

Writers' Bloc: Reading into Late Soviet Experience through Latvian Artists' Books

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Many of the characteristics commonly ascribed to so-called 'artists' books' describe equally well the Soviet underground phenomenon of self-published books, or *samizdat*. *Samizdat* and artist's books are often both hand-wrought in appearance, with innovative forms that challenge the conventional book format. They also often feature content best appreciated by an audience of initiates and are produced in very limited editions subsidised by the author and circulated through specialised, almost occult, channels of distribution. While cultural observers in the West tend to associate the term *samizdat* with the overtly anti-Soviet publications of political dissidents and literary nonconformists, the USSR and its satellite states also had *samizdat* artists' books. These works resisted ideological, bureaucratic and, moreover, aesthetic orthodoxies with tremendous inventiveness and the scarcest of means. They were created in societies where, at one time, the possession of a typewriter was considered to be a felony, and xerography, not to mention more capital- and expertise-dependent printing technologies, was all but unavailable to the private individual. These works pose additional questions for Western scholars already puzzling over appropriate critical approaches to the genre of artists' books. During its heyday in the 1960s and 70s the artist's book was hailed by many practitioners in the West as the superlative democratic art form, due to the hypothetical possibility of the widespread ownership of the art object. An examination of how artist-authored books developed amid Latvian society's repeated, abrupt transitions between democracy and totalitarianism during the past century may further illuminate this concept of a democratic art medium. This article will initially divide its attention between the peculiarities of the Soviet publishing environment, as it existed shortly before the USSR's annexation of Latvia at the end of World War II, and the roughly concurrent publication experiences of progressive artists in inter-bellum Latvia, the so-called First Republic. A dual focus is warranted because book works by Latvian artists during the late-Soviet period, the chief topic of this article, responded to these divergent visual and textual traditions.

It is well known that the suppression of the Soviet avant-garde under Stalin interrupted an extraordinary evolutionary phase in the history of artists' books. Though perversely, mutational typography and recombinant photomontage continued well beyond the imposition of Socialist Realism in 1932, though without its original, libertarian overtones. El Lissitzky's admonition to the readers of his 1922 masterwork, *About Two Squares*, "Don't/ read // Take / paper / columns / blocks // Fold / colour / build", found its widest enactment more than a decade later when the Soviet political environment led to dramatic interventions into traditional publishing and the handling of the written word. Ordinary Soviet citizens, whether out of paranoia or Party loyalty, began cutting and pasting the books in their household libraries according to the shifting political fortunes of public figures. As the Purges claimed individuals, it became common practice to excise a condemned person's biographical entry from reference books, certainly in public collections but also in private. If the political pariah was pictured in a published group portrait, the citizen could erase or ink over the offending figure, an inelegant equivalent to the official photo-re-toucher's practice for which the slang term *palmyat* [to palm, or obscure with a painted-in image of a potted palm] was coined¹. Collage and *décollage* came into play when subscribers to the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* series were sent substitute entries to replace those of the latest victims of revisionist history. For instance, as Commissar for Heavy Industry, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, disappeared in reality, one might receive an expanded entry on the alphabetically proximate *orekhovii*, the walnut, to effect Ordzhonikidze's textual disappearance. This process culminated infamously in 1954 with the obliteration of the entry for executed secret police chief Lavrenti Beria, Stalinism's most lethal obliterator, with a substitute entry on the Bering Straits. There were subtler forms of indexical diminishment, as well. Personalities in official disfavour might suddenly find their names spelled in all lower-case letters within newspaper articles, if the name was indeed spelled properly. Latvian avant-gardist Gustav Klucis, who created some of the best-known photomontage images of the early Politburo

and then, before his own liquidation, depopulated the original montages in his personal archives as the models vanished in reality, had the posthumous, pre-rehabilitation indignity of appearing in print as the comical-sounding 'Gustav Kluksis.' Consequently, an action as mundane as erasing or defacing a library book was no longer considered petty vandalism but sanctioned as mass-performance art, just as basic typographic manipulation could generate profound symbolic meaning echoing even profounder corporal circumstances.

