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Worlds on View: Visual Art Exhibitions and State Identity in the Late Cold War

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Art History, Theory, and Criticism

by

Nicole Murphy Holland

Committee in charge:

Professor John C. Welchman, Chair  
Professor Norman Bryson  
Professor Robert Edelman  
Professor Grant Kester  
Professor Kuiyi Shen

2010

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family, Lindsay, Emily, and Peter Holland, whose unswerving support and devotion has made this project possible.

*I didn't know at the time that John Wayne was an American icon. I thought the painting was just another picture of a cowboy.*

Vladimir Mironenko, commenting on the painting *John Wayne* by Annette Lemieux.

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and Tim Wollaeger, and Sandy Worcester for their many kindnesses and helpful suggestions at critical moments of this project.

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 2007 Curator, **Maurice Braun: The Hidden Treasure**, Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD  
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 2001 Curator, **Capturing the Light, Visions of the Land**, San Diego Historical Society

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Worlds on View: Visual Art Exhibitions and State Identity in the Late Cold War

by

Nicole Murphy Holland

Doctor of Philosophy in Art History, Theory and Criticism

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor John C. Welchman, Committee Chair

In this dissertation I argue that strategies of Cold War (1945-1991) cultural diplomacy engaged by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., specifically visual art exhibitions, are a logical outgrowth of the practices of world's fairs and national exhibitions developed during the nineteenth-century. I contend that the quality of diplomatic-

style neutrality characteristic of these earlier models compelled their adoption in a more perilous era. I examine U.S. and Russian/Soviet exhibitions at selected moments of political, cultural, or socioeconomic transformation within a genealogy of exhibition functionality that I construct from its origin in the medieval world, its proliferation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and its instrumentalization during the Cold War. I focus on one case study from the late Cold War, the exhibition *10 + 10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (1989-90), a unique project jointly organized by U.S.S.R. and U.S. officials and curators, and circulated in both countries.

In all these examples, I demonstrate the creation of a temporary space in which information was presented appositionally, with the possibility, but not the guarantee, nor even the expectation, of dialogue or political transaction, providing, in the late Cold War, a neutral space for the advancement of geopolitical awareness and potential understanding. At the end, my research reveals that, during the Cold War, visual art exhibitions, like other cultural interventions including music, dance and theater, served as instruments of cultural diplomacy, providing neutral zones where assertions of national identity, fixed or changing, circulated freely, without agency or conclusions. My research is based on interviews with actors in late Cold War cultural diplomacy, including artists, art critics, diplomats, and government officials.

## Introduction

By the time of the 1878 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris, exhibitions of fine art had become a frequent feature of world's fairs. Nations entered into mutual competition, deploying the arts in elaborate displays of cultural patrimony, just as they vied in the mercantile realm. On display in the Russian pavilion during the 1878 *Exposition*, a large figurative painting by Ukrainian-born artist Ilya Repin, entitled *Barge Haulers on the Volga River* (1870-73, fig. 1). First shown to European audiences at the 1873 Vienna *Weltausstellung*, and again at the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*, Repin's painting depicts workers scrabbling a livelihood hauling barges through the shallows of the Volga to the next deep water passage. The blinding, radiant heat of the sun bleaches sky, water and land, and the viewer is involuntarily caught up in the suffering and sweat of the straining laborers. The figures, their faces inscribed with the inhumanity of the task, form a forceful raking diagonal to the picture plane that metaphorically impales the viewer. The upright youth at the center contrasts sharply with the bent column of older workers, who are rendered in monochromatic browns. Erect in white and sanguine clothes and angled slightly to the right in counterpoint to the workers, he looks up and beyond them to the distance, where a pure-white sail is seen. A double meditation on youth and age as well as hope and discouragement, the figure of the rosy-cheeked, unbowed young man rhymes with the boat's white canvas, suggesting the possibility of a different social order. Consonant with the reform spirit of later nineteenth-century Russia, *Barge Haulers on the Volga River* constitutes a tableau of humanity harnessed like oxen,

forming a critical commentary on the conditions of lower-class labor in post-emancipation Russia and the prospect for redemption.<sup>1</sup>

One French critic reviewing the *Exposition Universelle* compared Repin's *Barge Haulers to Stonebreakers* by Gustave Courbet, and deemed it capable of inspiring the (by then deceased) social radical Pierre-Joseph Proudhon.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Soviet art historian Dimitrii Sarabionov, writing in Gorbachevian Moscow for a western publication, comments on the emotive power of the social subjects of Wanderers realism, and the *Barge Haulers* in particular: "Here we find the whole populace of pre-reform Russia, with its cruel constraints and its dormant power. Here also is the essence of genre painting as interpreted by the Wanderers, where protest is mingled with faith in the nation's awakening. The shift to a positive premise which pervades the painting is given further expression in its monumental scale." The reformist note of this description aligns this text, and the *glasnost* era in which it was written, with the storied chronicles of nineteenth-century Russian reformers. See D. Sarabionov, "The Rise and Fall of the Wanderers," *The Wanderers: Masters of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Painting*, ed. Elizabeth K. Valkenier, (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1991), 34. Valkenier, author of the first critical biography of Ilya Repin in the English language, describes his encounter with the barge haulers near St. Petersburg in 1868: "The sight of human beings trudging wearily along the river bank towing heavy cargo shocked him." Repin came to know the haulers as "not mere beasts of burden, but highly original and interesting personalities whom he came to admire as personifications of ancient wisdom and fortitude." Elizabeth K. Valkenier, *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 36, 39.

<sup>2</sup> "Proudhon, who was so affected by Courbet's *Stonebreakers*, would have found here a great occasion for inspiration." See Paul Mantz, "Exposition Universelle," *Gazette des beaux arts*, 17 (1878): 41, in Valkenier, *The Wanderers: Masters of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Painting*, 39, FN37. Russian critic A.V. Prakhov, reviewing the *Sixth Traveling Exhibit of the Wanderers* in Russia, lavishly praised Repin's *Barge Haulers*, noting its commitment to subject matter of the time. Prakhov's commentary was consonant with the definition of Realism promulgated by Gustave Courbet, in his statement on Realism (1855). Prakhov wrote: "Our social genre has so far been much too close to literature, it said far too much, too earnestly, and portrayed things too inadequately. ... This trend must come to an end! ... The end is here with the appearance of the *Barge Haulers*, where simple figures of our time, indeed from a most neglected social class, whom some consider the dregs of society and others, the very roots of that society, have been acknowledged and portrayed with such love, with such seriousness and reverence, that you would think that you were looking at

nineteenth-century Russian writer V.V. Stasov reported the reaction of an unidentified French critic, who commented: “Here dreadful ills and cruel savagery have come together. The painting is striking, and most certainly it opens horizons on the Russian people.”<sup>3</sup> For this non-Russian critic at least (if, indeed, Stasov’s figure was not a useful fiction), Repin’s work reached its target as a portrayal of contemporary, non-elitist Russian society for international audiences.

Repin was a prominent member of the Russian art society known as The Wanderers, a group of artists organized in 1870 and dedicated to the depiction of realistic, contemporary subject matter under the influence of French Socialist-inspired, Russian writer Nikolay Chernyshevsky.<sup>4</sup> The group set out to expose social realities through the circulation of exhibitions to audiences in the provincial cities of

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figures from the greatest religious legends.” An inherent contradiction lies in Prakhov’s encomium for Repin’s painting: while calling for an art of “our time,” Prakhov is compelled to draw the comparison with religious heroes, leading to the conclusion that the subjects of realism cannot stand on their own terms. See A.V. Prakhov, “The Sixth Traveling Art Exhibit at the Society for the Promotion of Art,” The Wanderers: Masters of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Painting, 189. For Courbet’s statement, see Charles Harrison, Paul Wood, and Jason Gaiger eds., Art in Theory, 1815-1900 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1998), 372.

<sup>3</sup> V.V. Stasov, “*Nashi itogi na vseмирnoi vystavke*,” Izbrannoe I (Moscow-Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1950), 67, quoted in: Janet Kennedy, “Pride and Prejudice: Serge Diaghilev, the Ballet Russes, and the French Public,” Art, Culture, and National Identity in Fin-de-Siecle Europe, ed. Michelle Facos and Sharon L. Hirsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91.

<sup>4</sup> Nikolay Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) wrote the novel What is to be Done, a critique of tsarist society, while confined to Peter and Paul Prison, St. Petersburg, in 1863. See N. Chernyshevsky, What is to be Done, trans. Michael R. Katz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

Russia.<sup>5</sup> Like itinerant medieval fair-workers, moving from town to town, these painters literally “wandered” the countryside in caravan, transporting their work by wagon, and installing temporary exhibitions in various regional centers. Given the reformist and populist nature of the work of the Wanderers, the display of the *Barge Haulers* in official international exhibitions held in the capitals of Vienna and Paris raises many questions.

What purpose did the exhibition serve for the Russian state? What role did the tsar, or his government, play in the selection of work for the 1873, 1878 and 1889 exhibitions? The 1878 exhibition was mounted in the same year as the Congress of Berlin, a meeting of the European Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in the surrender of territorial gains made by the Russian Empire in the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78). The imperial court of Tsar Alexander II, alternately promoting progressive reforms and countenancing repressions, had liberated all Russian serfs in 1861, thus creating a new class of poor peasants, disenfranchised from feudal labor, yet unable to buy land at the exorbitant prices on offer. The imagery of long-suffering labor conveyed in Repin’s canvas portrays, in actuality, those recently emancipated, proletarian peasants. The intentions underlying the roles and purposes of the state in the inclusion of the Repin painting in the Russian

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Valkenier comments: “Although the art of the Wanderers passed through different phases during the more than three decades of the group’s preeminence, throughout the work one characteristic predominated: an intense commitment to Russian subjects and scenes. This distinguishing quality was grounded in the conviction that art should serve a public, social function—conveying civic, moral, or national values—rather than focus on aesthetic expression and stylistic refinement.” Valkenier, The Wanderers: Masters of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Painting, 1.

