



PRESS RELEASE

**ecologEAST**  
***The Green Bloc***

**Marco Scotini**, curator of *ecologEAST – Art and Nature beyond the Wall*, and **Piero Gilardi** meet **Maja and Reuben Fowkes** on **6 June, 6:00 p.m.**

In *The Green Bloc, Neo-avant-garde Art and Ecology under Socialism*, recently published by Central European University Press, based on current debate on the Anthropocene concept, Maja Fowkes tells her almost unbeknownst story of a constellation of authors who, within the complex landscape of the Eastern Bloc, denounce, through their work, the impacts of irresponsible environmental policies, attempting to raise environmental awareness among socialist citizens in the territories where communist control imposes resource exploitation policies that inherently equal western dynamics; the book aims at tracing back such experiences, bringing to light an array of distinctive approaches to nature by consistently non-anthropocentric positions.

The book has played a crucial part in the creation of the exhibition currently featuring at PAV. *ecologEAST* focuses on the pioneers of artistic engagement with the natural environment, shifting Eastwards and tracing out a multiplicity of complementary experiences developed under Socialism, thus presenting a rich artistic landscape, so far unheard of in Italy. Post-1968 counterculture, technological innovation and environmental debate are at the heart of a new radical trend, which has been witnessing, since the second half of the 1960s, both development, by a number of eastern artists moving in different regional contexts, of an array of ephemeral artworks and conceptual actions mostly carried out within the natural environment on the margins of the city and photographically documented, recorded in photographic documents or as exposés of pollution through videos or postcards, graphic maps and visual cosmologies as in the case of Sikora, the recovery of local traditions and recourse to organic materials (Imre Bukta, Teresa Murak and Ana Lupas), irrigation systems and community associations such as that inaugurated by the OHO Group near Šempas, or urban events with the involvement of the public, as in the case of the TOK Group in Zagreb. *ecologEAST* is the first exhibition in Italy presenting non-official, avant-garde artistic research working with the environment and spread throughout Central Europe: from Poland to former Czechoslovakia, from Romania to Hungary and to former Yugoslavia

Introduced by Piero Gilardi and moderated by Marco Scotini, Maja and Reuben Fowkes will present both issues addressed in *The Green Bloc* and the experience of the Translocal Institute for Contemporary Art, a centre for transnational research into East European art and ecology based in Budapest. Founded by Maja and Reuben Fowkes in 2013, the Translocal Institute is the result of a decade of collective efforts, moving between curatorship and research, initially active as [translocal.org](http://translocal.org). Besides hosting research programs operating across the disciplinary boundaries of contemporary art and ecological thought, the centre cooperates with universities and institutions all over Europe to carry out common curatorial and educational projects.

Maja e Reuben Fowkes, art historians and curators, live and work out of Budapest and London. They

are founders of the Translocal Institute for Contemporary Art. Maja Fowkes is the author of *The Green Bloc: Neo-avant-garde and Ecology under Socialism* (New York and Budapest: CEU Press, 2015) and has a PhD from University College London. Reuben Fowkes's thesis at Essex University was on socialist realist public monuments in post-war Eastern Europe. They publish and lecture widely on the history and aesthetics of East European art from the art production of the socialist era to contemporary artistic responses to the transformations brought by globalisation. They teach an MA course on Visual Cultures of the Anthropocene at Central European University, as well as running a Seminar on Art and Ecological Crisis at Translocal Institute. Recent projects include the Experimental Reading Room (2014-6), the Danube River School (2013-15) and the exhibition Walking without Footprints (2015-6) .