

## The place of Modernism in Central European art

Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius

Review of:

Discussion about Matthew Rampley, 'Networks, horizons, centres and hierarchies: on the challenges of writing on modernism in Central Europe', special issue of *Umění: Journal of The Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences*, 69:2, 2021, edited by Steven Mansbach, pp. 142-215, 19 col. plates and 6 b. & w. illus., 99 CZK, ISSN 00495123; 18046509 (online).\*

Just before the appearance of his seminal *Art in the Shadow of Yalta* in English, the Polish art historian Piotr Piotrowski summed up his thoughts on writing about modern art in East Central Europe in the article 'On the spatial turn, or horizontal art history'. He published it in the leading Czech art-historical journal *Umění* in 2008. Piotrowski had grappled with the issue for a long time, trying to formulate an approach which would allow for negotiating both the pitfalls of western art history marginalising the peripheries, as well as the conceptual framework offered by postcolonial theory, the latter, he argued, ill-fitting the region, too. What he proposed in *Umění* was the first theoretical outline of his alternative art history project, devised specifically for East Central Europe. His text has been widely used, its claims interpreted creatively both by scholars within the region and far beyond. Piotrowski himself kept revisiting his ideas until his early death in 2015, continuously testing the ways of expanding horizons, multiplying centres and analysing East Central European art from the global rather than the 'western European' perspective.<sup>1</sup> A new book *Horizontal Art History and Beyond* is due to appear with Routledge in just a few months, written by an international team of scholars 'who acknowledge the importance of the concept, share its basic assumptions, and are aware both of its advantages and limitations'. It is edited by Piotrowski's former students, now professors themselves, Agata Jakubowska and Magdalena Radomska.<sup>2</sup>

\* The Editor of *Umění*, Pavla Machalíková, has kindly agreed to make this issue of the journal available to readers of this review. It may be downloaded by clicking [here](#) (7 Mb file). It is not normally available online and would need a subscription for regular access.

<sup>1</sup> Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989*, transl. by Anna Brzyski, London: Reakcion, 2009; Piotr Piotrowski, 'On the spatial turn, or horizontal art history', *Umění* 56: 5, 2008, 378-83; Piotr Piotrowski, 'Od globalnej do alterglobalistycznej teorii sztuki', in *Globalne ujęcie sztuki Europy Wschodniej*, Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 2016, 31-56.

<sup>2</sup> Agata Jakubowska and Magdalena Radomska, eds, *Horizontal Art History and Beyond: Revising Peripheral Critical Practices*, New York: Routledge, 2022 (forthcoming).

Yet another discussion about horizontal art history has recently taken place, and very appropriately so, on the pages of the same journal which had published Piotrowski's manifesto. It was initiated by British scholar Matthew Rampley who submitted to *Umění* a provocative article 'Networks, horizons, centres and hierarchies: On the challenges of writing on modernism in Central Europe'.<sup>3</sup> This lengthy text provides a complex re-examination of Piotrowski's concept, assessing both the aims and impact of horizontal art history, as well proposing a new set of insights on methods, practices and resonance of studies on modern art of the region, reduced however to Central Europe. The journal's editor Pavla Machalíková invited several art historians to respond to Rampley's arguments and suggestions, which resulted in devoting the whole issue to the debate. Steven Mansbach, the author of the pioneering book on modern art in Eastern Europe, accepted the role of a guest editor of the issue.<sup>4</sup> The debate gathered indeed a stellar line-up of contributors from many countries, including three art historians from the region, two from the 'East Central European diaspora' in the West, as well as five scholars from Britain and America.

Whether belligerent or reflexive, whether conflicting or converging on the role of centres and peripheries in remapping modern art in Europe, these voices constitute a prime historiographical exchange, conducted in a dialogical manner, with many references to recent theories, as well as to case studies, often accompanied by illustrations. This text is written following an invitation from Richard Woodfield, editor of *The Journal of Art Historiography*, always keen to give space to the region. My contribution cannot give full justice to the richness and diversity of thoughts assembled by *Umění*, but it looks at affinities and controversies, taking many turns, and circling around some of the ideas proposed during the debate. It reflects at the end on the horizontality metaphor and on Piotrowski's commitment to engaged art history.

