

The subject of the presented thesis is the situation of Czech visual arts at the turn of the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century. Special attention is paid to the so-called “official art”, art sanctioned by the state and Party, and its institutional basis the Czech Union of Visual Artists. On the basis of the analysis of renewed concept of Socialist Realism and hierarchy of genres presented at that time by official art criticism, destruction of the boundary separating the realm of arts from the realm of politics is argued as the main feature of the official definition of artistic production. In a sharp contrast to this official stand stood a radically different definition anchored in the tradition of modern art. According to it a true artist has to be consistently disrespectful of all external interference, be it political or economic. Through the notion of “field of cultural production” conceived by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, this fundamental opposition of radically different definitions is viewed as a struggle between heteronomous and autonomous principles of hierarchisation. The autonomous position of artists excluded from the public artistic life by the process of „normalisation“ (the so-called Generation of the sixties) as well as a different though related position of younger artists of the „Generation of the seventies“ are separately analysed. The rise of the Prague Action Art Circle and Brno Conceptual Art Circle is conceived as a veritable symbolic revolution of the seventies in the domain of pure art.