

## UZURPUOTA REALYBĖ. LIETUVIŲ FOTOGRAFIJOS SOVIETIZAVIMO PROCESAI IR KOLIZIJOS

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Straipsnyje nagrinėjami pototalitarinio režimo metais fotografijos srityje vykę kūrybiniai procesai, kurie subrandino dvi viena kitai oponuojančias meno sroves. Septintojo dešimtmečio pabaigoje iškilusi lietuvių fotografijos mokykla suformavo dokumentiškumu pagrįstą fotografijos meno sampratą, o naujosios kartos 9-ojo dešimtmečio pradžios darbuose pasireiškė alternatyvi raiška, paneigianti įtvirtintos tradicijos vertybes. Istorinėje analizėje sovietinė fotografija interpretuojama kaip *altrėalybė*, daug dėmesio skiriant stilistinės leksikos konstravimo principams ir socialinių komunikacijos formų – institucijos su kūrybiniu individu santykių kultūros sovietizavimo aplinkybėmis – nustatymui.

REIKŠMINIAI ŽODŽIAI: fotografija, sovietizavimas, mokykla, tradicija, realybė, *altrėalybė*, *alterrealybė*, devizualizavimas.

Originālios mokslinės teorijos apie vaizduojamomis priemonėmis keičiamos arba perkuriamos realybės darinius pàremtos tikrovės transformacijų analogijomis. Į civilizacijų kultūros istoriją jos įvedė naujas tyrimų įžvalgas apibendrinančias sampratas. Vienas šiuolaikinėje historiografijoje labiausiai paplitusių tikrovės originalo ir jo regimybės sąryšio aiškinimų – simuliakrų teorija, kurią Jeanas Baudrillard'as, remdamasis Karlo Marxo išvestu visuomenės bazės ir jos antstato (kaip atspindžio) dialektiniu ryšiu, išplėtojo filosofijos ir sociologijos problemų sankirtoje. Atskleidęs naujo darinio – hiperrealybės – postmodernybėje susiformavimą, prancūzų mokslininkas teigė, kad simuliakras ne

tik yra nepriklausomas ir nereferentiškas, bet ir kvestionuoja pačios realybės pirmaeiliškumą<sup>1</sup>. Istorinę šios sampratos analizę atlikęs amerikiečių meno istorikas Michaelas Camille'is, konceptualizuodamas įvairių laikotarpių ir kryptių filosofų įžvalgas, aptinka lotyniško termino *simulacrum* prasminius pradmenis Platono dialoguose<sup>2</sup>. O rašytoja Susan Sontag Platono olos alegoriją palygino

<sup>1</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simuliakrai ir simuliacija*, Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2002, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Camille, „Simulacrum“, in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson, Richard Shiff, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 35–50.

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USURPED REALITY.  
THE PROCESSES AND COLLISIONS  
OF THE SOVIETIZATION  
OF LITHUANIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

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KEYWORDS: photography, Sovietization, school, tradition, reality, *alt-reality*, *alter-reality*, devisualization.

SUMMARY

The article discusses the creative processes that took place during the years after the totalitarian regime in the field of photography. Those creative processes were responsible for the development of two artistic tendencies that were in opposition to each other. The Lithuanian school of photography that emerged in late 1960s formulated a conception of photography that was based on the documentary approach. In the meantime, the works of the new generation that debuted in early 1980s manifested an alternative expression that abandoned the values of the established tradition. This historical analysis focuses on how the principles of a stylistic vocabulary were constructed during the period and establishes the relationship that existed between the institution and the creative individual when culture underwent Sovietization.

One of the most important objectives of the Sovietization of photography was related to the creation of a new ideological reality. With the aim of presenting the precise characteristics of this reality, the paper introduces a new term – *alt-reality*. This term not only points to the nature of the phenomenon (as, for example, *hyper-*) or to its scale (as, for example, *total-*), but also provides grounds for its ideological goal to represent an idealized Soviet reality, i.e. to visualize it in qualitative categories. Documentary photographers who developed the traditions of the school usurped the concept in terms of the basic principles of the photographic art. Therefore, this new wave can be called “a movement for

devisualization” (with some reservations) due to its main creative strategy – isolation from the significance of the visual content. It remained peripheral for a whole decade, not only during the Soviet period, but also during the first years of independence.

The first chapter discusses the construction of a Soviet *alt-reality* in photography during the Thaw period, when the emerging diachronic function of photography raised the modern aesthetics of photography to a position equivalent to social realism. The new documentary photographers announced their break from photojournalism publicly in 1969 by founding the Society of Art Photographers of Lithuanian SSR and creating a new aesthetic programme based on the synthesis of the documentary and psychologism; consolidating documentary photography as an art. The recognition that the status of the photo artist subsequently gained and the strengthened position of the Society itself prompted the development of a more diverse artistic expression in the Soviet Union. However, those Lithuanian photographers acquired such favourable conditions only because of the strategic implementation of political projects and the maintenance of good relationships with the nomenclature of the party and the government. They gained a strong ideological and theoretical rearguard in Moscow and most importantly – created a trustworthy *alt-reality* that was widely spread not only within the Soviet Union, but also abroad, thus expressing not an individual point of view, but a common Soviet world outlook. During the last decades of the Soviet occupation documentary photographers interpreted reality much more critically. They searched for connections with the past and observed the unfriendly social environment. Their creative variations

of the documentary medium, however, impeded experimentation and limited the use of formal aesthetics as a means to reveal the artistic potential of photography.

The second chapter analyses the contradictions that were manifest from early 1980s between the traditional and alternative expression. The new generation of artists broke away from the canon of documentary reflection, maintaining that photography itself was a new artistic reality. Thus, the cornerstone of contention became not only the different perceptions of reality that were available in photography, or through photography, but also the definition of the limits of photography as an artistic object. Still, the pragmatic policy of public relations that was observed by the Society of Lithuanian Art Photographers was orientated towards the integrity of the medium in Soviet culture. This was pursued in a complex fashion by consistently reacting

to party directives, implementing ideological engagements, suppressing inner controversies and by limiting the spread of alternative expression.

Such a situation demonstrates that the *alt-reality* that was created during the Soviet period according to the conception of the traditional school of photography remained quite united in the public space; while the split took place on the level of the professional community's discourse and ideas. In the case of the school, photography was consolidated as a modern, yet "demonstrative" art, whereas the creators of alternative expression, who had a critical approach towards the traditional representation of reality, implanted the practices of devisualization. They were the first to inspire the use of postmodern tendencies in Lithuanian art photography under the circumstances of a weakened, although still ideological, restricted culture.