

IGOR ZABEL
AWARD FOR
CULTURE AND
THEORY 2018

Grant

according to the laureate's selection

Visual Culture Research Center (VCRC)

KYIV, UKRAINE
VCRC.ORG.UA

Third grant is traditionally selected by the laureate; Joanna Mytkowska awarded the Kyiv based collective Visual Culture Research Center (VCRC).

VCRC was founded in 2008 as a platform for collaboration between academic, artistic and activist communities. It is an independent initiative engaged in publishing, in carrying out artistic activities and scientific research, and in organising public lectures, discussions and conferences. VCRC initiated the following important projects: the *School of Kyiv – Kyiv Biennial* (2015) curated by Georg Schöllhammer and Hedwig Saxenhuber, an international art biennial combining exhibitions with arenas of public reflection; the *Kyiv International – Kyiv Biennial* (2017) exploring the emancipatory potential of the idea of the political International; and the *Kyiv International – '68 Now* (2018), an international forum for art and knowledge, exploring the political and cultural heritage of the revolt of 1968 and its contrasting dimensions in the West and the East.

The Kyiv Biennial initiated by VCRC soon became one of the most important international exhibitions in this part of Europe. The biennial functions not only as a platform for art from the region but also brings out the marginalised knowledge of the city and poses an important question, namely the right to the city by its inhabitants. It also serves as a channel for other local initiatives, such as, "Save Kyiv Modernism", which focuses on the local heritage of the Soviet architectural landscape.

The Visual Culture Research Center is a unique research-based organisation that has emerged from the academic and artistic circles and, through the analysis of visual culture, aims to foster reflection on the post-Soviet political and economic situation. VCRC has therefore established a unique background for acting, critical thinking and creativity in the highly difficult context of Ukraine in the state of war today.

Additionally, its collective form – gathering activists from various fields – creates a platform for engagement with the most pressing and controversial public issues and with interventions in the Kyiv cityscape VCRC animates new situations for grassroots social activism: VCRC traces the acts of iconoclasm of the imposed decommunisation, which are pertinent not only to particular public monuments but also to the heritage of modernist architecture. By this, the VCRC has established itself as crucial opponent to the new wave of nationalism, spreading its impact on the public space and the social identity.

In 2015, the Visual Culture Research Center received the European Cultural Foundation's Princess Margriet Award.

VCRC members: Oksana Briukhovetska, Vasyl Cherepanyn, Serhiy Klymko, Ruslana Kozienko, Yustyna Kravchuk, Anna Kravets, Yevhen Nasadiuk, Lesia Kulchynska, Tetiana Mala, Nataliia Neshevets, Maria Pashkova, Oleksiy Radynski, Hanna Tsyba, Pavlo Velychko, Daryna Wazhynska, Jessica Zychowicz.

2018 jury members

Adam Budak – CHIEF CURATOR, NATIONAL GALLERY, PRAGUE

Ana Janevski – CURATOR, MOMA, NEW YORK

Erzen Shkolli – DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ART GALLERY OF ALBANIA, TIRANA