

**Marius Babias**

## **EUROPE EXHIBITION DRAFT**

### **CENTRE CULTUREL SUISSE PARIS / ICR PARIS**

#### **New European cultural landscapes**

EU integration is leading to the articulation of a new interest in the art and culture of Eastern Europe in the context of globalization and identity politics. Some of the most interesting artistic works of recent years, both from the East and the West, deal with issues of identity politics – with the body, with gender, and with cultural status within social and transcultural parameters. There is a new move to discover and map the new European political and cultural landscape in its global political context.

#### **Representations of ‘Otherness’ and ‘Cultural Mixing’**

The main issue is how art and culture contribute to the creation of ‘Cultural Mixing’, liberated identities and options for action in view of future European self-definitions. The artistic works investigate and analyse the following fields:

- the politics of representation
- the production of acculturation and transculturality
- the concept of ethno-pluralism
- the codified Charter of the European Union in global context

#### **Beyond ‘Fertile Delay’**

The exhibition at Centre Culturel Suisse and ICR Paris attempts to initialize processes of cultural collaboration that will go beyond the duration of the exhibition. It aspires to establish programs for long-term collaboration with artistic and cultural scenes of “countries-in-transition” operating within the cultural settings of “fertile delay”, and to challenge representative cultural models and established market norms. The exhibition is interested in artistic positions as well as in non-institutional cultural initiatives, models of collectivity and organizational forms that all address the issue of the role of the public domain caught up in a dynamic of regulation and deregulation. This is a process of normalization that appears to be crucial to both mature Western democracies and post-1989 Eastern democracies to map the ‘New Europe’.

#### **Critical Europe**

“New Europe,” as we understand and address it in this exhibition, describes first and foremost the territorial integration of European states, regions, and cultural landscapes; but it is also, substantially, an identity political means of remapping and redefining more basic processes and connections. Now that the confrontation between the Eastern and Western blocs is over, we find ourselves in a period of transition characterized by a series of imbalances. The economic decline of whole regions, the unresolved problems of migration, and the militarization of the social sphere are accompanied by the reformulation of critical formats in art and culture. The idea of a “New Europe” is not simply a matter of economic and political integration;

above all, it is based on cultural definitions. The “New Europe” begins to define itself less as an economic community and more as a community of shared values and culture. European Union welcomed on May 1, 2004 ten new members (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia), the EU has grown to 27 members in 2007 (with admission of Romania and Bulgaria).

### **Liberated Identities**

While the political sphere formalizes the EU integration process as a geopolitical vision of a prospective greater Europe and forces norms on life and society (the new member states had to democratize their political systems on the Western model, accept international rules of competition, and integrate thousands of European Union laws into their national legislation), the field of culture—wherever it connects with political and social resistance movements—has the potential to bring forth a perspective that treats the process of European unification as an opportunity for creating a critical Europe. The purpose of a “critical Europe” is to investigate through art the foundations, prerequisites, and accompanying phenomena of this definition, and to identify the links between the cultural European dispositive and the underlying political phantasm for the viewing public. The aim is to capture the essence of the historical forces and the pressures of cultural ideology at work in the “New Europe,” and to merge them into a critical-artistic framework. One central question is, given the future possibilities for Europe to define itself, how can new cultures of mixing, liberated identities, and choices develop? The fine arts know no borders; they produce new policies of language and images and new models for thinking and looking at things. The process of European acculturation can hardly be described using the old monocausal or bipolar concepts. The description of the emerging pan-European relief is more successful if deterritorialized definitions are used, which accentuates the fact that the critical blueprint for a “New Europe” must be based on practices of dismantling borders and not practices of enclosure—even when the reality frequently appears quite different. The concept of “mixing” is important here, because it overwrites the old monocausal perceptions and construction principles of nationality, ethnicity, religion, and identity, and thereby allows new, “positive” approaches to the “Other” and the “different.” In his essay “Eulogy for the M<sup>ê</sup>lée” Jean-Luc Nancy put it in a nutshell: “Every culture is in itself ‘multicultural’, not only because there has always been a previous acculturation, and because there is no pure and simple origin (provenance), but at a deeper level, because the gesture of culture is itself a mixed gesture: it is to affront, confront, transform, divert, develop, recompose, combine, rechannel.”

### **The positive definition of Europe**

The “culture of mixing” describes a practice of new construction of discursive elements and the new definition of concepts that are fundamental to the European idea. This practice, which is diametrically opposed to the old monocausal perceptions of homogeneity (nationality, ethnicity, religion, and identity), is preceded by a process of purification. It is meant to throw out the ballast of cultural attributions that are often centuries old and conceptual determinations of Europeans’ perceived identities, before a “positive” definition of Europe can be made. In the field of culture, as soon as it is linked with political and social resistance, a new perspective

is able to arise in which the process of European unification can be seen as an opportunity for a critical design of Europe.

### **Artists CCS**

Renaud Auguste-Dormeuil (F)

Anetta Mona Chişa (SK) / Lucia Tkáčová (SK)

Marcelo Exposito (SP)

Laura Horelli (FIN)

Pravdo Ivanov (BG)

Dan Perjovschi (RO)

### **Project Space CCS**

Cetinje Portfolio

Marina Abramovic, Nevin Aladag, Halil Altindere, Maja Bajevic, Luceazar Boyadjiev, Danica Dakic, Braco Dimitrijevic, Ayse Erkmen, Jakup Ferri, Mona Hatoum, Edi Hila, IRWIN, Sanja Ivekovic, Sejla Kamberic, Gülsün Karamustafa, Vlado Martek, Aydan Murtezaoglu, Oliver Musovic, Dan Perjovschi, Marjetica Potrc, Anri Sala, Bülent Sangar, Sarkis, Erzen Shkololli, Nedko Solakov, Mladen Stilinovic, Rasa, Todosijevic, Jelena Tomasevici, Milica Tomic, Jalal Toufic

### **Display CCS**

Presentation of European initiatives, NGOs, etc.

### **Lecture and Film Programme CCS**

Nicoleta Esinencu (MD)

Hito Steyerl (D)

Bojana Pejic (YU)

Jasmila Zbanic (BOS)

Raluca Voinea (RO)

Katrin Klingan (A)

Ines Kappert (D)

### **Artists ICR Paris**

Daniel Knorr (D/RO)

Nita Mocanu (RO)

H.arta (RO)