## The Debate

The intricate set of arguments outlined by Matthew Rampley, who is currently based at the Masaryk University in Brno, stem both from his profound expertise in art historiography, including that generated by the region, as well as from his unique experience in holding professorships in art history both in Britain and in the Czech Republic.<sup>5</sup> The first gives him a thorough knowledge of directions, tendencies and obstacles of art histories in the area, the second - a rare double-angled insight into the increasingly more competitive world of international research projects and

<sup>3</sup> Mathew Rampley, 'Networks, horizons, centres and hierarchies: On the challenges of writing on modernism in Central Europe' *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 145-62.

<sup>4</sup> Steven A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890-1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Steven A. Mansbach, 'Methodological frameworks for a defiant region', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 143-44.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Rampley, Thierry Lenain, Hubert Locher, Andrea Pinotti, Charlotte Schoell-Glass, and C.J.M. (Kitty) Zijlmans, eds, *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012. He is currently leading the European Research Council project *Continuity and Rupture in the Art and Architecture in Central Europe 1918 -1939*.

publishing in the anglophone art history sector. Risking a gross simplification of his wide-ranging polemics, Rampley's main points are four.

One, horizontal art history did not bring a quantifiable change in the hierarchical world of art history vis-a-vis East Central European modernism. As he wrote 'the geography of art [Piotrowski] critiqued remains broadly the same as before. Research on the modernist practices of Prague, Budapest or Belgrade, for example, is still mostly left to scholars based in the countries concerned; major international museums and galleries in Western Europe and North America seldom stage exhibitions of the art of East-Central Europe, and few have examples in their collections'.<sup>6</sup>

Two, there are structural inconsistencies in the concept of horizontal art history which, as he argues, tries to 'overcome hierarchy by inverting its terms', bypassing the possibility that 'the view from the margin may be just as prone to ideological blindness as the centre.'<sup>7</sup>

Three, 'A more promising alternative [to horizontal art history] is the related idea of *entangled* [art] history', which, free both from 'the *struggle* for mutual recognition' and from ethnocentric partialities, examines the ways in which 'transfers and entanglements' between the nations are 'mutually constitutive of their identities.'<sup>8</sup> This proposal is accompanied by a warning though that even that model might not be free of ideological bias.<sup>9</sup>

Four, *ergo*, the remedy should be sought in the sphere of praxis rather than theory. 'Art historians should focus less on the *productivist* question of the potential for devising new art historical frameworks and methods and attend more to the task of identifying audiences and readerships and engaging productively with their horizons and expectations.'<sup>10</sup>

It has to be stressed at the beginning that all authors unanimously confirmed the inspirational value of Rampley's text. As conceded by Mansbach in the introduction, it provokes 'to reconsider, reconfigure, and revitalize studies of the visual culture of the region'.<sup>11</sup> But disagreements were also plenty. Not unexpectedly, the region's notoriously ill-defined name and geography activated controversies and uncertainties as to its boundaries. Scaled down in Rampley's title to 'Central Europe' and described as 'territories ... between Germany and Russia', it was restored in the first paragraphs of the text to 'East Central Europe' ... 'for the sake of convenience', with Zagreb and Belgrade called upon occasionally in the discussion.<sup>12</sup> Jeremy Howard, from the University of St Andrews, objected to the term 'East Central Europe' as 'a stultifying sociopolitical misnomer', as well as to the removal of the Balkan peninsula from the debate, and hence to the limitation of the discussion about the marginalised modernism in Europe to a 'Greater Visegrád

<sup>6</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 145.

<sup>7</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 154.

<sup>8</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 154.

<sup>9</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 155.

<sup>10</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 156.

<sup>11</sup> Mansbach, 'Methodological frameworks', 143.

<sup>12</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 145.

Group box'.<sup>13</sup> The issues of terminology as well as geography and space reappeared in many texts, the latter getting more attention from Milena Bartlova of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. Her nuanced response included the much-needed outline of the origins of critical geography, which had formed the basis for Piotrowski's horizontal art history, as well as presented a fabulous range of maps of *Střední Evropa* from school atlases published in Czechoslovakia and Austria between 1908 and 1959.<sup>14</sup> In themselves, they constitute a parallel visual essay awaiting ekphrasis.