Pavilions of the *Weltausstellung* and the *Exposition Universelle*, and the critical reception of the work as a measure of the state of Russian society, are issues that lie at the heart of this project and will be addressed throughout.

While it may never be known why the Russians sent such a pointed social statement to Vienna and Paris as a representative work of art of the state, it is known that in preparation for the Chicago *Columbian Exposition* of 1893, the Russian Empire refrained from exhibiting works of social critique on the international stage.<sup>6</sup> The displays shifted to the folk arts, icons, and traditional Russian architecture—anodyne choices building a picture of the charm and stability of Russian life in a country dependent in many ways on western support. In contrast, displays of jeweled eggs, boxes and other luxury goods by émigré designer and jewelry maker Carl Fabergé at the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* proclaimed the sophistication, wealth and power of the tsarist court. Together, the two strands of the elite and popular arts mediated the Russian national identity to western European audiences, replacing the earlier, confessional mode of Repin’s realism.

At the fairs cited above, as indeed for most of the world’s fairs and national exhibitions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is clear that a temporary space arose from a combination of conditional factors: the hosting country, the diplomatic negotiations attending the organization, and the sites and

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<sup>6</sup> Janet Kennedy states: “By the 1890s, nearly all parties in Russia, including the tsar himself, were anxious to counteract this type of perception.” Kennedy, “Pride and Prejudice,” 91.

spectacles of the participating nations. These temporary, situationally specific assemblages offered a zone of neutrality for the safe provision of the dissemination of national information regardless of the political or social conditions of the exporting and/or hosting nation.<sup>7</sup> For example, in her study on the role of art in the promotion of German nineteenth-century identity, Francoise Forster-Hahn recounts the events of German participation in the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War. She states: “Political strategies not only determined the organization of this complex and costly venture but also shaped its content. *Reich* [artist and exhibition organizer] insisted on ‘*hors concours*’ status because it [Germany] did not want to concede to the defeated nation the privilege of decorating artists of the victor.”<sup>8</sup> In many ways, this temporary space promoted a mission similar to that of the diplomatic embassy, offering the same immunities in the enunciation of national identity. Indeed, from their beginnings in early nineteenth century displays of

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<sup>7</sup> The diplomatic negotiations attending the first world’s fair, the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations*, held in London, 1851 (also known as the *Great Exhibition*, and, most famously, the *Crystal Palace Exhibition*) are discussed in chapter one. During the Cold War, the exhibitions of the U.S.S.R. and U.S. traveling to each other’s country, were protected by immunity from seizure by letter of the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. and by the Congress of the United States, through 1967 legislation (except during the era of the Carter Chill, and the interruption of diplomatic relations). According to a veteran cultural diplomat, “the exhibits themselves were the property of the government and in a sense covered by sovereign immunity—that would go both ways. The guides traveled on diplomatic passports so they were protected.” See Yale Richmond, author correspondence. (For this, and for all subsequent interview and correspondence notes, see Appendix). The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963) provided international protection, exempting one sovereign from litigation in another sovereign’s court.

<sup>8</sup> See Francoise Forster-Hahn, “Constructing New Histories: Nationalism and Modernity in the Display of Art,” *Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889-1910*, *Studies in the History of Art*, 53, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Symposium Papers XXXI (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 73.

commercial and cultural commodities at trade fairs, rising through the international network of world's fairs and national shows in place before 1900, exhibitions had become both agents and representatives of the nation-state and its ideology, as well as the most significant objects of cultural diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> By virtue of their display of fragments of the industrial, technological and cultural whole, many export exhibitions served as metonyms of the nation-state. As Frederik Gutheim pointed out in 1939, through the evolution of exhibition display techniques from the early practice of presenting actual, complete objects to the rise of models, dioramas,<sup>10</sup> photographs and maps, exhibitions could move between the tangible and the intangible, progressing from the material display to the virtual representation of the abstractions of the state.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Forster-Hahn reaches a similar conclusion, though she is in error in claiming German precedence for the practice at the site of the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*. She states: "The German art exhibition at the Paris World's Fair of 1878 established an important paradigm for the future: the total instrumentalization of art displays for purely political purposes, and the broad recognition that the selection and installation strategies of artifacts can serve as a powerful means of national self-representation. Thus exhibitions, reaching as they did a wide international audience and operating successfully in the domain of commerce and tourism, increasingly became part of popular culture and entertainment." In actuality, the retrospectives of French art mandated by Emperor Napoleon III at the site of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* clearly preceded the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*, and assuredly served as political propaganda. See Forster-Hahn, "Constructing New Histories," 72.

<sup>10</sup> A term employed beginning in the nineteenth-century, "diorama" was used to describe the *The Great Exhibition* (1851): "The statesman and the philosopher, the manufacturer and the merchant, and all enlightened observers of human nature, may avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by their visit to this Diorama of the Peaceful Arts, for taking a more correct view of the industry, the science, the institutions of this country." Charles Babbage, *The Exposition of 1851* (London: John Murray, 1851; reprinted Farnborough: Gregg Int. Pub. Ltd., 1969).

<sup>11</sup> Frederik A. Gutheim, architect, urban planner, and government official, comments, "Later by the device of the model (including the diorama), the photograph, the map, and other means, additional activities of the government were portrayed. With the advance of the exhibition technique it gradually became possible to get away from tangibles and to describe some of the less concrete but often more important work of

In this dissertation I argue that strategies of Cold War (1945-1991) cultural diplomacy employed by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., specifically visual art exhibitions, are a logical outgrowth of the practices of world's fairs and national exhibitions developed during the nineteenth-century. I contend that the quality of diplomatic-style neutrality characteristic of these earlier models compelled the adoption of similar modes in a more perilous era. In this study, I examine U.S. and Russia/Soviet exhibitions at selected moments of political, cultural or socioeconomic transformation within a genealogy of exhibition functionality that I construct from its origin in the medieval world, its proliferation in the early nineteenth-century and its instrumentalization during the late Cold War. I focus on one case study from the late Cold War, the exhibition *10 + 10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (1989-90), a unique project jointly organized by officials and curators of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and circulated in both countries.<sup>12</sup> I will show that *10 + 10* paralleled

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the government.” Federik A. Gutheim, “Federal Participation in Two World’s Fairs,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (October, 1939), 619. As stated in the introduction to his article, “Frederick Gutheim is Assistant Director of the Informational Service Division of the United States Housing Authority. Graduating from the University of Wisconsin, he was a junior staff member of the Institute for Government Research, Brookings Institution, and Assistant to the Chairman of the Social Science Research Committee at the University of Chicago. He was consultant to the Committee on Theme of the New York World’s Fair, and program director of the U.S. Golden Gate International Exposition Commission.” I return to his analysis in chapter two.

<sup>12</sup> The only other major joint exhibition project of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War was the ethnographic exhibition entitled *Crossroads of Continents* (1988-1989), organized by the Arctic Study Center, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and the Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., Commissions on the Humanities and Social Sciences of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. William Fitzhugh, author correspondence.

efforts in other arenas, such as the earlier *Apollo/Soyuz* joint space project (1975), in the creation of a space in which information was presented in tandem, or appositionally, with the possibility, but not the guarantee nor even the expectation, of dialogue or political transaction. Just as with *Apollo/Soyuz*, the project *10 + 10*, and other visual arts exhibitions of the era, whether unilateral or bilateral, offered an alternative model to Cold War nuclear weapons discussions, generating neutral spaces for the advancement of geopolitical awareness, potential understanding, and possible rapprochement. The polyvalent history of late Cold War cultural diplomacy is not yet fully articulated in the research literature, and it is my hope that this study will provide some groundwork for this last chapter in Cold War debates. At the end my research will reveal that, during the Cold War, visual art exhibitions served as instruments of cultural diplomacy, providing neutral zones where assertions of national identity, fixed or changing, circulated freely, without agency or conclusions. In turn, the space of the national exhibition might be seen to offer a metaphor for the end of the Cold War itself. As noted in chapter four, Gorbachev's unwillingness to terminate the Cold War without provisos against any claim for victory by either side models the conditions of neutrality and immunity offered by cultural locations and events that I will trace, effecting a "draw," stasis, or cease-fire in this post-modernist era.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>I am extremely grateful to Norman Bryson for his rich insights concerning aspects of the nature of consular diplomacy, as well as the conditions of post-modernity attending the end of the late Cold War.

I will examine selected exhibitions in revolutionary France, imperialist Russia, and federal America, and subsequent articulations in the twentieth century. Beginning with the founding of the world's fair with the *Crystal Palace* exhibition in London, 1851, I note the consular nature of the international exhibition. I then shift the debate to study the sociopolitical meaning of several important, state-sponsored exhibitions staged in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War, from the period of late Stalinism through the Khrushchev Thaw, and into the period of what I term the Brezhnevian "quiet," culminating in the *glasnost* era. Nowhere in world history have the stakes been higher for cultural diplomacy in general than during this prolonged period of nuclear threat. The spaces and instantiations of cultural diplomacy are seen to operate as metaphoric weapons in an ideological battle, what President Harry S. Truman called "a struggle, above all else, for the minds of men."<sup>14</sup> The notion of ideology to which I appeal, the idea of ideology as sociopolitical reality, constructed, naturalized, shared, is based on Slavoj Zizek's definition: "Not simply a 'false consciousness,' an illusory representation of reality ... [ideology] is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as ideological."<sup>15</sup> In other words, perceived reality is the basis for both the apprehended actuality and the ideological mental landscape of the social being. Zizek's definition grants permission for the straightforward analysis of ideologically determined objects, strategies, and events on their own terms, without further intervention into their genitive substrata. I take the

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<sup>14</sup> Walter Hixson, Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945-1961 (New York, St. Martin's Griffin, 1997), 14.

<sup>15</sup> Slavoj Zizek, The Sublime Object of Ideology (London: Verso Books, 1989), 21.

delivered ideological object at its face value, at the moment of its exhibition, and in its juxtapositions with other ideologically informed objects in that exhibition.

