preparing men for yet newer dangers.

Adorno’s theses on the relative autonomy of art, which would found his *Aesthetic Theory* and would rephrase in their own terms the dominant discourse of these 30 years, were evidently in complete opposition with the anthropological conception that Benjamin defended and which implied the dissolution of the classical concept of art as a socially separated activity. To Adorno’s pessimist and lofty vision, Benjamin opposed in advance the precise and technical observation of the transformations of the mimetic comportment that operated before his eyes and, after the age of gods, succeeded in destroying the age of art.

ART HISTORY AND POST-MODERNISM. THE THESIS OF "THE END OF ART HISTORY": OPINIONS AND POLEMICS Chavdar Popov

Until the 1980s, when the notion of the "end of art history" first came under discussion, the question of the identification and legitimacy of this scholarly discipline related to the domain, which we are wont to designate by the general term of Fine Arts, had never been of topical interest. This is no more the case. Our time has problematized the boundaries, the generic specifics of the traditional and novel forms, which are more appropriately referred to as "visual arts". Under the impact of post-modernist ideas were revised the epistemological models that had been functioning in European science ever since the age of the Enlightenment. Modernism, with its anti-essentialism and anti-fundamentalism, undermined the "metaphysical" concepts that, alongside those of gender, history, nation etc., included also the concept of art, which had emerged in Europe in the era of Modernity. Art history was also affected by the mistrust towards the transhistorical global categories.

To shed some light on the situation, it is necessary to go back to the genesis of this branch of the humanities and, concurrently, examine the correlation between the developments in art and art history. Art history, as an academic discipline formed during the second half of the 19th century, established its methods and tools of inquiry at a time when art was thought of as a distinct and clearly defined object of study. Having come into being simultaneously with modernism, which proclaimed the autonomy of art, art history is by presumption "modernist". Insofar as Modernity has laid the foundations of the historical understanding and forged the very concept of "art", the notion of the "death" of art too is connected with the exhausting of the modernist paradigm. This in turn has led to a state of crisis in art history that could be described as loss of identity and disintegration of the discipline itself.

Possible prospects for the future development of this field of study can be sought in the interdisciplinary exchanges of art history with cultural anthropology (the so-called Cultural Studies) and the exploration of ways for a more flexible application of the dialogic approach, in keeping with the ideas of the Russian scholar M. Bakhtin. Are we entitled today to speak of "non-classical" art history in the way we speak of "non-classical" physics?

METHODS AND PRACTICES OF ART CRITICISM IN BULGARIA DURING THE 1990s Svilen Stefanov

A distinctive feature of art criticism in the 1990s was the emergence of new strategies of interpretation. The period was characterized by institutional instability and a change of the model of contemporary art, as a result of which contemporary art criticism too saw itself lacking in a systematic methodology. A criticism emancipated from all ideological dogmatism was born at the same time as professional art academic education was confronted by a nonconformist, militant kind of "operative" critical writing, which had set itself the aim of provoking a radical change in the art model inherited from the previous system.

The 1990s in Bulgaria saw the emergence of some new functions in the social role of the art critic. From a figure taking his cue from the ideas and works of the artist he evolved into an all-important ideologue and selector "casting the characters" on the "art scene". While art criticism took on new functions and developed a new awareness of its tasks and relevance, one can ask whether the actual increase in the importance of the *critic-curator* hybrid does not reflect the global crisis in the functioning of this specific activity?

If we can really speak of a crisis in the institution of art criticism at present, this might well be the result of a loss of the critic's credibility as a mediator between art and the public. Art criticism is losing its homogeneity as a specific subject and is dissolving in the practice of the curator, the gallery owner, the art dealer, etc. Because of these institu-

tional commitments, the critic is increasingly forfeiting the liberal (postmodern) mainstays of his position. The critic's activity is ruthlessly *exploited* as the warden of territory.

In the 1990s art criticism in Bulgaria experienced a revival only to be deformed again due to its inability to establish itself as an autonomous cultural field — the mediator between the artwork and the public being foredoomed to act as a figure belonging to *realms parallel to art criticism*. The problem confronting criticism is revealed in its functions as a subservient activity. Instead of analysing and interpreting contemporary art in terms of possible historical and socio-cultural meanings, it is toying with issues of the immediate present, which are more properly the domain of the curator, the museum worker, the art dealer, etc. The role of intermediary, historically bequeathed to European art criticism, fails to carry conviction nowadays, because the Mediator's vocation has been reduced to a mere mask on the face of a relatively new social figure aspiring to play a leader's part in the interrelations between the artist, his work and the public.

