April 8-9, 2016, Yale University, New Haven, CT
A discernable boom in politically engaged, leftist art practices and critical theory is underway in Eastern Europe and Russia, China, and in post-socialist countries of the Global South. This boom defies all expectations, emerging after the depoliticizing “transitions” to capitalism of the 1990s and the seemingly reactionary historical moment. Activists and art collectives, critics, poets, grassroots filmmakers, and video, performance and digital artists of all stripes are seeking alternative spaces for engaged aesthetic experimentation. In many cases, these aesthetic producers return to the emancipatory promises of earlier political and aesthetic experiments, reimagining them for the digital age.

Setting in conversation researchers in Slavic, East German, East Asian, and Global South Studies at Yale and elsewhere, Red on Red seeks to establish a deeper and more transnational understanding of these recent aesthetic and political developments. While many of these aesthetic movements have a strong media presence in their native countries, they tend to be poorly known in other areas of the post-socialist world or in an international academic context. By fostering cross-linguistic dialogue, this project fills a gap in these various movements’ awareness of each other, as well as in their interdisciplinary study as a world phenomenon. Rather than merely apply Western analytic frameworks to these movements, Red on Red develops new kinds of critical and aesthetic theory that are inherently grounded in a post-socialist context. Taking its cue from Dipesh Chakrabarty’s Provincializing Europe, it asks what alternatives the utopian and dystopian spaces of post-socialist art can provide to traditional Western notions of progress, freedom, and history.

We welcome a wide range of theoretical and non-theoretical, comparative and more focused papers. Please submit 250-300-word abstracts to Julia Chan at julia.chan@yale.edu no later than December 15, 2015.

Keywords: Slavic, East German, East Asian, Global South Studies; African Studies; South Asian Studies; South American Studies; Critical Theory; Marxism; Leftism; Avant-Garde Art and Literature, Protest Culture, Hacktivism, Contemporary Culture.