With regard to the space of exhibitions, a key aim of this study is to assess how exhibitions have functioned theoretically as special sites outside “ordinary” or common space and time for the presentation of cultural and national ideologies, representing homeland and alien other through the agency of objects on display. One striking model generated from the cinematic world is the 1991 film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* (fig. 2). Written in response to the collapse of the Berlin Wall two years earlier the film’s subtitle is a quotation from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.<sup>16</sup> Lest there be any doubt on the part of the audience as to the metaphorical nature of the series (and this episode in particular) in relation to policies and practices of the Cold War, Christopher Plummer’s General Chang intones to Captain Kirk, “In space all warriors are cold warriors.”<sup>17</sup> In the film, avowed enemies—the Klingons and officers of the United Federation of Planet Starfleet—are forced to find common cause in the wake of the physical peril of a subspace shock wave. The dining room of U.S.S. Enterprise, under the command of Captain James Tiberius Kirk (not pictured),

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<sup>16</sup> Leonard Nimoy, Lawrence Konner & Mark Rosenthal (screenplay by Nicholas Meyer & Danny Martin Flinn) *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, directed by Nicholas Meyer, Paramount Pictures, 1991. The subtitle of the film quotes: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act III, scene 1.

<sup>17</sup> Created by Gene Rodenberry, Nicholas Sarantakes writes, “the Cold War allegory of the conflict between the Federation and the Klingons was introduced in the television episode, *Errand of Mercy*, which first aired on 23 March 1967.” He continues, “*Star Trek VI* features a complex narrative of a thwarted anti-accomodation conspiracy,” a plot to block reconciliation efforts with the Klingons. See Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, “Cold War Pop Culture and the Image of U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 7, 4, Fall 2005, 80, 100.

dressed in full European imperial uniform, is the stage for the encounter between the two sides, each as strange, unknown and marvelous to the other as were so many Soviets and Americans during the period of the Cold War. Despite petty criticisms, bad table manners, mutual suspicions, and harrowing betrayals, the wise Dr. Spock knows that “there is an historic opportunity here,” and it is made clear that peace is valued at any price. The so-called old Vulcan proverb “only Nixon could go to China” is invoked during a moment of high tension and paranoia, while recognition of a shared culture that is the language of Shakespeare, beloved by both sides, provides the script on this stage for an accommodation of differences. The dining room space, occupied briefly, and evincing the temporary exhibition hall or the fairground, is a contoured, time-bound site, granting license to experiences that are out of the ordinary. The Star Wars model of intergalactic cultural and administrative diplomacy offers a strikingly useful analogy to some of the main contentions of this study.

### *Theoretical Underpinnings*

Scholarly examination of visual arts exhibitions, the nature of their space, and their role in national definition, reaches across many fields of enquiry. Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson’s ground-breaking formulation of a nation as a political community unified on the basis of shared practices of language, cultural custom and ritual, and bounded by temporal and geographic perimeters, offers a

starting point.<sup>18</sup> My study addresses the obverse of the Andersonian community, what Frank A. Ninkovich calls “mutual enmity,” the chaotic Tower of Babel that, absent a shared language, ensues in situations of non-dialogical confrontation. On occasion, the inability of nations, by virtue of their different languages and customs, to communicate with each other calls into question the very possibility for intercultural understanding, giving rise to “the vacuum of intercultural silence” and its corollary, the logic of force, underwritten by what Ninkovich calls the “language of power.”<sup>19</sup> In the Tower of Babel, however, a new appositional space in place of the failed dialogic can arise in the realm of visibility, though one that is just as replete with opportunities for misinterpretation, misunderstanding and conflict.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London: Verso Books, 2006, 1991, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> Frank Ninkovich, “Culture, Power and Civilization: The Place of Culture in the Study of International Relations,” On Cultural Ground, Essays in International History, ed. Robert David Johnson (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1994), 8. “Ever since the nineteenth century, a basic element of self-legitimation for nation-states has been the belief that they were the avatars of unique and incommensurable cultural forms that, of necessity, promoted mutual enmity. The ability of nations to speak a common language of power as an ersatz form of discourse was the result precisely of their inability to speak to one another in culturally meaningful terms. The logic of force as a universal form of rationality thereby becomes, somewhat paradoxically, a substitute for intercultural rationality, filling in the vacuum of intercultural silence with a language of power.” The logical consequence of this proposition for Cold War II protagonists was unthinkable.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Cook, co-author of the theatrical revue *Beyond the Fringe*, put it incisively in a skit: “I went first to Germany, and there I spoke with the German Foreign Minister, Her... Herr and there, and we exchanged many frank words in our respective languages; so precious little came of that in the way of understanding. I would, however, emphasize that the little that came of it was, indeed, truly precious.” The hilarious absurdity of this diplomatic mission, including the vacuous optimism of its concluding report, well exemplifies Ninkovich’s observation. See Allan Bennett, Peter Cook, Jonathan Miller and Dudley Moore, The Complete Beyond the Fringe (London: EMI Records Ltd., 1996).

Brian Wallis extends the Andersonian model specifically to the realm of visual representations: “Such representations are not just reactive (that is, depictions of an existing state of being), they are also purposefully creative and they can generate new social and political formations ... cultural representations can also be used to produce a certain view of a nation’s history.” For Wallis, this social construct of shared visibility is politically determined; the sociopolitics of visibility, in turn, shapes national and export exhibitions.<sup>21</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett also builds on the Andersonian model in her study of exhibition culture, including world’s fairs that “offer for analysis a virtual phantasmagoria of ‘imagined communities’ and ‘invented traditions.’” For her, the physicality of the objects on view does not preclude casting them in their role as virtual representatives of the nation in its ideological entirety.<sup>22</sup>

The notes of Walter Benjamin concerning the histories and implications of exhibitions, contained in The Arcades Project, lead my enquiry from a general consideration of the qualities of exhibitions to the rise of national exhibitions in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>23</sup> Benjamin’s all-too-brief and thought-provoking comments on world’s fairs offer important historical detail and rich propositions for this study. Benjamin’s major insight, as advanced in his groundbreaking essay

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<sup>21</sup> Wallis, “Selling Nations: International Exhibitions and Cultural Diplomacy,” Museums, Culture, Histories, Discourses, Spectacles, ed. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 266.

<sup>22</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999).

entitled “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” is that the single, unique object loses its aura in the era of mechanical reproduction, shifting from singularity to Marxian collectivity. The collapse of the aura, and the attendant telescoping from the distant to the near, is coincident historically with the development of new structures and etiquettes for exhibitions.<sup>24</sup> In fact, this shift is crucial to the rise of the national exhibition and the consumption of the spectacle within the context of the international world’s fair, as well as to the notion of a constellation of nations that transcends the particularity of any single national entity. In this sense, world exhibitions, like Olympic games, for example, are totalizing wholes that contain the metonymic parts of the participating nation-states, and bring the distant near. Further, Benjamin’s notion of the move from the nineteenth-century bourgeois interior and its world of objects to the public spaces of the museum and the arcade can be related to his meditations on the consumption of nation-states in displays of industry and fine arts at the sites of world’s fairs. From interior to museum, to shop and fair, the luxury commodity moves in a closed circuit of consumption. These speculations assist with our understanding of twentieth-century Soviet participation in international exhibitions, neatly ironing out the episodic paradoxes of Soviet object presentation, at the *New York World’s Fair* (1939) for example, and offering an explanation for the Marxian concessions that must be made in the inexorable march to the socialist state.

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<sup>24</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Illuminations (New York: Schocken Books, 1988).

Western capitalist attitudes toward the international exhibition are, on the other hand, conveyed in a telegram from U.S. Minister to Argentina, William I. Buchanan, to newspaper publisher Moses P. Handy, then serving as U.S. Special Commissioner to the 1900 Paris *Exposition Universelle*. The remarks contained in the message seem to embody what Benjamin perceived in his meditation on the inescapability of consumerism in nineteenth-century culture. Handy had earlier served as director of publicity for the 1893 *Columbian Exposition* in Chicago, a world's fair which, among its other achievements, had introduced the Ferris Wheel and featured the architecture of American proto-modernist Louis Sullivan (designer of the Transportation Building). Buchanan comments on the upcoming spectacle of the 1900 fair, advocating for what he passionately believes to be the nationalist goals of the U.S. presence in Paris:

I believe we should not waste our ammunition there on sentimentalities—Prison Reform, Bible Societies, Educational Systems, Municipal Government, Fine Art, etc., etc.—these, or some of them, might ornament the table, as it were. From my point of view . . . what we should do there would be to try to force a breach in the trade wall of every country for new lines of our goods—to work with but one object in view by virtue of their different languages and customs—that of endeavoring to keep our skilled labor employed.<sup>25</sup>

Buchanan dismisses a customary missionary feature of nineteenth-century world's fairs, one promoting religion, education, reform, or even the fine arts, all of which are viewed as impediments to his real plan for the U.S. pavilion. The sheer purity of

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<sup>25</sup> Diane P. Fischer, ed., Paris 1900: The 'American School' at the Universal Exposition (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press & The Montclair Art Museum, 1999), 123.

American mercantilist goals, as articulated by Buchanan, is surgically precise in the formulation of a military-style incursion at the site of the world's fair.

Buchanan's position statement summarizes the entire spectrum of attitudes toward world's fairs at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Comprising cultural, economic and industrial spectacles, world's fair exhibitions incorporate propagandistic aspects of both the military and the missionary in their strategic incursions and claims for power. This dual model would persist in the period of the Cold War as, in the case of the first, art exhibitions and exchanges offered one battleground for "psychological warfare," in the words of President Eisenhower.<sup>27</sup> This neutral venue was situated outside the potential nuclear in the fight for economic, ideological and geopolitical hegemony, or as Truman described it, the battle for "hearts and minds."<sup>28</sup> As for the second aspect, Haddow states "the notion that the United States had a sacred mission, or at least an obligation, to export freedom, democracy, and capitalism was rarely questioned during the Eisenhower years." Haddow appropriates missionary language, characterizing propaganda as "gospel," and invoking both Wendell Wilkie's "one-worldism," and the "new

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<sup>26</sup> Ted Tanen, government official in charge of several U.S. international festivals, echoes Handy in his transparently profit-oriented rationale for these events: "A country may wish to have a more positive image in the United States, or it may wish to encourage tourism and build up new markets for its products." Ted. M.G. Tanen, "Festivals and Diplomacy," Exhibiting Cultures: The Poets and Politics of Museum Display, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 368.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Osgood, Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad, (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2007), 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

humanism” of Henry Luce, son of missionaries to China.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, in this light, many nineteenth-century fairs were accompanied by concurrent conventions of organized religions.