What really stirred the debate, however, was Rampley's second point. While a number of the discussants, departing from various theoretical positions, acknowledged that the concept of horizontal art history does not alter the principle of hierarchical thinking, there was no unanimous rejection of Piotrowski's idea either. On the contrary, its defence, either explicit or implicit, often cautious, underscores many of the texts. The most forward vindication of the concept of horizontality and its legacy came from Marie Rakušanová from the Charles University in Prague, who addressed head-on the issue of inversion, the main target of Rampley's scrutiny. She pointed out to his possible misreading of some of Piotrowski's statements which led to the reduction of the horizontal art history project to a simple exchange of positions on the east/west axis, driven by the aim to 'provincialize the centre'. 'The horizontal paradigm', as she argued quoting from Piotrowski's texts, does not aim to abolish 'western' art history, but to localise it, to name it as 'western', and place it, 'side by side with other art historical narratives'. Just as feminist art history does not attempt to position female artists on the pedestals replacing male geniuses, she continued, so Piotrowski's aim was not to add to, or invert, the canon, but to expand and realign the field.<sup>15</sup> The issue of inversion was also addressed by the aforementioned Magda Radomska who, drawing from Marx and reflecting on Piotrowski's comparison between peripheries and proletariat, compared the assault on the hegemony of the centre to the revolutionary act, to 'a trigger to set binaries in dialectical motion'.<sup>16</sup> Beáta Hock, based at GWZO in Leipzig, even if agreeing that inequality 'cannot be simply thought away by the force of mental magic', contextualised Piotrowski's project within a wider process of the renewal of the discipline of art history, including its social, post-colonial and feminist critique.<sup>17</sup> Significantly, the book which she recently co-edited with Anu Allas, *Globalising East European Art Histories: Past and Present*, had grown from the last conference organised by Piotrowski at the Labyrinth Gallery in the Polish city of Lublin in 2014, adopting (and adapting) the

<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Howard, 'MINCE words: For and against writing on modernism IN Central Europe', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 188-94, esp. 189.

<sup>14</sup> Milena Bartlova, 'From which vantage points does an art historian look? The history of Central European art and the post-colonial impulse', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 175-83.

<sup>15</sup> Marie Rakušanová, 'Writing on the history of modern art: From particularism to a new universalism', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 168-74, esp. 168, 170.

<sup>16</sup> Magdalena Radomska, 'What isn't orthodox horizontal art history?', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 184-87, esp. 185.

<sup>17</sup> Beáta Hock, 'Is there life after canonical certainties?', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 163-167.

concept of horizontal art history as its *modus operandi*.<sup>18</sup> Éva Forgács, from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, commented instead on the ephemerality of 'artistic centres [which] have emerged and submerged throughout history', moving from Paris, to Berlin and Munich, and to Budapest, providing also an overview of the changes of the geographic and cultural concepts of Central Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Rampléy's third point on privileging entangled art history, focused on transfers and interdependencies rather than on the centrality of nations, was taken on board by several contributors. Claire Farago elaborated on Rampléy's arguments in relationship to her research on theorising cultural interaction without imposing ethnocentric categories.<sup>20</sup> This issue was also raised by Raino Isto, editor-in-chief of *ARTMargins Online*, the journal at the forefront of research on modern art in East Central Europe. He suggested 'attention to the "translocal"', the term applied in Maja and Reuben Fowkes' research, which 'opposed to just the inter- or transnational, ... privileges the specificities of situated knowledge.'<sup>21</sup> It is Rakušanová again, who emphasised the affinity of entangled history with the concepts of transnationality as well as that of horizontality, all of them emerging within the debates on alternative histories, as well as aiming to target rather than embrace nationalist biases.<sup>22</sup> At the time of writing this text, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, when the rights for national self-determination are being ruthlessly violated within Europe, it is difficult not to reflect again on the value invested in national concerns, re-appreciating perhaps the concept of transnationalism which not only is particularly suitable for the discussion about the Ukrainian-Russian heritage and that of (East Central) Europe as a whole, but also, unlike the term 'entangled', does not purposefully obliterate the particle 'nation' from the historiographical lexicon.