This enhanced corporeality of the book in the hands of a highly performative readership seems somewhat less implausible if one considers a key visual precedent to Socialist Realist propaganda, the Russian Orthodox icon. Unlike Western ecclesiastical artworks that are understood to be representations of divine personages, the icon is believed to embody the divine. In common Orthodox worship, the faithful touch and kiss the sacred object, as one might a beloved, revered person. Centuries earlier, there was even the arcane practice in which certain icons suspected of being ineffectual at inspiring religious fervour would be turned to face the wall or flagellated by dissatisfied clergy, less a matter of iconoclasm than 'iconocorrection.' Accordingly, books inconsistent with Party doctrine could be physically compelled toward a state of orthodoxy, albeit in a manner less destructive than the coercion of the books' human subjects.

Indeed, when Stalinism became the state religion, books deemed ideologically important often assumed Biblical proportions, with grandiose bindings and highest-quality materials belying the physical impoverishment of Stalinist society. When the Terror subsided and Gulag survivors began producing *samizdat* memoirs, these were often miniscule, a practicality in terms of concealment and material scarcity. Yet their diminutive size constituted a symbolic dimension as well², and the dissociative contrast in scale vis-à-vis the Stalinist tome was reinforced by the use of abject materials, such as coarse scrap paper. Until the final days of empire, even in periods of political liberalisation, books containing the transcribed speeches of Communist Party congresses received priority allocation of resources, the highest degree of craft, largest press runs and most conspicuous display within bookstores, where they largely remained unsold, only to be quietly pulped when the next congress convened and needed paper for its dissemination. The polished state of such publications is striking, considered in light of legendarily inferior Soviet industrial production, but also in comparison with other mass-produced ideological staples, such as propagandistic architectural signage, whose shoddy, handmade appearance tended to strike a dissenting note about the achievements of industrialisation³. Even an object as relatively well-crafted as the Soviet book always seemed to have its slip showing, namely, the errata slip tucked inside the back cover. Typically correcting minor typos, this omnipresent feature communicated the disconcerting fact that editorial attention had been myopically directed at ideological content while other sins went unnoticed, if only temporarily. Although Western readers may have felt empowered by the post-structuralist death-of-the-author thesis, Soviet citizens witnessed that the proof-reader lived on, appropriately vigilant for that culture of acute surveillance.

When Latvians suddenly found themselves living as colonial subjects in 1941 and from 1945 onward, this Soviet approach to books was one of the first cultural imports. Befitting their forced infantilisation as political subjects, they were promptly given primers on collectivisation. In a photographically illustrated children's book from 1941 titled *Dace at the Cubs*, Dace is a proactive Goldilocks, who puts the disorderly ursine household on a regimen of diet, calisthenics, scheduling, hygiene etc⁴. Reading this story against its photographic grain, one could find a less uplifting story: involuntary communal living with the uncouth Russian bear, images mirroring the concurrent deportations of tens of thousands of Latvians to Siberia, and, indeed, a rather trance-like method of indoctrination. Despite its now nostalgia-inducing sepia tones, this book arrived as a bleak visual contrast to the prevailing illustrated book styles in Latvia. During the increasingly authoritarian local political climate of the 1930s and the war-time Nazi occupation of Latvia the nation's publishing had, in fact, experienced a golden age. Collaborations between top artists and writers produced dozens of materially elegant books, most notably those issued by the publisher Zelta ābele. These limited-edition works were, for the most part, modestly scaled as a result of the global economic depression, with many

Zelta ābele hardcover titles measuring smaller than eight by twelve centimeters. Here we find another instance of symbolic dimension; these discreet articles of property embodied a discreet article of faith among the Latvian bourgeoisie, that gentility could be afforded even in the face of economic adversity.