### ***Exhibition Functions***

Scholars investigating the function of exhibitions have offered varying analyses of the values and uses of the international exhibition, through the lenses of culture, economics, religion, or sociopolitics. Basing his contentions on the idea of a “symbolic universe” constructed by sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann,<sup>30</sup> Robert Rydell ponders the power of exhibitions as nations’ representatives: “world’s fairs performed a hegemonic function precisely because they propagated the ideas and values of the country’s political, financial, corporate and intellectual leaders and offered these ideas as the proper interpretation of social and political reality.”<sup>31</sup> Rydell here offers a unifying model of the exhibition as an ideological object unilaterally representing all functions of the nation-state. Meanwhile, Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid describe exhibition sites as, “ideologically charged contact zones between cultures, in which state authorities frequently manipulated the image that their country projected abroad in the interests

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<sup>29</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 1, 26.

<sup>30</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 92-108 cited in: Robert Rydell, *All The World’s A Fair, Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

of national prestige and economic gain.”<sup>32</sup> These authors site the discourse of the function of exhibitions, then, in the realm of national interest and profit; their view of the resultant “charge” is quite different from my focus on diplomatic neutrality.

Robert Haddow extends the work of Rydell in his analysis of 1950s Cold War exhibition culture. He views international trade fair exhibitions as one field in the Cold War propaganda war, with U.S. participation actively engaged in the promotion of values of progress and freedom through consumer culture. He invokes, too, the propagandistic missionary value so readily dismissed by Buchanan, above: “International exhibitions provided excellent opportunities for businessmen to popularize their gospel of free trade, one-worldism, and the benevolent guidance of corporate leadership.”<sup>33</sup> Wallis analyzes, in a similar light, the rise of international cultural festivals in the U.S. in the 1980s and 1990s. *Mexico: A Work of Art*, for example, featured multiple exhibitions, performances, and cultural events throughout the U.S., including the exhibition *Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*, which traveled to the Metropolitan, San Antonio and Los Angeles County Museums of Art. Wallis rightly locates the festival concept in the domain of cultural diplomacy, but misunderstands its lineage. He states, “To use multicomponent cultural festivals as a form of cultural diplomacy—or, to put it more crudely, public relations—is the latest in a long history of propagandistic deployments of art exhibitions. The festival

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<sup>32</sup>Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid, “A Long Engagement,” *Russian Art and the West: A Century of Dialogue in Painting, Architecture, and the Decorative Arts* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 3.

concept only signals a more aggressive assertion of nationalism and a greater inclination to manipulate the manifold powers of the culture industry.”<sup>34</sup> I argue that the cultural events he examines are not the first manifestation of the national festival, and that the multimedia temporary cultural event arose within the format of the nineteenth-century world’s fair. Finally, generalizing the military metaphor, Joseph Nye, writing retrospectively in the last stage of the Cold War, succinctly theorizes the militancy of exhibitions and their counterparts in dance, music, sports and theater as “soft power” weaponry in the battle for geopolitical influence. Nye contrasts “command power” with “co-optive power,” replacing the military with the strategies of diplomacy, to suggest that “soft power,” or “co-optive power,” is equally poised to achieve political goals.<sup>35</sup> Nye’s theory has become a bedrock of many analyses of cultural diplomacy.

### *The Nature of Exhibition Space*

Shifting from the purposes of the exhibition, I then look into scholarly interpretations of the nature of the temporary space, and the objects displayed within

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<sup>34</sup>Brian Wallis, “Selling Nations,” 265.

<sup>35</sup> “Soft power” is a term coined by Nye to signify cultural and ideological weaponry in the battle for geo-political influence. Nye contrasts command power with co-optive power, and suggests that soft power, or co-optive power, “is in contrast to the active command power behavior of getting others to do what you want. Co-optive power can rest on the attraction of one’s ideas or on the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences that others express ...these soft sources of power are becoming more important in world politics today.” See Joseph Nye, Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of Soft Power (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 31-33.

it. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett characterizes the temporary exhibition as a “space of abstraction,” generating the defamiliarization of objects and providing the opportunity for surprise.<sup>36</sup> The potential transformation of objects by virtue of their disassociation from normative context offers the possibility of a different mode of apprehension. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Robert Herbert both dwell on notions of that which cannot be seen, the former shaping a notion of “virtuality” in contrast to “actuality” in the construct of what she terms “the shrine,” an installation which resignifies an already-existing and signified space. The monument, in this context, functions as a reminder of what went before, is now vanished, and cannot otherwise be seen again. In effect, virtuality is a ghost haunting the space of the present. In his study of the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, Herbert finds that the more astonishing quality of the exhibition format is, simply put, its representation of absence.<sup>37</sup> Fragment, excess, metonym and surplus underpin

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<sup>36</sup>Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 72, 79, FN 1, 294. In her examination of historical and ethnographic exhibitions, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes a space of abstraction offering the opportunity for the juxtaposition of fragments in a new context. “They bring together specimens and artifacts never found in the same place at the same time and show relationships that cannot otherwise be seen.”

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 9. James D. Herbert, *Paris 1937, Worlds on Exhibition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 5. Herbert concentrates on the insufficiency and excess of representation at the world’s fair: “No, the world obviously would not make an appearance in the French capital; only its representation could. And that representation stood in relations of both insufficiency and excess to the world itself: insufficient, to the extent that it lacked the fullness and completeness commonly attributed to that world; excessive, to the extent that it supplemented that world with something beyond itself, that it abstracted from that world a duplicate image to be viewed in Paris.” Lawrence Alloway, relating the Venice Biennale to the world’s fairs of the nineteenth century, views the exhibition *per se* as conveyance to that which is absent, a “compressed journey, the journey to the Orient or to Africa, taken by the exhibition visitor in the course of a single day.” Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale 1895-1968*, Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1968, 36-38.

Herbert's notion of the object and space of display. For Herbert, as with Gutheim and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, visibility and invisibility are crucial issues in his theorizing of the fair. He states:

I will insist, from the start and throughout this argument, on the crucial paradox underlying the rendering of all things visible. Precisely to the degree to which the world in its great extent and diversity became the object of perception in the form of its visual manifestations within the exhibitory spaces of Paris in the late 1930s, the world itself retreated into the invisibility of being that absent thing to which the objects on display referred only from afar.<sup>38</sup>

Herbert's insight regarding the distance between the representative and that which is represented offers one explanation for the particularly striking quality of neutrality at a fair site especially replete in symbols of aggression.

Consideration of the nature of the designated space of exhibitions informs the work of other scholars. For example, Francis Frascina, in describing the activities of the Artists' Protest Committee of Los Angeles (1965), formed in opposition to the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic and the escalation of military action in Vietnam, conceptualizes the ideas, gestures, and actions comprising protest strategies as the "space," the "theatre," the "disposable and transitory life of the streets," fusing the visible and the invisible in a unified locus. Frascina notes the symbolic location of the constructed Artist's Tower of Protest, a tower evoking the work of both Simon Rodia and Vladimir Tatlin, as "in the practical and contingent space between utopia and dissent," thus extending the space into more complex fields of sociopolitical

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 7. Herbert's insight may offer one explanation for the particularly striking quality of neutrality at a fair site replete in symbols of aggression.

discourse, as a site of idealism and opposition.<sup>39</sup> Herbert weighs the utopian nature of the exhibition, from the site that is invisible, as Frascina describes, to one that is nowhere, a fundamental definition of utopia, and one collapsing conventional notions of locus. Herbert extracts the characteristics of this site from the text of a contemporary critic of the 1937 fair, André Warnod, who wrote: “As soon as you pass through its gates...you are...in a land that is located nowhere and everywhere at the same time. A land where all notions of distance and time are confounded.”<sup>40</sup> Here, Warnod highlights the otherwise impossible intermingling of histories, chronologies, and geographies within the format of the arbitrary, temporary exhibition, which itself is the marker of the invisible spaces of Frascina’s theater and Herbert’s nations.

One study in particular has provided a framework for thinking about the characteristics of the site so eloquently described by Warnod. In a 1967 lecture, Michel Foucault offered observations on the characteristics of the cultural spaces of his epoch, including simultaneity, juxtaposition, the near and far, the side-by-side, and the dispersed. These led him to craft the notion of heterotopia, a place outside of place, a counter-site, a place existing outside reality but paradoxically a part of

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<sup>39</sup> Francis Frascina, Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 29, 51, FN 61, interview with Irving Petlin, 27 October, 1992, 47.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert, Paris 1937, 16, FN 4.

reality. This kind of space will provide one theoretical starting point for my study.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to utopia, which has no real place but is located in inversion to the culture, Foucault's heterotopia is a counter-utopia located in a real site that also contests and inverts that site. Establishing the grounds for heterotopia, he describes six defining principles. The first claims that heterotopias are elite; the second, that the functions of heterotopic spaces can change as society unfolds; and, according to the third, "the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces." The fourth principle declares that heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time, what Foucault calls heterochronies or absolute breaks with traditional time, as seen in museums and libraries. In Foucault's account, time may be seen in its most fluent and transitory aspect in the mode of the festival, which is temporal. According to the fifth principle, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible; and, finally, the sixth principle outlines the role of the heterotopia in creating a space of illusion that exposes every real space, or else to create another real space of compensation. These principles construct an elegant model for the operations of the museum. But if we emphasize the qualities of temporality and fluidity, they can be seen, as well, to characterize the properties of the temporary visual art exhibition, at the same time describing, according to the sixth principle, its critical function as a "different space."

