

Sándor Hornyik
**The Surnaturalist Experiment.
 Tibor Csernus and Socialist Realism**

The surnaturalist experiments in painting at the end of the 1950s and first half of the 1960s seeped into the history of Hungarian art without significant reflection as a kind of overdue version of surrealism that quickly turned into kitsch. Surnaturalism thus fell into the no man's land between avant-garde and official art, while its aesthetic and ideological background was never given a thorough examination. As a student of Aurél Bernáth, the leading figure of surnaturalism, Tibor Csernus arrived to the surrealist deconstruction of socialist realism from a "bourgeois" version of socialist realism, a process which can be clearly traced in his most significant works from the period, such as *The Three Instructors* (1955), *Saint-Tropez* (1959) and *On the Reeds* (1965). Formalist, Marxist aesthetics offer a good starting point in the interpretation of these works, especially the ideological analysis of the social-historical foundations of these aesthetics, but the key to a more complete interpretation of the paintings may lie in the post-formalist critique that experimented with a synthesis of the history of ideas and formalism. From the perspective of the ideas of Georges Bataille, Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois, we can regard the surnaturalist works of Csernus as painterly critiques of rational, enlightened modernism and materialized socialism.

Keywords: surnaturalism, socialist realism, surrealism, Marxist aesthetics, formalism, critique of ideology, post-formalism

Gábor András
**A Poisonous Weed in the Plains of Art. Old and New Abstraction
 in Hungary between 1957 and 1968**

The essay discusses the period of abstract art in Hungary between 1958 and 1968, examining the subject from two points of view. First it attempts to introduce the (contemporaneous) "contemporary viewpoint". This presents the possibility of draw-

ing distinctions between various phenomena that were blurred together by the cultural politics of the day and in the second public sphere (in other words in the criticism, which rested on official ideology, and in the intellectual milieu of the avant-garde and counter-culture), as well as in the later Modernist reception. The methodology for this involves drawing a distinction between "old" and "new" abstraction, the former referring to works that were tied to and continued the tradition of the avant-garde of the thirties and forties, and the latter referring to works that were connected with the contemporary art of the period in question. The second of the two is examined in light of changes that occurred in contemporaneous reception and in general outlines of cultural policies – on the basis of books and other publications on theoretical questions that were available to the wider public – to see what ideological and aesthetic modifications took place in the evaluation of abstraction. In the context of the Cold War and the easing of the political regime, as well as the dynamics of the reforms implemented in Hungary (including a new system of economic management), 1965 is regarded as an inner milestone, a breakthrough, the beginning of a period in which abstract art came to be accepted as part of the so-called "tolerated" category. Finally, the essay offers a brief survey of the various expressions of old and new abstraction in Hungary ("bio-romanticism", constructive and post-surrealist non-figural art, abstract expressionism, lyrical abstraction, calligraphy, gesture painting, new geometry, concrete art) and attempts to point to pivotal moments in certain oeuvres, emphasising their connection to contemporaneous modern art.

Keywords: old and new abstraction, contemporary viewpoint, discourse analysis, cultural politics during the Cold War, 1965: "year of change" (in the official aesthetics and cultural policies of the Sixties)

Edit András

From the Coffee Grinder to Sputnik. The Culture of Objects and Women in the Service of Ideology

The essay endeavours to serve as a background for further research on Hungarian pop art and the artistic representation of societal gender roles by examining socialist consumption and the culture of objects and the discourse concerning the socialist woman, not from the perspective of economics or the history of consumption, but from the point of view of cultural history. It focuses on the change of strategy during the Cold War, which from the side of the West signified the use of soft power and a modification of socialist modernization in the East, in so far as emphasis was shifted from aggressive armament and the conquest of space to everyday prosperity and consumption. The narrower segment under examination is the project in the Sixties that addressed the modernization of the kitchen and the woman of the house, a project which extended to the manufacturing of household appliances aimed at facilitating domestic chores faced by women who also had full time jobs,

the introduction of a network of self-service businesses, the expansion of the use of canned food, as well as hygiene, environmental culture and the cultivation of taste. According to the imagery and the texts found in contemporaneous publications, posters and women's magazines, it was not socialist modernism and the official policy of emancipation that stood against the inherited mentality of the masses as a hindering factor, although this is what contemporary official discourse attempted to imply. This mode of discourse, the style in which the modernization of the household and the housewife and the expansion of consumption was communicated through pictures, advertisements and objects conserved old patriarchal topoi in opposition to the official political discourse. Indeed these topoi bore strong resemblance to the topoi prevalent in the capitalist world, which represented a rival ideological construction that communism sought to surpass, and the manner of their implementation was very similar to that used during in the Soviet Union during the Khrushchev years, a period which showed signs of easing with regards to the dictatorial regime.

Keywords: lifestyle, consumption, gender representation, kitsch, household, Cold War, hygiene, Khrushchev, Kádár era, "kitchen debate", domestic chores of a married woman who otherwise has a full-time job, history of mentality, modernization, Nixon, pop art, societal gender roles, culture of objects, scientific-technical revolution, socialist utopia

György Jerovetz

The Future in the Present: The Representation of "Up-to-Dateness" in the Visual Culture of the 1960s

The essay analyses a few of Gábor Papp's posters and the circular structure of the Hotel Budapest designed by György Szrogh from the point of view of how the contemporaneous notion of "up-to-dateness" appears in the evolution of these works. Furthermore it examines the meaning of "up-to-dateness" and introduces the possible references of the works. In the case of the Hotel Budapest it dwells on the construction process as well as its reception in the press.

Keywords: visual culture, case study, up-to-dateness, history of reception, history of ideology

Erzsébet Tátai

"From the Square to the Nude" – Art Instruction in the Sixties

This essay addresses art instruction at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts between the 1956 Revolution and 1971 (the year in which the college obtained the rank of university). The research, which is based primarily on records of meetings of the board of directors and interviews with artists, was intended to survey the content of instruction, the structure of courses offered, and the methods of instruction used at the institute, taking into consideration the ways in which state controlled ideology shaped artist training and examining the changes which took place over the course

of these years. Due to the greater or lesser resistance to this ideology on the part of the teachers (and students), the training of socialist realist artists on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist world view was realized in a somewhat haphazard way. The official ideology was represented primarily by instructors of "Marxist" subjects, although the government wished to make the entire curriculum subordinate to ideology. In the time of modernism and neo-avant-garde the institution, and the entire country, was closed off from the art of the developed (Democratic, Western) world. Thus the work of the – far from homogenous – teaching staff resulted in a "splotchy realism". As for the content of instruction, little change took place over the course of the years, although the easing of the socialist dictatorship manifested itself in artist training as well: primarily in the decrease of subjects and a reduction of emphasis on ideological courses. This only signified the loosening of instruction and discipline, however; it did not indicate an emergence of liberalism or the development of creativity, nor did it imply inspiration or thorough, varied approaches to the transmission of knowledge.

Keywords: Academy of Fine Arts, ideology, realism, art instruction, entrance examination, instruction, courses, methods, diploma