Finally, point four of Rampléy's arguments, focusing on the sphere of praxis rather than concepts under the umbrella of the 'What is to be done?' question, stirred the debate even further. The much-discussed issue of the inadequacy of stylistic labels derived from 'western' discourses, as well as the call for more effective transnational/entangled art histories, which require professional expertise and proficiency in more than one East Central European language, were carefully considered by Rakušanová and Forgács. The claim that collaborative research within the region tends to boil down to the presentation of national narratives running in parallel without addressing the 'relationship *between them*', was tacitly accepted by many, but provoked Timothy O. Benson, the curator of the groundbreaking exhibition *Central European Avant-Gardes* (LACMA 2002), which had indeed been targeted directly by Rampléy's critique. Benson pointed out that the

<sup>18</sup> Beáta Hock and Anu Allas, eds, *Globalising East European Art Histories: Past and Present*, London and New York: Routledge, 2018. *Eastern European Art Seen from Global Perspectives: Past and Present*, conference, Lublin, Galeria Labirynt, 24-27 October 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Éva Forgács, 'Notes on Matthew Rampléy's "Networks, horizons, centres and hierarchies: on the challenges of writing on modernism in Central Europe', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 209-15.

<sup>20</sup> Claire Farago, 'A very different kind of national art history: Looking to the future from the past', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 198-202, esp. 199.

<sup>21</sup> Raino Isto, 'Towards a weakened history of modernisms', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 195-98, esp. 195.

<sup>22</sup> Rakušanová, 'Writing on the history of modern art', 170.

exhibition not only presented a wide 'array of vanguard works largely unknown in the U.S.', avoiding national schools, but several of the catalogue contributions explored, in the 'horizontal' manner, the interaction between avant-garde groups, migration, and nomadic *modus operandi* as specific both for the region and for the 'avant-garde itself'.<sup>23</sup> The significance of exhibitions as the most effective tools in realigning the field of the present was acknowledged also by Forgács, while Howard brought attention to the undeniable importance of university courses focusing on art in Eastern Europe, such as those taught at the Art History Department at the University of St Andrews.<sup>24</sup>

Rampley's brief comment on moving the discussion from the issues of form to that of extra-aesthetic concerns, focusing on 'landscape, technology, or gender', inspired perhaps the most intriguing ideas, situated on the boundaries of methodology and practice, even if not accompanied by examples. Howard proposed a model of art history which, as he argued, is more suited to the analysis of 'actual artwork[s]'. He named it 'tumbleweed art history', providing its poetic albeit ambiguous description. 'For tumbleweed is a diaspora whose cycles of existence depend on an anatomical system developed for dispersal. Let it be the natural, wind-blown, art history plant which spawns new life through detachment from roots and opportunistic adaptation to disparate environments. Let tumbleweed art history uproot and disrupt old entanglements.'<sup>25</sup> Isto, on the other hand, came up with an interesting and refreshing counter-proposal. It seems to have tuned in with Rampley's call to 'work with hierarchies rather than going *against* them, and it was inspired by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's juxtaposition of 'weak' and 'strong' theories, which she adapted from the domain of psychology.<sup>26</sup> Isto categorised the struggle of East Central European scholars against the charges of 'belatedness' and 'derivativeness' as an instance of application of the 'strong theory', which aims 'to reveal the hidden workings of an ideology' and is underpinned by a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' and 'paranoid readings'. As he suggested, the framework of a 'weak theory', privileging 'reparative readings' and 'aiming to discover joy, pleasure, escape, and hope in the objects, people, and stories that give our lives meaning', would open up the drive towards 'microhistories' of multiple modernisms which do not aim to universalise the field.<sup>27</sup> In my view, such an approach has already been applied by a plethora of authors and curators, both from outside and within the region, who adopted narratives that do not set East Central European art and its historiography apart, as entities in their own right, indelibly marked by marginalisation and hence in need for empowerment. I would also contend that taking the route of a translocal inquiry rather than confrontation does not necessarily have to invalidate the principle of horizontality, providing that the

<sup>23</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 156; Timothy O. Benson, 'Writing about and exhibiting Central European modernism in North America then and now', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 203-08, esp. 205.

<sup>24</sup> Forgács, 'Notes', 214; Howard, 'MINCE words', 193-94.

<sup>25</sup> Howard, 'MINCE words', 191-92.