Thus, the temporary ground of the exhibition site is apprehended theoretically in my project as a heterotopia: a space offering the possibility of a complex

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<sup>41</sup> Michel Foucault, "Des Espaces des Autres," 1967 lecture, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, October, 1984, <http://Foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia>, 6/02/2008, 1, 3.

conjunction of aesthetic, social and political resignifications changing over time; a site in which consciousness is raised and ideologies are interrogated; a site in which a boundless, transcendent sensibility may emerge. Temporary heterotopic sites may shift their meanings and purposes in astonishingly protean transformations, yet carry with them previous associations and memories. The *Champ de Mars* in Paris offers a striking example of a military training ground converted temporarily to exhibition space or awards arena, and, later, site of the *Exposition Universelle* commemorating the French Revolution. Other examples of heterotopias include former Olympic villages; Sokolniki Park, Moscow, the site of the 1959 *American Exhibition*, now an amusement and trade show park; or Flushing Park, Queens, New York, site of the 1939 *World's Fair*, now given over to a number of activities. All are examples of sites whose meaning changes with the redeployment of the space while retaining their ghosts. The site I seek to define may be materially grounded in these spaces, but the site of cultural encounter I investigate rises above the constraints of nationalist shackles to the purer ethers of transnationalism, like a geosynchronous satellite floating in a weightless space. The lack of constraint underpinning this buoyancy owes to the diplomatic nature of the world's fair and official exchange exhibitions, and their presumed immunity. The fact that exhibitions function as literal representatives of the nation that conveys them preserves them, in effect, from attack and seizure while on foreign soil, permitting the transcendence of disagreements. Thus, it has been possible for past and present enemies to host exhibitions while simultaneously negotiating terms of agreements.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See FN 7.

As time-bound metonyms, exhibitory heterotopias deeply influence the physical design and execution of their projects in ways that may be liberating. This is addressed quite pragmatically in the introduction to the guidebook for the British Pavilion at the 1939 *New York World's Fair*:

An attempt has been made to illustrate, on such a scale as limitations of space allow, some of the outstanding features of the contribution of the United Kingdom to the arts of peace and the advancement of civilization. The design derives more from the nature of the problem than from the desire to express any particular phase of architectural development. It is contemporary in spirit and makes no conscious acknowledgment to tradition, nor is it modeled on any given prototype. Its mass and detail elements are rather the result of specific aims and requirements arising from the site and the nature of the exhibition.<sup>43</sup>

The driving forces behind the architectural design for the pavilion are, then: the metaphorical value of the exhibition in its representation of the British state; its temporality, precluding any opportunity for, and indeed ruling out the appropriateness of, architectural monumentality; and the unmistakably political intention of the exhibition in the promotion of peace in the critical year of 1939.

In this context, Soviet Constructivist El Lissitzky's formulation of a new definition of monumentality in art and architecture, one that is lightweight, dynamic and transitory in all respects, uses as an example the *Tour Eiffel* (created for the

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<sup>43</sup> Great Britain, Department of Overseas Trade, Guide to the British Pavilion, United Kingdom Section (with references to the Australian Pavilion, the New Zealand Pavilion and the British Colonial Empire Section) (New York: World's Fair, 1940), 5, 9.

centennial celebration of the Revolution during the Paris 1889 *Exposition*

*Universelle*) as an example of his new aesthetic (fig. 14):

Even today the opinion still prevails that A. [Art] must be something created for eternity: indestructible, heavy, massive, carved in granite or cast in bronze—the Cheops Pyramid. The Eiffel Tower is not monumental, for it was not built for eternity but as an attraction for a world fair; no solid masses, but a pierced space needle. We are now producing work which in its overall effect is essentially intangible. For we do not consider a work monumental in the sense that it may last for a year, a century, or a millennium, but rather on the basis of continual expansion of human performance.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, Lissitzky, too, though in a different way from the British overseers, ponders the impermanence of the world's fair site, and the presumed intangibility of objects that (usually, though not in the case of the *Tour Eiffel*) will vanish after the fair, finding in these new monuments qualities that are of significant aesthetic and social value.

One point of departure in the consideration of heterotopia is the ephemeral market fair and its companion, the festival. Both public spheres flourishing together in ancient Rome, they expanded in the Middle Ages as assembly points for products, services, and economic opportunities, as well as arenas for sacred rituals and celebrations, and sometimes both. Attendant to heterotopia is the notion of heteroglossia, Mikhail Bakhtin's term for a polyphony of voices. Heteroglossia offers a model that, to some extent, describes the polyhymnia of the international exhibition.<sup>45</sup> On another level, the fair (or exhibition), seen in the context of its

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<sup>44</sup> El Lissitzky, "A. and Pangeometry," *Europa Almanach*, Carl Einstein and Paul Westheim, eds. (Postdam: 1925), 321. See: Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory: 1900-2000* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1992, 2003), 321.

<sup>45</sup> Bakhtin introduces the notion of polyphony in his study of Fyodor Dostoevsky: "Thus, all the elements of novelistic structure in Dostoevsky are profoundly original;

ancient and medieval origins, is a unique form of temporary spectacle, and as such constructs myriad subject positions. Questions of precisely who is looking, what is being looked at, and how these gazes intersect, tangle, or negate are further questions of this study.<sup>46</sup>

A contemporary example of an elite heterotopic space which stands both outside and within the society whose space it inhabits is the American Embassy, whose international “Art in Embassies” program has featured exhibitions of American works of art in many countries throughout the world since the program’s inception in 1964. Visitor access to this art-for-export program, particularly in high-security venues, is limited. The program is, in fact, a gesture, with little or no intention of packing the same level of “soft power” of the Cold War era. Yet it must be conceded that the presence of U.S. work on foreign soil, particularly in the case of the recently constructed U.S. Embassy in Beijing that opened summer 2008 with a

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all are determined by that new artistic task that only he could pose and solve with the requisite scope and depth: the task of constructing a polyphonic world and destroying the established forms of the fundamentally *monologic* (homophonic) European novel.” Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 5 ff..

<sup>46</sup> Naima Prevots, author of Dance for Export, Middletown (Wesleyan University Press, 1998), put it this way: “And then the big question that was raised is, who are we sending this for? Can we reach everyone, and who are we trying to reach?” Prevots raises basic questions regarding the ranges of domestic and alien sponsorship and reception.

See Center for Arts and Culture, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, National Journalism Program and Arts International, “Cultural Diplomacy in Historical Perspective—from 19<sup>th</sup> Century World’s Fairs to the Cold War,” conference paper, Arts and Minds: A Conference on Cultural Diplomacy, April 14-15, 2003, [www.ccges.yorku.ca/IMG/pdf/Roundtable](http://www.ccges.yorku.ca/IMG/pdf/Roundtable). July 7, 2008.

celebratory exhibition of work by approximately eighteen American and Chinese contemporary artists, is not without significance.<sup>47</sup> This exhibition of the art of two nations in the capital of the largest owner of U.S. debt must be read as a diplomatic gesture, and models the *10+10* exhibition staged during the late Cold War, the focus of this study.

My project aims to build on these important areas of published enquiry and research, expanding the discourse of exhibitions into the arena of the late Cold War where I offer an interpretation of the temporary visual arts exhibition as a potent, yet neutral, site for geo- and sociopolitical encounter. This study investigates the genealogical connections between the trade fair, as well as the public display of fine art, with events commencing in Revolutionary France. International fairs would proliferate in the nineteenth century, including the *Great Exhibition* (England), the numerous *Expositions Universelles* (France) and the *World's Fairs* (America). I will trace the flows of identity, ideology, and propaganda that course through the space of the world's fair, and its subset, the temporary visual art exhibition that became a customary feature of these events.

***The Nature and Function of the Opposition and the Avant-Garde***

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<sup>47</sup> See Jason Edward Kaufman, "Contemporary art 'to connect' in China," *The Art Newspaper*, May 5, 2008.

I have also observed that the dominant or subdominant voice of the avant-garde may often have either a subtle or emphatic role to play in the formation and dissemination of national ideology. In her landmark book The Great Experiment, Camilla Gray quotes Vladimir Tatlin and Kasimir Malevich regarding their perception of the inexorable link between avant-garde practice in the 1910s and the conceptualization of the Bolshevik Revolution. For Tatlin, “The events of 1917 in the social field were already brought about in our art in 1914 when ‘material, volume and construction’ were laid as its ‘basis.’” Meanwhile, Malevich proclaimed that, “Cubism and Futurism were the revolutionary forms in art foreshadowing the revolution in political and economic life of 1917.”<sup>48</sup> These large, “eye-witness” claims for the role of art in the revolution, as reported in Gray’s book, epitomize the symbiosis of avant-garde art and ideology. Indeed, in the early Soviet period, exhibitions proliferated as public venues for display of the laboratory researches of Malevich, Tatlin, and their followers, all in the service of the new state.

Indeed, a vital thread interweaving the theories and practices examined in this study is the gradations of tone between received notions of binaries—position and opposition, official and unofficial, and refuser and refused—which engender a steady-state of pendular opposites. The sense of refusal of the status quo is immanent in the oppositional voice, which is entwined in a complicated relationship with the notion of

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<sup>48</sup> Camilla Gray, The Great Experiment, republished as The Russian Experiment in Art, 1863-1922 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1962), 248.

the avant-garde. Originating as a military term as early as the late fifteenth-century, the term avant-garde was redeployed four hundred years later to describe those art practitioners working in advance of (from within or outside of—and, in both cases, in nonconformity with) the sanctioned, official art practices of the nineteenth and twentieth-century western European and American art academies.