The relationship between local artists and the Latvian publishing industry was not always so genteel. In the early 1920s, the publishing house connected with the state-supported news agency, LETA, had made the unusual move of commissioning cover designs and text illustrations from some of Rīga's most experimental artists, and soon other publishers followed its lead. Before long, expressionistic and, to a lesser extent, cubo-futuristic imagery appeared on local booksellers' shelves. However, this endorsement of modernist aesthetics did not increase sales as hoped, which had not been an entirely ludicrous marketing expectation, given the fact that exhibitions by Latvia's modernists were extraordinarily popular, relative to modernism's reception in other European societies of the day. The commercial situation became grim enough that another publisher-patron, Valters un Rapa, filed suit against its artists for alienating potential readers⁵. By the decade's end, editorial imagery was increasingly realistic, even in the manifestly modern sub-genre of book illustration composed of miscellaneous typographic elements, lead-type dingbats, rules, spacers and so forth, termed *tipomontažs* [typomontage] by its inventor and foremost practitioner, Niklāvs Strunke. For example, the cover of a 1931 catalogue for the Valters un Rapa backlist bears a nicely self-reflexive vignette, a typesetter's proto-emoticon. Figural abstraction, when used, retained representational features and mostly decorated books of a utilitarian, overtly mechanical nature, such as automotive manuals. Nevertheless, Latvian modernists did create a few fully-fledged book-works, though these were less interrogations of the book form or conventional layout than of the general readership's tolerance for erotica or urban-themed poetry. Exemplary in this regard were Sigismunds Vidbergs's folios of Beardsleyesque illustrations, *Erotika* (1926) and *Kama Sutra* (1931), as well as his early collaboration with poet Arveds Švabe, titled *GongGong* (1922)⁶.

Naturally, such experimental book-works disappeared after the annexation because Stalin's cultural apparatchiki had no tolerance for erotica, cosmopolitan poetry or Modernism. Latvian publishing was nationalised, and the visual components of a typical book were overwhelmingly salutary, didactic and secondary to the text. Even in the case of art reproduction albums, images appeared almost tangential to the overtly politicised text, just as the primitive colour-separation process might only accidentally account for the original artwork's actual appearance. After Khrushchev endorsed a renewed functionalism in architecture and product design, artists regained opportunities to be formalistically inventive, but these were largely limited to consumer durables and interior décor. Nevertheless, as the Thaw ended and Soviet society stagnated under Brezhnev, certain Latvian artists understood that design might provide the necessary pretext for exploring abstraction, minimalism, kinetic art and other current international tendencies, and the Latvian Artists' Union notoriously sanctioned this strategy by adding a design section to all major republican exhibitions beginning in the 1970s⁷.

While a few designers, such as Valdis Celms, produced single-exemplar photography-based book-works in folio or leperello format in the mid-70s, the artist Māris Ārgalis produced the first multiple of the contemporary era with his 1978 work, *Models*. The title itself alludes to the diversionary tactic, in which eleven 'speculative architectural models' follow the conceit of a standard design process, progressing from diagram to elevations to axonometric views of a ziggurat-like object. As soon as the object attains three-dimensionality, graphic suggestions of alternate realities arise: Clouds gather in the distance, intermixed with faint handwriting. Obviously, Ārgalis was generating more than an architectural model. From there onward, schematic and illusionistic views of each model hybridise, with the abrupt introduction of a fingertip in the final image. The artist characterises images seven through ten as, "simultaneously including spatial reality and optical absurdity," but hints at a purely existential dialectic, "ambivalently combining the BURNING – of life / and / the CHILLING - of decomposition." Image eleven tempers this solemnity. The finger is toying with a rather phallic form that discharges a beam of light from its end, and the artist quips that this, "kinetic energy represents - [me] SELF-REPRODUCING, consequently REPEATING MYSELF, CONTINUING."⁸ Ārgalis led an informal group of designers who

called themselves *Polūcionisti* ['Pollutionists' or, in Latvian slang of the time, 'Emissionists' or 'Ejaculationists']. The combination of sexual innuendo and stylistic nonconformity drew the attention of the KGB, which eventually pressured Ārgalis to give up artmaking⁹. Years later, however, in his new career as a capitalist entrepreneur, he returned to the creative realm by bankrolling the publication of innovative illustrated children's books by younger contemporary artists, such as Andris Breže's *Doctor Hector*, Rīga: Vaga, 1991, whose message, as it turns out, is anti-pollution (though in the usual sense of the word).