<sup>26</sup> Rampley, 'Networks', 158-59; Isto, 'Towards a weakened history of modernisms', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 196-97; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003

<sup>27</sup> Isto, 'Towards a weakened history of modernisms', *Umění* 69:2, 2021, 196-97.

assortment of the 'meaningful stories' is not reduced to the discovery of pleasure and joy, but it includes also engagement with issues relevant for our time, both from macro- and micro- perspectives. Suffice to think about texts by Piotrowski himself, just to choose some chapters in his *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, or, recently, *Art and Climate Change* by Maja and Reuben Fowkes, forthcoming with Thames and Hudson in June 2022.<sup>28</sup> Is it then the abandonment of the struggle for 'consecration', to use Piotrowski's sarcastic phrase from his *Umění* article, which might facilitate the ways of speaking 'in compelling ways' to distracted audiences, as advocated by Rampley? Are we on the same boat?

### **Much has been done**

There is one issue which has not been really questioned by the contributors, namely Rampley's opening assertion that the aims of horizontal art history 'are far from resolved', as measured by publications about East Central European art, exhibitions and collections of major museums. This is surprising, considering that the idea of horizontality is being widely discussed, both within and outside the region. Moreover, it is also applied in most recent publications which begin to focus, emphatically, on exchange between East Central Europe with other cultural arenas, such as that of the Ottoman Empire, or South America, bypassing or at least minimising the so far obligatory references to western categories.<sup>29</sup> Of course, we want more but, contrary to Rampley's verdict, I am inclined to say that much has been done already, both in academia and the museum world, and not solely in response to Piotrowski's call of 2008.

Clearly, it all depends on how long back one is prepared to look. It is helpful to realise that the imaginary land of Slaka, its art reducible to socialist realism and folk performance, which had been conjured up by the acclaimed British novelist Malcolm Bradbury, is gone, full stop.<sup>30</sup> Of course, such a change was facilitated by the unprecedented rise of interest in East Central Europe as a whole after the Fall of the Wall. This applied also to art and art history, and I do not need to mention the names of scholars of many generations, from within and without the region, some of them contributing to this issue of *Umění*, or referred to in its prolific footnotes. Neither do I have to make a list of the prestigious publishers which brought out a very diverse range of books on East Central European art as well theory, nor yet another list of the key museums, which staged major exhibitions, either of art in the

<sup>28</sup> Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, London: Reaktion, 2012; Maja and Reuben Fowkes, *Art and Climate Change*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2022 (forthcoming).

<sup>29</sup> Tomasz Grusiecki, 'Uprooting origins: Polish-Lithuanian art and the challenge of pluralism', and Katarzyna Cytlak 'Transculturation, cultural transfer, and the colonial matrix of power on the Cold War margins: East European art seen from Latin America', both in Hock and Allas, *Globalizing East European Art Histories*, 25-38 and 162-174, respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Malcom Bradbury, *Rates of Exchange*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1983; Malcom Bradbury, *Why Come to Slaka?*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1986. On Slaka as a fictitious Eastern European country, see Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, *Imaging and Mapping Eastern Europe: Sarmatia Europea to Post-Communist Bloc*, New York and London: Routledge, 2021, 1-11.

region, or of individual artists, to mention only LACMA and MoMA, Tate and Centre Pompidou. Nor should I forget about dedicated journals as well as the increasing number of articles on East Central European art published in major periodicals, art historical or other; about the new university courses, and a plethora of projects, funded by mighty grant-giving bodies, including the one led currently by Rampley under the aegis of the European Research Council. True, we want more art works from East Central Europe in collections of the major museums, both West and East to be precise, but this raises yet another issue. The increased mobility of artists today, who work in more than one country, as well as on more than one continent, puts at least a question mark over the old regional identifications.<sup>31</sup>