The relations between the notions of rejection of the status quo thus implicit in the avant-garde and political resistance are complicated and often contradictory, collapsing, at times, into subtly graded registers of tension. For example, while dissidence is reactive, the avant-garde is usually proactive; dissidence is purely oppositional in its stance, while the avant-garde is appositional;<sup>49</sup> while dissidence operates in the shadow of the pre-existing social and cultural conditions, by definition, the avant-garde moves forward and out of its context, to anticipate and to out-flank the new, the undefined. The complex relationships between these two forces, their relations with their political regimes, and the nature of their complicity and/or manipulation in the advancement of national ideologies, will inform my study of the official visual art exhibition, with particular reference to the strategies of U.S. and U.S.S.R. projects. Underpinning these considerations of the oppositional artist and his/her function within the format of the exhibition is the work of Bakhtin who

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<sup>49</sup> Theodor Adorno considers the extreme dissident position of silence in a discussion of socialist realism. He imagines “the rejection of art for the sake of art,” the descent into silence with “artworks that fall silent or disappear.” “Rather no art than socialist realism.” For Adorno, the oppositional stance at certain political moments, thus, may necessitate the absence of art. See Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1997, 53.

reconstructs the carnival clown in his Stalin-era dissertation Rabelais and His World.<sup>50</sup> Bakhtin analyzes the character of the holy fool, the principal actor on the stage of oppositional practices, a figure fusing the wise, wandering holy hermits of the Russian countryside with the sacrilegious clowns of carnival seen throughout western culture. Clowns or holy fools circulate on the streets or in court as unofficial, integral members of regulated societies. These characters mobilize the tools of irony, parody, absurdity, and laughter to expose, to satirize and to erase, even if momentarily, the covert boundaries of age or class. Bakhtin explores the figure of the clown/fool, operating at the site of religious rites and festivals and present, in the literature of antiquity, the Middle Ages, the French and English Renaissances, and in his Stalinist-era context.<sup>51</sup> Victor Tupitsyn claims the holy fool for Soviet unofficial

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<sup>50</sup> “But in Rabelais’ mind this [rejection by a fool or madman] actually implies the rejection of the official world with its philosophy, system of values, and seriousness.” Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1984), 261-262.

<sup>51</sup> Bakhtin’s study argues, first, for the role of the carnival clown in the formulation and practices of the French Revolution. He expands this model to shape an argument for the holy fool as the critical outsider in Soviet society. One question underlying this claim centers on the paradoxical significance of the pseudo-religious holy figure in the ultra-secular socialist state. Bakhtin mobilizes the Rabelaisian, holy carnival figure as a model of permitted critique in a society where political party festivals, indeed the Party itself, have eliminated the need for festivals and religious events. The clown, seen in Bakhtin’s Stalinist Soviet Union, offers a model for tolerated, indeed, institutionalized critique, in western Europe, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. in the twentieth-century. (I use the word “tolerated” with care, thinking within the parameters advanced by Wendy Brown, who exposes tolerance as an articulation of institutionalized superiority/inferiority. Wendy Brown, Regulating Aversion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). Writing in exile, Bakhtin reached back to the Roman Saturnalia and Renaissance theater of Rabelais for legitimation in the neoclassicizing “Third Rome” of Joseph Stalin, according to Viktor Misiano. See Viktor Misiano, author interview. The merging of the Rabelaisian fool with the venerable Russian/Byzantine hermit-saint fully establishes the figure in Russian religious and artistic practices, and is heroized, for example, in the work of Russian

art, commenting that, “The role of the holy fool, like that of the hobo, is inseparable from the Russian tradition of opposition to the establishment. An intolerance of power, characteristic of all periods of Russian history, developed to the point that alternative individuality was forced to resort to camouflage.”<sup>52</sup> Tupitsyn’s reading suggests a clandestine role for the Soviet clown, in contrast to the Rabelaisian public mode. Tupitsyn’s is deployed in my consideration of several of the Soviet artists of *10+10*.

Complexities in my consideration of the oppositional role arise in the arenas of U.S. and Soviet ideologies, specifically in the period between the two World Wars. In America, for example, the emergence of intellectual models offering leftist critiques of the social, cultural and political character of the liberal status quo and the evidence for this in art practices of the 1920s and 1930s parallels traces in the Soviet Union of scarcely articulated, yet slightly visible approaches antithetical to the Party line, and thus (perhaps) complicit with liberalism. Questions probing the levels of toleration within the post-Stalinist Soviet state in its approach to the public display of nonconformist art, and in the U.S. with its own, abiding complex relationship with the avant-garde, include the occasional double deployment of the oppositional voice in the representation of national identity and as a surrogate in ideological battle. These

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Wanderer Vasilii Surikov (fig. 18). For discussion of the holy fool see James H. Billington, The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture (New York: Knopf, 1966), 46, 60.

<sup>52</sup> Victor Tupitsyn, “Moscow Communal Modernism, 1950s-1980s,” Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956-1986, ed. Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge (Rutgers: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum and Thames & Hudson, 1995), 87.

lines of enquiry will inform my discussion of the role of visual arts exhibitions of nonconformist Soviet artists and the American avant-garde in Cold War culture. Indeed, they invite consideration of whether, in any theory of national exhibition and ideology, it might be possible to argue against binary antinomies, in favor of some kind of a unifying synthesis. Looking across the discourses of difference and alterity which have marked the emergence of postmodernism in the west, Boris Groys, for example, characterizes the “postutopianism” of the last wave of unofficial Soviet art not as a thinking of difference or as positing one set of relations to an other, but rather as a thinking of “indifference.”<sup>53</sup> Might not the inclusion of the opposition at the site of the international exhibition during the late Cold War be reconsidered through the Groys lens? In the specific case of *10+10*, with its combined checklist of unofficial and a few official artists, might the regime ideology of Socialist Realism be canceled out in a postmodernist gesture of apposition and mutual indifference?

### ***Methodology***

My primary research is based on interviews with artists, art historians, art critics, rock musicians and critics, diplomats, and government officials working in the U.S. and Russia in the era of the late Cold War.<sup>54</sup> Absent the availability of written

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<sup>53</sup> Boris Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism: avant-garde, aesthetic dictatorship, and beyond (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 89.

<sup>54</sup> Freedom of Information Act requests submitted to the archives of the U.S. Department of State regarding the official protocol were fruitless, as were research requests to the archives of the Ministry of Culture, RGALI (Russian State Archive of Literature and Art [*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Literatury i Iskusstva*]), or the

archival documents in either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., the oral accounts will offer a set of claims or contestations about what was and was not understood by governments in the advancement of avant-garde artists on both sides. The justification for my widening of interviews beyond the participants of *10+10* to include a number of members of the unofficial Moscow cultural world lies in the deeply ingrained sense of community inherent in the 1980s. It is this collectivity that secures the relevance of these interviews in framing a narrative of the conditions of art making and viewing in Moscow during the late Cold War. Further support for an expanded enquiry stems from the customary curatorial challenge of adjudication implicit in drawing up any selective exhibition checklist. For *10 + 10*, U.S. and Soviet curators visited a great number of highly eligible artists' studios in Moscow in a short amount of time to develop a relatively small exhibition consisting of the work of twenty artists.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian State Archives, Archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Administration, as well as the State Archives of the former Ministry of Culture, U.S.S.R. My disappointment is assuaged by a comment of Pavel Khoroshilov, Director of ArtCombine, Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. If documents were to be found (and they may be somewhere in a sack or unmarked file in the Ministry) "there would be no record of negotiations, only travel plans," pointing up the lack of a paper trail that was customary practice in many spheres in the Soviet era. Pavel Khoroshilov, author interview. Research in the personal archives of John E. Bowlt resulted in the same conclusion: negotiations between the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. and InterCultura were conducted by telephone, rather than via written correspondence. Another research tool used in previously published work by researchers in the field of earlier Soviet exhibitions, and not available to me, is the visitors' book customarily available for use within the Soviet exhibition display. See, for example, Susan E. Reid, "In the Name of the People, The Manege [sic] Affair Revisited," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, 4 (Fall, 2005), 673-716. Reid mobilizes discursive themes of surveillance and the performing of the self in the analysis of visitors' books in use during the 1962 exhibition. To my regret, my effort to locate any visitors' books in the Artists' Hall, Moscow venue for the exhibition *10+10*, if they indeed they were even in use during this transformational time, has, so far, proved in vain.

Furthermore, a strictly pragmatic limitation was set to include paintings exclusively, ruling out practice in sculpture, for example, or other media such as video and photography.<sup>55</sup>

The interview format has inherent limitations. According to J. Burton and L. Paquariello, the artist interview is a necessary evil: “not quite document, not quite literature, not quite propaganda, not quite staged voyeurism, not quite entertainment, not quite verifiable fact.” They also note “the difficulties, even the impossibilities, of obtaining an outside position or an exterior vantage,” and they view the interview as “an anticritical tool” containing “inherent biases.”<sup>56</sup> However, the usefulness of oral history practice and the role of recent memory in documenting the Bakhtinian heteroglossia—the multiple voices, positions, shadings and nuances—is assessed somewhat differently by Robert Dallek who writes that: “first drafts of history are indispensable assets for future historians. ... the earlier reconstructions remain essential starting points for understanding the past.”<sup>57</sup> Attempting to define what he calls the “substrate” of the interview construct, John C. Welchman notes the potential danger implicit in the format that Dallek lauds, that is, the power of the dominant interviewer and interviewee: “We lose all that makes up this ‘dark side’ as history only preserves the single voice, the voice that remains.” Welchman senses the

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<sup>55</sup> Indeed, any one of the artists in the circle of unofficial Moscow art whom I have interviewed might just as well have participated in the *10 + 10* as those who were finally selected.

<sup>56</sup> Johanna Burton and Lisa Paquariello, “Ask Somebody Else Something Else,” *Art Journal*, 64, 3, Fall 2005, 46-49.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Dallek, review of Elisabeth Bumiller, *Condoleezza Rice. An American Life: A Biography*, Random House, 2007, *New York Times*, December 27, 2007.

possibility that multiple voices, points-of-view, and repressed memories might be foreclosed or extinguished in the hands of a biased interviewer.<sup>58</sup> My analysis will seek to steer between the intrinsic limitations of the artist interview and its necessary deployment in the context of an archival deficit. The arguments of this thesis are anchored in close analysis and reproduction of the languages of both words and images, in the assumption that, like the founding imagery of hieroglyphics, the two are inextricably interlocked.