An insinuation of the artist's body, or at least the artist's self-reproducing finger, within a bibliographic context was also characteristic of work by painter Miervaldis Polis, who began in the mid-1970s to execute self-portraits within photographic book illustrations. Polis would take travel guides or, more commonly, reproduction albums of canonical Western paintings and meticulously insert either his likeness or an image of his knuckle, which happened to be holding the edge of whatever page was being transformed. This peripatetic knuckle was an unwitting parallel to César's bronze thumb sculpture, then hitchhiking its way through Western Europe. So, at a time when the average Soviet citizen had no possibility of visiting Dallas, Polis could pose before its skyline, which had sprouted a colossal knuckle. In other works, he stood in Venetian piazzas and strolled the Crimean shore; always looking a little sheepish about the privilege of mobility afforded him by virtue of artistic imagination and virtuoso technique¹⁰. His corporeal ubiquity also extended, to well-known paintings, or, more to the point, to the books which rendered these paintings ubiquitous. In 1999, the usually gregarious Polis spent most of a month's residency at Cleveland State University cloistered in a dormitory room, interpolating himself into a book of Caravaggio reproductions. As far as he was concerned, the greatest benefits of international exchange had already occurred when foreign art books with higher quality colour-printing had finally become available in Latvian bookstores in the late Soviet period.

In the winter of 1990, while Baltic politicians manoeuvred toward secession and the Kremlin responded with violence, thousands of citizens gathered behind barricades in Rīga and Vilnius to show support for democratisation. With the fortuitous scheduling of an event titled *Gentle Fluctuations*, six prominent, young Latvian painters were ideally situated to address themes of occupation and vigil. For a month, the artists lived and worked in Rīga's premier exhibition venue, putting their painting processes on public display. Integral to this performance, and consonant with the role of the emergent independent press in the anti-Soviet struggle, a weekly tabloid was composed and published¹¹. The tabloid's designer, Normunds Lācis, showed participants Ieva Iltnere, Sandra Krastiņa, Jānis Mitrēvics, Nils Muižnieks, Edgārs Verpe, and Aija Zariņa not only painting but also performing the mythologized role of Painter (decorous, decorative and highly decorated, at least during the exhibition's opening ceremony). This publication not only chronicled the on-going situation in the gallery but also offered new poetry, critical perspectives on contemporary culture and assurances to George Herbert Walker Bush and Margaret Thatcher that Latvians were persevering in spite of Operation Desert Storm's deflection of global attention from East Europeans' self-liberation efforts and Moscow's retaliatory response. The regular appearance of *Gentle Fluctuations* on premium paper stock, embellished with colour accents and, moreover, a full-colour insert in the fourth and final edition which reproduced the completed paintings, was reassuring. Particularly because at this critical moment central economic planners in Moscow were actively sabotaging Baltic mass media by fabricating a newsprint shortage, forcing the reduced circulation of democracy-oriented newspapers. Equally significant in terms of symbolic impact, the pages of *Gentle Fluctuations* shared the uncluttered, yet dynamic compositional appearance of *Avots*, the reascent independence movement's foremost newspaper and, in fact, a minor miracle of desktop publishing. The Western-inspired appearance of *Avots* was made possible by Macintosh computers and graphic design software surreptitiously donated to the publisher by members of the Latvian diaspora. The paper's editorial staff ensured the on-going appearance of their publication by disassembling the computers every night in anticipation of a possible KGB raid, with one staffer taking home the keyboard, another the monitor, and so forth. The equivalent journalistic perseverance that the

Gentle Fluctuations tabloid represented was largely the effort of art publishing house Jāņa sēta, a pioneering private enterprise headed by Aivars Zvirbulis.

