GRAD lab

TOWARDS THE NEW SUBLIME:
FROM MILITARY LABS – TO ART SPACES
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This paper sorts to explore the paradox of multiple realizations of Romanticism and the "*Theory of Sublime*" in contemporary architecture and artistic practices. It traces the lines of recent mutation in romantic vision, as well as the radical shift in its instrumental apparatus, caused primarily by accelerating the intersection of art experiments with military advanced technologies and discoveries of the "new dangers". Indeed, following notorious article of Barnett Neumann "The sublime is now", published just three years after Hiroshima's tragedy, the conflict shorelines – one of the main modes of Romanticism, must extend to include the perspective of history of new conflicts, as well as new geographies, new instruments and new tools. Newman was well aware of the lessons of Kantian "sensation of the spirit" when laying claim to the modern importance of the sublime as visible-invisible and as "a desire to destroy form; where form can be formless". Re- thinking Caspar David Friedrich's "open sky's", re-wring Turners "light sensations", and re-calibrating Ruskin's "atmospheric exercises", the "new sublime" is operating with collective memories of Romanticism, re-examining them in 4-D real-time physical adventures of museum installations, transplanting recently declassified investigations of the Cold War scientific experiments on the territory of critical art. Case studies to be discussed: the monumentalisation of ephemerality in Cold War exhibition pavilions, as well as the new generation of Gesamtkunstwerk in contemporary museums discourse.

Reading the legacy of Romanticism against the history of military inventions, that include advanced studies of radioactive and chemical materials, meteorological and climate data, modes of control and military statistics, psychotropic and neuroscience research, will allow us to investigate the new frontiers of this aesthetic phenomenon, as well as to decode the complexity of metaphors and tropes it operates with.