

Postcolonialist Perspective on the History of Estonian Art

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This article analyses Estonian art scene in the Soviet era from the postcolonial perspective. The colonial period in Estonia was not uniform; in the fine arts, several different rhetorical regimes existed simultaneously. This article outlines the Estonian art scene in its three clearly distinct discourses: firstly, empire-minded official discourse followed Soviet standards and ideals, striving to fix colonial subjection of Estonia and to assimilate Estonian artists gradually into the future homogeneous Soviet art scene. Secondly, an orientation towards western avantgarde was nevertheless possible and formed an alternative artistic means of expression. Thirdly, a national-conservative discourse distinguished itself from the Soviet and Western orientation and instead focused on sustaining the aesthetic value system of the pre-Soviet independence era. The article follows the development of these three discourses in their tanglements, juxtapositions, clashings and mergings, in the context of the Sovietized and colonized institutional sphere.