Earlier that year, Zvirbulis had published a book to accompany the exhibition, *Latvia, the Twentieth-Century's Somersault*, whose title referred to that society's repetitive tumble between totalitarian and democratic governance, with yet another rotation now in the offing¹². The exhibition itself was an assembly of ten installations, and the book referred explicitly to this in a centre spread showing the gallery plan, with a subtle bit of paper engineering to reflect the two-story layout of the space. The book was designed by conceptual artist Kristaps Ģelzis to function less as a catalogue than as a collaborative artists' book. Each exhibitor was allotted pages in which she or he articulated a position regarding whatever deserved regard. Ģelzis himself did photocollages as preparatory sketches for his installation *Washing Day*. Sarmīte Maliņa created a paper installation every bit as physically engaging as her gallery work, forming a tactile, haptic experience from a page sequence that juxtaposed opacity and translucency, slickness and tooth, virginal surfaces and marked regions. Oļegs Tillbergs forsook any correspondence with his installation, manipulating porn imagery to an extent that would circumvent most Western censorship but would certainly have run afoul of the same Soviet censors. Other artists regarded their pages as a curriculum vita, lyrical meditation, project ledger sheet or philosophical preamble. The book's most important quality, overall, was its heterogeny. As Latvian society headed toward a new, messy pluralism, *Somersault* was as eloquent a document of that process as any published then and there.

In the spring of 1991, three months after Soviet Interior Ministry troops killed citizens in Vilnius and Rīga, and the Baltic peoples' collective mood was at its most pessimistic, two artists' books were published in Latvia that again served as social barometers. Aija Zariņa, a painter involved in both the *Gentle Fluctuations* and *Somersault* projects, produced a large-format book in conjunction with her exhibition *Princess Gundega's Black Room*. The show had opened on a freezing midnight in April, requiring many attendees to skirt barricades and anti-tank fortifications protecting the nearby state radio headquarters. Befitting the exhibition, wherein the walls, ceilings and floors of Aivars Zvirbulis's Jāņa sēta gallery became a veritable panopticon painting of black forms outlined in white and slashed with red, Zariņa's bookwork was an expansive composition, equivalently bleak and strident¹³. Although the exhibition title refers to a Latvian fairy-tale about a princess, the book-work declares, on its cover, that the artist has never read the story. Indeed, the book is an adamant refusal of traditional literary narrative, its text devoted solely to a description of the artist and its severely abstracted imagery organised according to visual logic alone. Physically, its 41-by-56-centimeter size conveys the presence of an epic, requiring a lectern to accommodate its majestic spread. But the mendicancy of its materials, a cheap, fibrous cardboard cover so heavily inked that its texture approximates asphalt, with pages of the flimsiest newsprint, again secured somehow in the midst of shortage, diminishes whatever edification the traditional reader might seek in such a story. The indigence expressed by this work recalls the appearance of early *samizdat* publications, although its looming size communicates an inability or unwillingness to conceal expression any longer. The crudeness of Zariņa's draftsmanship and hand-lettering is consistent with her brute painting style, which outraged officials when her work first appeared in the early 1970s. Just as deliberate de-skilling was a key impulse within Western conceptualism, Zariņa represented a bracing antidote to an academic system which valued execution over idea.

