

Disputed Heritage: Modernism as Resistance

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Abstract : The flaccidity of the contemporary art production, its banality and incapacity of raising social and political relevant issues, and its ubiquitous connection to an ever prospering art market have become a trite, prosaic mantra, a thought-terminating cliché repeated by many, at least in the academic circles, who constantly lament the absence of pressing issues, artistically articulated from a Marxist perspective. This 'resignation' or crystalized insistence to consider Contemporary Art as a monolithic block - insufficiently critical - seems to be part of a pattern in Art History, not excluding its leftist wings: the idea that Modernism was, too, a homogeneous movement, one that despite its attempts to establish meaningful connections between art and society are now part of a museological past. This post-mortem attributed to a 'flat' modernism disregards it's highly contradictory character and diverging tendencies, in permanent conflict between themselves and part of a larger movement that questioned Capitalism - as a system. The aim of this presentation is to shed light on some of the most radical modern tendencies, how they articulated ways to figure the uneven and combined development, and how this 'Alternative Modernism' may inform, inspire, and make us advance critically in our struggles against the returns of Capitalism.

Keywords : art criticism, art history, contemporary art, modernism

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