PRINCIPAL METHODOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ART EDUCATION ACCORDING TO THE CRITICAL MODELS OF POSTMODERN THEORY Peter Tsanev

The article deals with the impact of the two major tendencies in education during the second half of the 20th century on the specific character of art education. The first wave of reform was associated with the propagation of the scientific-normative model of discipline-oriented teaching after the 1960s, while the second manifested itself in the ever increasing influence, which the critical models of postmodern theory exerted on education in the 1990s and the early years of the 21st century. According to the author, the methodological alternatives facing art education today depend, on the one hand, on the contradictions between these two models of educational reform and, on the other hand, on the processes taking place in contemporary art and art theory themselves. Important new characteristics of the subject of visual arts in Bulgaria are pointed out, as they are embedded in the new official educational requirements and the new syllabus of instruction in the visual arts. The author also analyses individual elements of the reform launched in Bulgarian art education, and more particularly those interpreting the importance of the postulates of critical pedagogy and postmodern theory for the organization, objectives and content of contemporary art education.

SEMIOTIC ASPECTS OF WEAPONS IN ANTIQUITY Ivan Marazov

The topic of the study is the symbolic role of the offensive weapons in the antiquity. The analyses and conclusions are based mainly on the monuments and pictorial texts from ancient Thrace. Some aspects of the weapons as marker of culture, as signs of age and warrior initiation are of special interest. The most important weapons as the spear, sword and bow acquire their symbolic meaning from myth and ritual. The implicit meanings of some natural phenomena as sexuality, moon and plants, as well as cultural symbols like weddings, branding of the spear, ritual implementing of the marked weapons, exchanging the roles between weapons and tools, and power connotations of the weapons are studied in detail.

NOTES ON SOME UNKNOWN ICONS BY THE ICON-PAINTERS CHRISTO DIMITROV AND DIMITER CHRISTOV IN MACEDONIA Victoria Popovska-Korobar

The text is a contribution to the investigation of the work of two icon-painters (zographs) from Samokov, Christo Dimitrov and Dimiter Christov, containing attributions of hitherto unpublished icons in Macedonia. To Christo Dimitrov are ascribed the icon of St John of Rila (Ivan Rilski) in the church of St Nicholas in Shtip (ca 1810), two royal icons in the church of the Nativity of the Virgin at St Joachim Osogovski Monastery from 1810, as well as the murals in the dome of the church of St John the Baptist (Prodomos) at St John (Jovan) Bigorski Monastery from 1800. In Dimiter Christov's workshop at Samokov were executed the icon of the Virgin Galactotrophousa with Saints, now in a private collection in Skopje (ca 1830), six royal icons from before 1847 at the St Nicholas church in Rankovce village near Kriva Palanka, an icon of Sts Constantine and Helena of 1847 in Skopje, ten royal icons from 1859 at the Archangel Michael church in Orizari village near Ko ani, three icons from ca 1850 at the St George church in Ko ani, and four royal icons at the Archangel Michael church in Spanchevo village, district of Ko ani, which were probably painted between 1845 and 1850.

MANUSCRIPTS AND RECORDS, OR AN ATTEMPT AT DESCRIBING PRESENT-DAY BULGARIAN CODICOLOGY Elissaveta Mussakova

The article offers an overview of problems in contemporary Bulgarian codicology, having a bearing on the methodological approach to the description of medieval Slavonic manuscript documents. The author makes a general survey of the history and state of this discipline (or science) in Bulgaria, pointing out some of the more important trends in its development and citing selected examples, which illustrate as yet unsolved questions regarding the structure of the description and the formal presentation (formalization) of its elements. Also, the need is commented of bringing about changes in the traditional attitudes and (or) arriving at a new consensus between the specialists, paleographers and codicologists, on a wide international scale, these being essential preconditions for the creation of the modern electronic catalogues and publications of the old literary heritage, intended for universal use.

NEWLY DISCOVERED INSCRIPTION ON THE SCROLL OF THE PROPHETESS ANNA IN THE CHURCH OF ST PETER NEAR BEREND VILLAGE Christo Andreev

In this brief report is published a newly uncovered mural inscription in the Church of St Peter near the village of Berendø, which can be seen on the scroll held by the prophetess Anne in the scene of Presentation of Christ in the Temple. In translation it reads: "This Infant created/strengthened the Heavens and the Earth."

It is established that the text in this form appeared in the above scene from the period of the Comnenes onwards and is identical with that of examples in Nerezi, Bachkovo, Milesevo, Sopo ani, Arile, Staro Nagorichino, Gra anica, Stani ene, De ani, Ohrid, Kremikovtsi, Poganovo, and others. The author puts forward the assumption that its origins are linked to the homiletic tradition of the feast of Presentation of Christ in the Temple. In conclusion, certain linguistic features are discussed, pointing to links of the inscription to the West-Bulgarian orthographic tradition.