Generated in a kindred spirit of de-skilling, the second Latvian bookwork from the final moments of Soviet annexation was titled *Poussin and the Dried Flowers Will Save the World*. Its creator, Jānis Mitrēvics, was an alumnus of *Gentle Fluctuations* and one of the first painters in Rīga to promote his work in a distinctly Western entrepreneurial manner. Rather than evoking the earnest shabbiness of *samizdat*, however, Mitrēvics' bookwork addresses peculiarities of the domestic book with considerable irony and wit. Immediately apparent, the covers are occluded like an underbite; the overly narrow top fails to protect the pages within, while the bottom juts gracelessly beyond. Apparently even the well-made Soviet book could not survive the vicissitudes of imperial and industrial decline. Coincidentally, its

prim, pink hardcover, general dimensions and the thinness of the work recall another limited-edition book in late Soviet-Latvia, the phone book of the LSSR Cultural Ministry and its institutions. Accorded a precocity suitable for a Soviet government ministry and, in fact, anything containing guarded information, this phone book was all of a quarter-inch thick, reflecting the fact that even the biggest museums in Latvia might have had a total of three or four phones (with no additions forthcoming) and that staff fiefdoms were so entrenched that a clothbound, permanent directory seemed a reasonable publication.

In any case, *Poussin and the Dried Flowers* is emphatically not the well-made Soviet book. Instead, Mitrēvics has given us an anarchical assembly of photocopied drawings, appropriated texts, rogue pieces of cover stock within the regular pages, and one tipped-in colour photograph of a Mitrēvics painting. At last, we find a chromatically accurate art reproduction within a Latvian book, but, paradoxically, the pictured painting incorporated a grainy black-and-white photo enlargement of a poorly reproduced detail from Poussin. Many of the drawings are extensions of and departures from photocopied fragments of other Poussin compositions, sloppily, exuberantly washed with fluorescent highlighter markers. Considered altogether, the book evokes a *cadavre exquis*, and indeed some of the illustrations continue from one folded page to the next. A four-panel cartoon early on in the text expresses Mitrēvics' profane love for his source material. Introducing himself in an English-Latvian patois as "Johnis", Mitrēvics sexually mounts his new friend Poussin, after which Poussin gives Johnis a gift of dried flowers and offers to introduce Johnis to the other 'classicists.' The whole irreverent transaction is titled, "Latvian art enters the world." Though it is impossible within the confines of this essay to explicate the book's various historical references and jokes, it seems fair to summarise Mitrēvics' bookwork as an expression of fascination and ambivalence with regard to the hegemonic forces of Western culture upon the small, increasingly westward-looking Latvian art community. The cover itself is a metaphor for imbalance, slippage and vulnerability; what ends up exposed is the interior stuff, perhaps a metaphor for what some might presume to be a provincial intellect. To judge from Mitrēvics' inclusion of critical texts from André Malraux and Latvians Gundega Repše, Pēteris Bankovskis and Juris Boiko¹⁴, there seems to be no reason to declare an exclusive allegiance to ideas that enjoy global or only local circulation. In effect, the distinction is collapsed when Mitrēvics reproduces a double-page spread from a Latvian-language loan-word dictionary that traces the Portuguese origin of the word marmalade. By the same token, Mitrēvics work expresses a cheerfully messy answer to the long-pending question of whether artists' books obviate criticism. This is the popular, conceptualism-based, claim that many book-artists made for the genre during the 1960s and 70s, that the mediating function of the critic is displaced by the artist's integration of text and image, thus completing the circuit between art object and art commentary. By specifying the critical texts to accompany his bookwork, Mitrēvics on one hand rejects extrinsic commentary. Conversely, his inclusion of multiple texts forces open an interstitial space in which unfettered critical dialogue is free to occur.

Once again, it all seems to come down to fetters and ways of resisting them. Architectural historian Catherine Cooke recently noted that astute, contemporaneous studies of Soviet material culture often had greater ability to reveal the onset of cataclysmic social processes in the USSR than the countless political position papers generated by Kremlinologists¹⁵. Of course, the artists who responded critically to their Soviet material circumstances were even more qualified to write the diagnostic book, so to speak. The fact that so many of them chose to do so using the book format bespeaks both the Eastern Bloc's legendary bibliophilia, this was, after all, a place where revered writers could fill a stadium with ecstatic youth for a poetry reading, as well as the traditional association between criticism and the Book. It also reminds us that nonconformist artists were uniquely positioned to judge whether books were as vulnerable to vetting as art exhibitions. It was not uncommon for artists to experience both processes simultaneously as exhibition censors pulled works from gallery walls while book censors pulled the matching illustration from the catalogue's galleys. Although it also happened that the contested work was sometimes overlooked in one of these manifestations and survived, or that entire exhibitions are known to us in their printed form.