### *Chapter Synopses*

The first chapter offers a genealogical and critical outline of nineteenth-century practices of public display of the art of nations, in national exhibitions and world's fairs, and the role of oppositional art practices at crucial sites. As mentioned above, the origins of the nineteenth-century world's fair are located in the medieval trade fairs, combining mercantilism with spectacle.<sup>59</sup> In the modern era, I begin with the French Revolution by examining the political persona and exhibition practices of Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), where we can locate one of the most significant public conjunctions of aesthetics and politics in the modern era. (Twentieth-century

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<sup>58</sup> John C. Welchman in conversation with Mike Kelley. See Mike Kelley: Interviews, Conversations and Chit-Chat (1986-2004), John C. Welchman, ed. (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2005), 9, 15-16.

<sup>59</sup> Myroslava M. Mudruak comments on the significance of the fair, without noting its specific characteristics. See Myroslava M. Mudruak and Virginia Hagelstein Marquardt, "Environments of Propaganda: Russian and Soviet Expositions and Pavilions in the West, The Avant-Garde Frontier: Russia Meets the West, 1910-1930 (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992), 65.

Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary Russia, a key site of such an intersection, would invoke the specter of David and the French Revolution in the construction of the Soviet state. From the early days of the national museum established at the Louvre, I trace examples of temporary space public display and their negotiations with nationalism, internationalism, modernism and the oppositional avant-garde, as they correlate with the rise of international fairs in Europe and the United States. I also address issues of nineteenth-century avant-garde realism, setting the stage for the consideration of the complicated role of traditional and advanced art practices in the service of the twentieth-century state across authoritarian regimes and democratic societies.

Chapter two narrows in focus and offers a close description of the role of exhibition practice in the service of the wider political agendas of the Soviet Union and the United States at the site of several key art exhibitions and world's fairs, notably those of 1925, 1937, and 1939. Here I attend to the transformation of earlier exhibition goals from the realms of socioeconomics and geopolitics (for example, "peacekeeping," in the words of Queen Victoria regarding the 1851 *Great Exhibition*<sup>60</sup>), to the promulgation of the authoritarian state and imperialism through the techniques and practices of art and visual display. El Lissitzky's use of the abstract language of the avant-garde in the iconic representation of the Bolshevik state at the site of several European art fairs of the 1920s and 1930s is paralleled in

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<sup>60</sup>Paul Greenhalgh, Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 17.

the modernist pavilion designed by Konstantin Melnikov for the *Exposition Universelle des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* (1925) (fig. 19). By the early 1930s, the repression of modernism ushers in a new era of perversely neoclassicizing monumentality under the aegis of Stalinist Socialist Realism, as witnessed in Vera Mukhina's colossal *The Worker and Peasant Laborer* (fig. 31) fronting the 1937 Soviet Pavilion (fig. 28). The agonistic struggle between the avant-garde and the academic parallels artistic and administrative antagonisms in the U.S., which are examined in chapter three.

In chapter three, I discuss the appropriation of world's fair practices by early and late Cold War "soft power" exchange systems, in a world thought to be teetering on the brink of nuclear disaster.<sup>61</sup> I trace the genealogy of U.S. and Soviet diplomatic practices in cultural diplomacy, and I reexamine scholarship concerning the selective absorption of the left-leaning avant-garde cultural discourse in the U.S. as a useful tool in Cold War politics. Interrogating the assumptions and conclusions of Serge Guilbaut, Eva Cockcroft, Max Kozloff, and Michael Kimmelman in their readings of post-World War II art and U.S. ideology in the organization of internationally traveling art exhibitions, this chapter develops a framework for assessing late Cold

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<sup>61</sup> An early version of this chapter was presented to Robert Edelman, UCSD seminar, Spring 2004, and as a paper at the Cold War Studies Graduate Student Conference, George Washington University, London School of Economics, and University of California, Santa Barbara, April 2007. In addition, research on 1980s Soviet art practices was presented to: John C. Welchman, UCSD seminar, Fall 2003; Robert Tejada, UCSD seminar, Fall 2004; Elana Zilberg, UCSD seminar, Spring 2006; Lesley Stern, UCSD seminar, Winter 2005; Norman Bryson, UCSD seminar, spring 2005.

War U.S. and Soviet art, cultural politics, and diplomacy. Received conspiracy theory implicates the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), its International Council, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as well as the Rockefeller family and its international capitalist network in the covert circulation of American ideology. Cockcroft, in particular, views the MoMA International Traveling Exhibition Program as a tool of U.S. imperialist interests in the Cold War battle against Soviet Communism. This chapter considers whether the program represents a more important agenda for domestic and international audiences: the assertion of U.S. Bill of Rights freedoms in the wake of the McCarthy trauma. Within the framework of this theory, avant-garde art is used against the grain of its points of origination as an emblem of democratic freedom in the Anti-Communism culture wars. The site affords an opportunity for comparison with Socialist Realist practices. While in the latter, the state controls the means of production, in the west, the state is viewed as controlling the means of distribution.

In chapter four, I examine a case study of visual art exhibitions cultural exchange practice, the exhibition *10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters*. I discuss what I term the “Art of the Quiet” practiced by nonofficial artists in a generation that came of age in the grey Brezhnevian atmosphere of nonconfrontation, silence, and “keeping one’s head down,” creating “innovative, alternative practices beyond the eye and reach of the State.”<sup>62</sup> I relate the conceptualization, organization and circulation of the exhibition to the wider,

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<sup>62</sup> Sergey Shutov, author interview.

historical context of Cold War cultural diplomacy and oppositional practice in the 1980s.

Using interviews with the participants in *10 + 10* and other Soviet and American actors in the cultural scene in the later 1970s and 1980s, I attempt to reconstruct some of the contexts that underwrote Soviet unofficial art and ideology in the late Cold War. One aim here is to add the voices of the Moscow artists of the late 1970s and 1980s and their circle to the metanarratives of the Soviet twentieth-century. I also attend to the reactions and reception of the American artists participating in the project. The potential to reconstitute the period of the late Cold War, in part, through the agency of memory, assists, I believe, in reconstructing the conditions of cultural diplomacy of the era, at least through the lens of *10 + 10*. It is my hope that this case study will provide the means to define with greater precision the character and agency of Soviet unofficial art at a crucial and contradictory moment of transformation in the late Cold War. In particular, I hope to shed light on the work of these artists and how they wittingly or unwittingly participated in resignifying the nature and intentions of the U.S.S.R. as they were understood by international audiences viewing this art for export in visual arts exhibitions hosted in galleries and museums in Europe and the United States.

Culture One and Culture Two, Vladimir Paperny's crystalline theory of Soviet cultural practice, offers a useful model for positioning the artists of the late Cold War within a contextual genealogy that ranges from the early Soviet state to the era of

Stalinist Socialist Realism and beyond.<sup>63</sup> Deploying Paperny's model throughout chapters two, three and four, I examine the often overlapping and intermingling worlds of official and unofficial art, and their manipulation by post-Stalinist regimes. Here, I analyze the varying social significations and cultural formations of oppositional and/or avant-garde art as it was shaped and circulated, repressed, tolerated, or promoted at the site of national exhibitions. I look at the role of both western art and the Byzantine tradition in the formation and signification of this last wave of Soviet art, an art that stands outside both the west and "counter-centrist discourses," as "*second-sites of difference*," in the words of John C. Welchman.<sup>64</sup> My research leads to the, perhaps, inevitable conclusion that by the time of the generation of the "Art of the Quiet," the superpowers completely or well understood the power of art for export to communicate ideology in the space granted by the other.

In my conclusion, I offer some perspectives on the conditions and consequences of Cold War cultural diplomacy in the arena of art exhibitions. It had

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<sup>63</sup> Vladimir Paperny, Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; first published in the U.S. in Russian, Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis Publishers 1985); Paperny, "Culture One and Culture Two," Tekstura: Russian Essays on Visual Culture. Edited by Alla Efimova and Lev Manovich (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press), 1993; Alla Rosenfeld, "Soviet Nonconformist Art: Its Social and Political Context," Soviet Dis-Union: Socialist Realist and Nonconformist Art, Minneapolis: The Museum of Russian Art, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> John C. Welchman's *glasnost*-era meditation on the nature of late Soviet art presciently observed first-hand the conclusions to which my research has led me. The intent of Welchman's essay is to define the differences inherent in the Soviet context that underpinned two photography exhibitions on view in Gorbachevian Moscow, and thus to argue against the application of standard western metrics in their assessment. See John C. Welchman, "Photographies, Counter-revolution and Second Worlds: Allegories by Design," Art After Appropriation: Essays on Art in the 1990s (Australia: G+B Arts International, 2001), 65, 90.

been the West's conviction in 1991 that its mission was now complete, an idea now discarded with the re-ignition of Russia/West tensions, the relative absence of cultural dialogue, and the current economic collapse (2008-09). Relations between the U.S. and The Russian Federation continue to influence transnational balances of power, as Alexis de Tocqueville noted in comparing the two countries in 1835.<sup>65</sup> It is hoped that this study will uncover a matrix of issues that will help to clarify the layering of the aesthetic and the political in the art and exhibition practices of a globalized world, with specific significance for Russian/U.S. relations. If the modern period has witnessed the demise and resurgence of state hegemonic systems, I will consider what grounds there might be for the revitalization and reformation of progressive forms of cultural intervention within the transnational context of economic globalism. I will attempt to define what a recuperated post-modernist art exhibition diplomacy might look like, and in which theaters it would play out. The dismantling (in the 1990s), of the United States Information Agency, the decades-long facilitator of cultural diplomacy, marked the rise of more self-referential, self-interested nationalistic policies with no regard for nuance or understanding on the international stage, leading

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<sup>65</sup> De Tocqueville writes: "There are now two great nations in the world which, starting from different points, seem to be advancing toward the same goal: the Russians and the Anglo-Americans...Both have grown in obscurity, and while the world's attention was occupied elsewhere, they have suddenly taken their place among the leading nations, making the world take note of their birth and of their greatness almost at the same instant ... Their point of departure is different and their paths diverse; nevertheless, each seems called by some secret design of Providence one day to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world." DeTocqueville's uncanny, if unwitting, prognostication of the twentieth century Cold War is supplemented by descriptions of enormous specificity and relevance. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. J.P. Mayer, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 412-413.

to less desire for “hearts and minds,” and more for the spoils of traditional conflict. Frank Ninkovich advocates an “ideological compatibility between respective visions of world order,” bound as we are by “global interdependence” to pursue the “dialogic imaginary.”<sup>66</sup> My conclusion similarly argues for the revival of the space for free play among nations, though questioning the significance of the dialogic and arguing, rather, for the return of appositional representation.