At the end I want to reflect on Piotrowski's term 'horizontal art history' which, juxtaposed to the centralised 'vertical art history', makes one of the powerful metaphors introduced to the language of the discipline. As argued by Lakoff and Johnson long time ago, and recently by Julia Herrmann, metaphors do not rightfully belong just to the domain of literature and rhetoric, but they constitute an indispensable part of everyday language as well as academic discourse, art history included.<sup>32</sup> Their function is to make concepts and theories more understandable, rather than merely aiming to embellish them; they are not supplements or substitutes, but an inevitable process of human thought and reasoning. Their inherent flexibility makes them particularly suitable within the domain of humanities. Rising as it was within the framework of literary studies and linguistic turn, it was postcolonial theory which has been particularly rich in figures of speech, such as 'othering', 'hybridity', 'strategic essentialism', or 'epistemic violence'. Adopted by a range of disciplines, they kept offering the much needed, even seductive, tools for explaining the relations of power. Piotrowski's 'horizontal art history', also targeting western hegemony, might seem like an extension of the postcolonial lexicon, but it was consciously formed within the intellectual agenda of the spatial turn, which focused critical attention on space rather than language. Piotrowski repeatedly stressed that this is one of the major reasons for which critical geography fits better the area of visual art studies, and especially those focused on East Central Europe as being marginalised both by the 'vertical' western art history and by postcolonial theory.<sup>33</sup> Piotrowski's metaphor of 'horizontal art history' merges the practices of art history with the horizontal rather than vertical spatial orientation. It brings up a vision of the terrain of art as a wide-open space to be traversed in every direction, rather than being overseen and overshadowed by an erect abode of the hegemonic art historical discourses. It implies the view from below, it presupposes walking, and it includes a promise of face-to-face encounters

<sup>31</sup> Maja and Reuben Fowkes, *Central and Eastern European Art Since 1950*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2020, 204.

<sup>32</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980 Julia B. Herrmann, *Metaphor in Academic Discourse: Linguistic Forms, Conceptual Structures, Communicative Functions and Cognitive Representations*, Utrecht: LOT, 2013. On metaphors in art history, see Carl R. Hausman, 'Figurative language in art history', in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, eds. *The Language of Art History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 101-28.

<sup>33</sup> Piotrowski, 'On the spatial turn', 381; Piotrowski, 'Od globalnej do alterglobalistycznej historii sztuki', 40-41.

and conversations. It values equality and aims to avoid partiality and blindness, or the struggle for 'consecration' which comes with verticality and elevation.

This brings me to my last point, namely, the political edge of horizontal art history, as defined and practised by Piotrowski. For him, brought up in communist Poland, strategies of resistance were part and parcel of everyday life and his academic endeavours. As noted by Radomska, Rakušanová, Benson and other contributors to *Umění*, his horizontal art history, as much as his project of the critical museum, both marked by engagement with issues relevant for our time, fit the ethos of decoloniality and intersectionality.<sup>34</sup> This point could not be stressed strongly enough. One of the last texts by Piotrowski, a chapter in the book on which he had been working right until his death and which was published posthumously in 2016, imbues his project of horizontal art history with an 'alter-globalist' agenda of solidarity and resistance against economic globalisation, driven to promote civil liberties, as well as the search for exchange and transfers between far-flung cultural arenas of the globe, including that of East Central Europe.<sup>35</sup> Both his horizontal art history and the critical museum project had been devised for East Central Europe, but their immersion in the socio-political realm made them widely heard, and widely discussed, outside the region, connecting the inner world of academia and museums with the world outside. The *Umění* debate, stimulated by Rampley's provocative article, both contributed to clarifying and rethinking the aims of horizontal art history, as well as to raising a plethora of other pertinent issues to ruminate upon, missed in this review.

**Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius** teaches art history at Birkbeck College, University of London. She was Curator and Deputy Director of The National Museum in Warsaw, as well as Guest Professor at the Humboldt University Berlin. Her publications include *Borders in Art: Revisiting Kunstgeographie* (Polish Academy 2000); *National Museum in Warsaw Guide: Galleries and Study Collections* (National Museum in Warsaw 2001); *Kantor was Here: Tadeusz Kantor in Great Britain* (Black Dog 2011, with Natalia Zarzecka), *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum* (Ashgate 2015, with Piotr Piotrowski); *Imaging and Mapping Eastern Europe: Sarmatia Europea to the Communist Bloc* (Routledge 2021).

k.murawska-muthesius@bbk.ac.uk



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

<sup>34</sup> Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski, eds, *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Piotrowski, 'Od globalnej do alterglobalistycznej historii sztuki', 44-51.