

*The “Second Public” of the Hungarian Avant-Garde. Understanding space-constitutive media and performances of the 1960s and 1970s.*

Two-part guest lecture

**Victoria Harms**

**“From apartment parties to party politics:  
The Hungarian Democratic Opposition.”**

Monday 3 June 3 – 5 pm, 7 – 9 pm

Location: Jura-Soyfer Saal

Institut für Theater-, Film- und Medienwissenschaft

Universität Wien

Hofburg, Batthyanystrasse

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This two-part guest lecture presents the rise and fall of the so-called Democratic Opposition in Hungary from the 1970s until the late 1990s. This focus closes the academic year of the 2013/14 *Patterns Lecture Project*, “The >Second Public< of the Hungarian Avant-Garde. Understanding space-constitutive media and performances of the 1960s and 1970s.”

First, a lecture introduces the significance of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 for the creation of ‘goulash’ communism, the unique type of Hungarian state socialism. The memory of the crushed revolution played an important role for the new opposition that emerged in the mid-70s. The lecture addresses the structural difficulties and the development of dissident thought throughout the seventies and eighties. It portrays private apartment as ‘the’ location for a ‘second public’ in the Hungarian capital of Budapest. Apartment lectures and private get-togethers forged ties among intellectuals, activists, artists, and samizdat publishers that soon came to be known as the Democratic Opposition. The Polish Solidarity and the Czech Charta 77 movements served as desirable, yet unattainable role models. In the 1980s, foreigners also frequented these gatherings providing important links to Western media, academic appointments, scholarships, and publishing contracts. Yet, the peculiar historical split between ‘populists’ and ‘urbanites’ re-emerged in the mid-1980s. This polarization and the legacy of ’56 both paved *and* warped Hungary’s road to a democratic transformation in 1989/90. This session closes with a brief portrayal of the difficulties dissident intellectuals encountered in the ‘new’ Hungary.

The evening session invites participants to engage actively in the provided secondary literature and primary sources. They may draw on previous lectures by Dr. László Beke, Beáta Hock and Júlia Klaniczay as well as Katalin Cseh. Participants are strongly encouraged to share their views on dissident concepts such as ‘Mitteleuropa,’ civil society, the second public, and the legacy of the Cold War for Austro-Hungarian relations.