

There is a Crack in the Museum of History. Is That How the Future Gets in?

FORMER WEST Public Editorial Meeting  
TRANZIT.HU Conference

FUGA Budapest Center of Architecture  
Marcel Breuer Hall  
1052 Budapest, Petőfi Sándor u. 5

Program

**Session 1**

**Toward the Worst of All Possible Pasts?**  
**Wednesday May 13, 2015, 10:00–17:45**

What was foreshadowed with the spectacular failure of the Arab Spring has become fully transparent with the Ukrainian crisis and alleged return of the Cold War. Designed as the last progressive movement in what political scientist Francis Fukuyama once described as “the museum of history,” the process of the so-called transition to democracy, generated by the collapse of communism, has finally come to a standstill. Today, its whole teleological edifice lies in ruin. Are democracy and capitalism with a human face just other dreamworlds of modernity’s short afterlife, now revealing themselves to be nightmares from which we are not able to wake up? How might we sustain hope in a world that desperately struggles to prevent the return of the worst of all possible pasts?

9:30–10:00

Registration

10:00–10:15

Welcome: Dóra Hegyi, director, tranzit.hu Budapest

Introduction – Former West: Maria Hlavajova, director, BAK Utrecht

10:15–10:45

Introduction: **Boris Buden** (writer, cultural critic, translator, Berlin)

10:45–11:15

Presentation: **G. M. Tamás** (political philosopher, writer, Budapest)

11:15–11:45

Coffee break

11:45–12:15

Lecture-performance: **Ferenc Gróf** (artist, Paris)

12:15–13:00

Response: **Anna Wessely** (art historian, sociologist, Budapest)

Followed by audience discussion

13:00–14:30

Lunch break

14:30–15:00

Presentation: **Jodi Dean** (writer, researcher, Geneva/New York)

15:00–15:30

Presentation: **Rastko Močnik** (sociologist, literary theorist, translator, activist, Ljubljana)

15:30–16:00

Coffee break

16:00–17:45

Response: **Andrew Ryder** (writer, journalist, Budapest), followed by a panel with **Jodi Dean**, **Rastko Močnik**, **Andrew Ryder**, **G.M. Tamas**, **Anna Wessely**, moderated by **Boris Buden**

18:00–19:30

Public screening: **Dezső Magyar**, *Agitators*, 1969-71 (78 min) in the Marcel Breuer Hall (In Hungarian, with English subtitles)

## Session II

### Performing the End of History

Thursday May 14, 2015, 10:00–13:15

In modern times, history was an ignorant master. It was not a story of past events, but an event in itself, which is why it was impossible to learn from. Yet, for Roman historiographers, the Greek word *istoria* still implied testimony—a personally experienced history, whether our own or someone else's—thus rendering it a teacher of life. Is memory today, for which history itself has become a past to be remembered, no longer an expression of longing for the lost experience of history that one was able to learn from? Could this be the reason why memory reaches out to the realms of art and performance, to re-enactments and body movements, so as to teach without possessing, sharing, or transmitting any knowledge—striving, that is, to be the cause of knowledge and not its owner? Indeed, art does not produce any knowledge of the past. But could it possibly turn the past into a teacher of life, a *magistra vitae*?

10:00–10:30

Presentation: **Inke Arns** (curator, author, Berlin/Dortmund)

10:30–11:00

Presentation: **Edit András** (art historian, curator, Budapest)

11:00–11:30

Presentation: **Jelena Vesić** (independent curator, writer, Belgrade)

11:30–12:00

Coffee break

12:00–12:20

Screening: Video documentation of the simulation game on the Treaty of Trianon. tranzit.hu in collaboration with **Tehnica Schweiz– Gergely László and Péter Rákosi** (artists Berlin/Budapest)

Introduction **Dóra Hegyi, Zsuzsa László**, tranzit.hu

12:20–13:15

Response: **Andrea Tompa** (writer, theatre critic, curator, Budapest), followed by a panel with **Edit András, Inke Arns and Jelena Vesić**, moderated by **Andrea Tompa**

13:15–14:30

Lunch break

### **Session III**

#### **Present Pasts: Memory, Oblivion, Trianon**

**Thursday May 14, 2015, 14:30–18:45**

Long gone are the times when the past had its proper place in our historical consciousness. Moreover, the historical consciousness that had once guaranteed our orientation within the time-spaces of modernity has evaporated into a myriad of memory cultures that hover over post-historical reality like a fog. It is thus no wonder that one gets easily lost or mistakes various ghosts of the past for the contemporary. In today's political reality, previously opposing forces that once mutually excluded one another, such as memory and oblivion, often act as brothers in arms. Is this not the case in present-day Hungary, where the memory of the Treaty of Trianon threatens to divide the living even more deeply than it had divided the dead? Are the traumatic effects of this event a legacy of the past or a brand new product of contemporary power struggles? How could we prevent alleged traumas of the past from turning into much worse traumas in the future?

14:30-15:00

Presentation: **Daniel Lazare** (writer, political theorist, New York)

15:00-15:30

Presentation: **József Mélyi** (critic, art historian, Budapest)

15:30-15:45

Screening: **Szabolcs KissPál** (artist, Budapest)

*Amorous geography*, 2012, (11 min)

15:45-16:15

Presentation: **Tony Chakar** (writer, architect, artist, Beirut)

16:15.-16:45

Coffee break

16:45-18:15

Response: **Vjeran Pavlakovic** ((historian, Rijeka), followed by a panel with **Boris Buden, Tony Chakar, Daniel Lazare, József Mélyi, Vjeran Pavlakovic**, moderated by **Zsuzsanna Toronyi** (museologist, Budapest)

18:15-18:45

Conversation-performance: **Jonas Staal** (artist, Rotterdam) and **Boris Buden**

19:00-20:30

Public screening: **Milo Rau** (Zurich/Berlin): *The Moscow Trials*, 2013 (85 min) in the Marcel Breuer Hall

Ongoing

Intervention in the lecture hall by **Ferenc Gróf** and screening of *Word Domination* (2012) by **Neil Beloufa** (Paris) and *False Testimony* (2012) by **Hajnalka Németh**(Berlin)