

Alterglobalizing NET: Contacts and Exchanges with the Global South

The object of research in the project "Alterglobalizing NET: Contacts and Exchanges with the Global South" is the international exchange of artistic ideas and contacts - NET - initiated in 1971 by Jarosław Kozłowski and Andrzej Kostołowski. The aim of the project is to reconstruct artistic relations established within NET, focusing on contacts with artistic communities in South and Central America and on the archives collected there.

The project was created as a response to Jarosław Kozłowski's donation of the NET archive to the city of Poznań in 2022, which resulted in the director of the Arsenal City Gallery in Poznań, Marek Wasilewski, asking for substantive support from the Center for Research on Central and Eastern European Art and the Legacy of Piotr Piotrowski, whose director is Magdalena Radomska.

Behind the decision to focus the research on these two geopolitical areas - Eastern Europe and the Global South - is the need to critically rethink the dominant ways of understanding and describing the art created in these regions, also projected onto the research on NET conducted so far. This is because the narratives concerning these activities have been constructed mainly from a Western position. The project aims to reevaluate the mediated perception of contacts between marginalized regions peripheral to Western art centers - in this case Eastern Europe and the Global South - which has been dominant in the tradition of Western art history. The point of departure of such a wide-ranging study of NET is the concept of "alterglobalist art history" proposed by Piotr Piotrowski, outlined in his posthumously published book "A Global Approach to the Art of Eastern Europe". The idea is to examine the networks of exchange between the global artistic periphery without the mediation of the institutions of Western art history, which, from the perspective of artists and institutions of the Global South, constitutes a form of problematic appropriation. This approach will also be extended to consideration of the material and political conditions of artists working in both regions. It can be said that we perceive NET's contacts as dependent on political geography, whereby the distance from Buenos Aires to Paris was much greater (due to economic reasons as well as political procedures) than from Paris to Buenos Aires.

The premise of the project is to examine the archive in terms of NET's collaborations with artists from the Global South, in order to develop a complete list of objects that are part of the archive and those that were sent as part of the exchange and reconstruction of art events - exhibitions, and to determine what works were exhibited during these events, in what configuration they were displayed and what their resonance was in South America and Poznań. On the basis of the research, we plan both to describe the structure of the exchange network itself: its internal relations and external conditions, and to establish its actual artistic and political effects on artists operating in different artistic and geopolitical contexts.

In order to achieve the objectives of the project, we plan research stays in countries with which NET has had lively and partially documented artistic exchanges. These are destinations proposed as a result of a series of conversations with Jarosław Kozłowski and as attempts to partially reconstruct the dynamics of NET's contacts with artists and critics from the Global South. An important task will be to reach out to artists, researchers and curators who were connected with NET directly or indirectly - through research interests. These encounters will not only serve as fact-checkers, but will also constitute an attempt to reconstruct the narratives of collaboration constructed by this community both in the 1970s and those emerging in response to Western researchers' attempt to monopolize global research.

The research work we undertake will not be limited solely to the identification and analysis of past phenomena, but will also be directed at reconstructing NET's existing contacts with the Global South and establishing relationships and cooperation with other institutions and archives whose goals and activity profiles coincide both with those guiding our research and those formulated within NET. This way of conducting research on archival materials and documents comes close to the concept of an *active archive* developed by György Galántai. It assumes that activities in the field of archives are not only about collecting materials, as in traditional archival practices, but also about building - and, in the case of the proposed project, also rebuilding - a network of relationships that has generative potential.