In so far as artists' books from Soviet-era Latvia can be seen as a response to a socio-political system, fallen far short of its utopian pretences, their critical consideration may prove useful in understanding how we might assess contemporary artists' books in the West, as products of a pointedly utopian, politicised moment in the capitalist art world that, alas, did little to disrupt business as usual. At the very least, by emphasizing the worldly contingencies of *samizdat* book-works created throughout the Soviet Union, we might find a parallel strategy to get beyond the current museological pall surrounding Western artists' books. For all the idealistic assertions that artists' books would democratise access to and possession of art, these agents of change are often even more physically estranged from their intended audiences than, say, a 19th-century oil painting in a museum setting. Sequestered in manuscript collections with restricted right of entry, when they do see the damaging light of day, book-works are typically displayed out of reach, propped and splayed, even dissected, within vitrines, not unlike a Damien Hirst sagittal section. But this alienating clinical condition should not go unchallenged, and perhaps this quasi-anthropological look at what remains, for most Westerners, an exotic, moribund Other may serve as a starting point.

¹ Jānis Borgs, designer and erstwhile re-toucher, revealed this neologism in a 23 June 1994 interview.

² G. Hirt and S. Wonders [pseud., S. Hänsgen] (ed.), *Präprintium. Moskauer Bücher aus dem Samizdat*, Bremen 1998, 23.

³ E. Andreeva, *Sots Art: Soviet Artists of the 1970s - 1980s*, Roseville East, New South Wales 1995, 8.

⁴ N. Sakonska, *Dace pie lācēniem*, trans. M. Silabriede, Rīga 1941. Photo-illustrations by V. Arnolds and L. Zizins.

⁵ H. Sils, *Tēlotāja māksla un vārds*, Sydney 1968, 28.

⁶ S. Vidbergs, *Erotika*, Rīga 1926; S. Vidbergs, *Kama Sutra*, Rīga, 1931; and A. Švabe, *GongGong*, Rīga 1922, illustrations by Vidbergs.

⁷ See the section 'Ulterior Design, Ulterior Motifs,' in my essay 'Many Easels, Some Abandoned: Latvian Art after Socialist Realism,' in *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression under the Soviets, 1945-1991*, A. Rosenfeld and N. Dodge (ed.), New Brunswick, New Jersey 2002, 234-241.

⁸ M. Ārgalis, *Grafikas izstāde "Modelj"*. [exhib. cat.] Rīga 1978, n.p.

⁹ J. Borgs, 'Māris Ārgalis,' in *Personal Time: Art of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1945-1996*, [exhib. cat.] Iveta Boiko, Helēna Demakova and Joanna Słodowska (ed.), Warsaw 1996, 60.

¹⁰ Regarding Polis's unfettered pictorial mobility, see my essay, 'Twiggy & Trotsky: Or, What the Soviet Dandy Will Be Wearing This Five-Year Plan,' in *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture*, Susan Fillin-Yeh (ed.), New York 2001, 259.

¹¹ I. Iltne, S. Krastiņa, J. Mitrēvics, N. Muižnieks, E. Verpe, and A. Zariņa, *Maigas svarstības*, no. 1-4, Rīga 1990.

¹² *Latvija - XX gadsimta kūlenis. 1940-1990*. [exhib. cat.], Rīga 1990.

¹³ A. Zariņa, *Princesas Gundegas melnā istaba*, Rīga 1991.

¹⁴ J. Mitrēvics, *Pasauli izglābs Pusēns un sausie ziedi*, Rīga 1991, n.p.

¹⁵ C. Cooke, in her preface to *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, D. Crowley and S. Reid (ed.), London & Oxford 2000, vii.