

East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe/ Edited by IRWIN.—London, England: Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, dist. by MIT Press, June 2006.—500 p.: ill.—ISBN 1-84638-005-7: \$45.00 (pa.).



This excellent volume discusses twentieth-century Eastern European art, covering Russia to the east and East Germany to the west, Albania to the south and Estonia to the north. It is edited by IRWIN, a conceptual art group founded in 1983 in Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia. The first part of the study, about 100 pages, includes small reproductions of paintings, sculptures, conceptual works, urban interventions, performance works, photographs, and video stills. The works are arranged chronologically from the 1920s to 2005 and include examples from a variety of geographic regions. The second part, approximately 200 pages, provides short historic and biographical narratives for twentieth-century artists, artists' collectives, and movements. The third part, about 150 pages, includes essays and interviews by Eastern European arts and culture critics.

The intent of this ambitious volume is to start reconstructing the contemporary art histories of Eastern Europe on their own terms, while at the same time situating the region's artistic production within the larger international context. The volume aims to lay the groundwork for

critical practice that refutes post-communist, totalizing, national identities, and goes beyond Western art historic perspectives about East European art. The essays deal with specific themes. They vary in expository style, with some contributors emphasizing chronologies and historic overviews and others analyzing specific modes of production. Evaluative essays are included, as well as works-in-progress, that update a scholar's long-term, ongoing academic research. Overall, this volume succeeds in introducing the reader to cross-regional and East / West artistic and critical connections and parallels that go beyond local and national historic contexts. The volume includes brief biographies of contributors; an index; and a conceptual, two-dimensional map that presents the interrelationships between artists and issues—political and aesthetic—across geographic regions.

This publication has several antecedents. Some of the featured essays come out of collaborations for the 2001 special issue of the *New Moment* art magazine, published in Slovenia. A retrospective exhibition related to this volume took place in 2005 at the Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum in Hagen, Germany. The publication itself is an extended imprint based on *Afterall* journal, which is dedicated to discussing the impact of contemporary arts on social, cultural, and political milieus.

This is an excellent volume for a large academic library with collections covering both the disciplines of art and contemporary European and East European cultures.

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