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<sup>66</sup> Frank Ninkovich, U.S. Information Policy and Cultural Diplomacy, Headline Series, Foreign Policy Association, 308, Fall 1996, 54, 52.

## **Chapter One**

### **The Origins of the National Fine Arts Exhibition**

The metonymic representation of the sociocultural and/or geopolitical identity of the state in the format of the international exhibition, by which I mean a temporary, time-based display of objects of any kind exported by one or more nations to a host nation, has a rich and complex history. In this chapter I trace the rise of national exhibitions from Revolutionary France through the nineteenth century Industrial Revolution and the birth of the world's fair. I examine the genealogy and nature of the host country's enterprise to repurpose an existing physical space within its geopolitical boundaries for use as an impermanent display, and that of the participating country to occupy that reimagined space. I trace the changing means and aims of time-bound resignification and its implications for host and guest, at selected sites. Within this framework, I focus on the role of visual arts exhibitions as conveyers of identity and ideology in the belief that this offers a strong vantage point from which to observe the evolving geopolitical relationships between Russia and the West.

Any consideration of international exhibition spaces must take into account the heterotopic site of the medieval fair. The fair is a festival stage, a migrant theater, temporarily engorged with city dwellers, rural vendors and sundry visitors, full of

displays of local and exotic animals and goods, and replete with migrant clowns, actors and theatrical props. The fair transgresses the borders of conventional temporality and space. As shown in my introduction, the medieval fair evolved from ancient holy ritual. It quickly became a potent source of political and monetary capital for the hosting town, and from the beginning served as a time-bound locus for the exhibition of goods and services not offered in the regular markets. In fact, as Jean-Christophe Agnew argues, the medieval fair functions as one marker for the birth of the modern world, with the emergence of two public economies, the commercial and the social. Agnew traces the concomitant rise of commodity exchange and representations of the self (including the role of the trickster) in the medieval theater and market, from their origins in rural customs and mores to their presence in increasingly urbanized contexts.<sup>67</sup> Agnew argues for the role of the theater in modeling new social relations and conventions of representation in the new capital exchange economy. The construction of the spectacle of the time-bound fair, including the clown as well as other theatrical characters of carnival afforded the circulation of socially sanctioned, oppositional practices.

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<sup>67</sup> Agnew claims that “It is thus in the evolution of the theater and *its* convention of representation – its theatricality – that I trace a protracted struggle to forge a broader sociocultural accommodation with an expansive system of capital formation and commodity exchange. In these years, the theater became a laboratory of and for the new social relations of agricultural and commercial capitalism, not just a mirror of nature but showing another nature, a new world of artificial persons.” See Jean-Christophe Agnew, Worlds Apart: The Market and The Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), x.

The term “fair” derives from the Latin “*feire*,” holiday, and was in currency by the thirteenth century, while the notion of “holiday” itself derives from holy days, days which were always free from labor. Thus, the term “fair” signifies both leisure and sacred ritual, while “carnival” specifically refers to pre-Lenten fair festivities. The construct of the medieval fair, an ephemeral cornucopia of performers and goods, endured in European society to provide a framework in the nineteenth century for the sacred secular display of the world’s fair.<sup>68</sup>

In The Arcades Project, Walter Benjamin ponders the notions of festival and exhibition, providing an intellectual framework for understanding the spectacular nineteenth-century development of medieval practices and demonstrating their persistence in the exhibition practices of his day. Benjamin traces the evolution of the sacred secular through an architectural genealogy that originates in the cathedral

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<sup>68</sup> The medieval underpinning of the world’s fairs of the nineteenth century is noted by Curtis M. Hinsley: “Like most of the buildings that housed them and the landscapes on which they stood, these exhibitions were ephemeral constructions, at once catalytic and celebratory events, economic risks taken in expectation of future return. They were carnivals of the industrial age, communal activities undergirded and directed by corporate boards and interests of state. None lasted more than six months; collectively their ideological impact was profound and permanent.” See Curtis M. Hinsley, “The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893,” The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 344. Anthony Swift ironizes the term “sacred space” in describing the architecture of the Soviet pavilions at the 1937 and 1939 *World’s Fairs*: “In Paris and New York Boris Iofan employed the architectural language of monumental classicism to design pavilions containing a sacred space that visitors entered to behold the Soviet people’s journey from hardship and revolution to socialism and their new life.” Anthony Swift, “Soviet Socialism on Display at the Paris and New York World’s Fairs, 1937 and 1939,” Kunst und Propaganda im Streit der Nationen 1930 - 1945 (Berlin: *Deutschen Historischen Museums*; Dresden: *Sandstein Verlag*, 2007), 190.

of the Middle Ages, continues through the nineteenth century museum, and is redirected “in the years 1850-1890 [when] exhibitions take the place of museums.”<sup>69</sup> Benjamin suggests that, “world exhibitions are places of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish” and locates their origins in the *Champ de Mars* exhibition of 1798.<sup>70</sup> Benjamin traces the evolution of museum exhibitions from industrial exhibitions and world’s fairs, observing that industrial exhibitions offer a kind of “secret blueprint” for the era of museums and that “the phantasmagoria of capitalist culture attains its most radiant unfolding in the world exhibition [*Exposition Universelle*] of 1867.”<sup>71</sup> Benjamin also maps a lineage from bourgeois collections of objects in private domestic interiors to public exhibitions, and thence to the commercial arcades, the sites of pure consumption, which he terms “phantasmagorias.”<sup>72</sup> The arcades, by his definition, are not greatly different from the exhibitory sites of the 1851 *Crystal Palace Exhibition*, the defining moment for the eruption of the world’s fair. Benjamin also notes that world exhibitions are designed “to entertain the working class, and it becomes for them a festival of emancipation ... The framework of the entertainment industry has not yet taken shape; the popular festival provides this.”<sup>73</sup> Benjamin forecasts that the conveyance of the visual ideology of the state within the framework of the temporary exhibition will become increasingly paired with, indeed mixed with, entertainment exhibitions, evidencing the persistence of the Bakhtinian carnival model. Carnavalesque entertainment,

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<sup>69</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 406.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

commodity display, class consciousness, the collective, the consumer, and the sacred secular in his use of the term “pilgrimage” are all threads coursing from the medieval world to the present, as Benjamin considers the nature of the nation on view within the spectacular framework of the fair.<sup>74</sup>

As Benjamin notes, the emergence of the world’s fair is located in the national exhibitions of eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century France and Great Britain where, from the start, the reimagining and resignifying of space for the display of national production and consumption was enacted. Specifically, French Revolutionary visual culture offers the staging point for a selective history of the rise of visual arts displays within the context of world exhibitions. Its antecedents reach back to the first exhibition of *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* graduates was organized in 1673 by the *Academie Royale de Peinture et du Sculpture*, the official government organ of

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<sup>74</sup> It is tempting to speculate on the possibility that the commodification of the fine arts in the nineteenth-century spectacle of the world’s fairs at least in part contributed to the diminishing aura that he describes in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” where the reproductive arts of photography and film play so strong a role. See Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” Facos and Hirsh note the rising imbrication of the serio-formal and entertainment sectors in the development of the world’s fairs, for example: “in all circumstances, nation-builders relied on visual codes to establish, support, and disseminate their claims.” “Still, the national and international fairs in the late nineteenth century provided perhaps the most ambitious sphere for national visualizations. Although these expositions usually had separate, demarcated areas for official versus entertainment displays, one of the points made by both Hirsh and Switzer was how commingled these distinctions and their respective intentions became by the end of the century.” See Facos and Hirsh, *Art, Culture and National Identity*, 3, 8-9. This comingling of elite and popular displays provides further evidence for the Bakhtinian carnival model discussed in my introduction. The role of entertainment is epitomized in the extraordinary display of Salvador Dali’s pavilion *Dream of Venus*, located in the entertainment section of the 1939 *New York World’s Fair*. (See chapter two).

the visual arts. The exhibition was moved to the *Salon Carré* of the Louvre in 1725, and was opened to the full public in 1737, permitting the mingling of all classes of society in viewing the recent products of the French fine arts system.<sup>75</sup> Deeply tied to national and religious interests, the *Salon* customarily opened on the feast day of St. Louis, the thirteenth-century Crusader king, reflecting the enduring sacred secular nature of French absolutist culture. At the same time, during the French Revolution, the boundaries of the official display mechanism were extended beyond national borders, as participation in the Salon was now open to non-national artists.<sup>76</sup>

The artistic and political role played by Jacques-Louis David offers a compelling case study for any consideration of the role of oppositional art forms within the structure of both the temporary exhibition and the ideology of the state. In David's neoclassical practice, the threads of the avant-garde, revolution, festival, and exhibition—key issues of this study—are strongly interwoven. Perhaps for the first

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<sup>75</sup> For a history of the Salon, see Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 1-7, 33-39.

<sup>76</sup> Looking across to countries outside of France that would play significant roles in the development of an international, circulating culture of exhibitions and politics, The Royal Academy of Arts was founded in London 1769. A site for instruction as well as providing a dedicated exhibition space, it promoted the Enlightenment ideal of the role of the fine arts in a civilized society. Similarly in St. Petersburg, the Academy of the Three Noble Arts (renamed the Imperial Academy of the Arts in 1764) was founded by Count Ivan Shuvalov in 1757, and, following the French model, grew to control all aspects of the arts, including instruction, commissions, and exhibitions, in Russia. This Academy promulgated rigorous instruction, augmented by direct study of the arts of Italy and France. In the United States, the founding in 1805 of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by painter Charles Wilson Peale and others signaled a desire in the young, post-Revolutionary nation for the offering of a prestigious European-style academic instruction and exhibition practice on American soil, which so many artists had continued to seek in England and France.

time, David functioned as painter, teacher, politician, prisoner, and festival planner for the Revolution and the new Republic, circulating a very public radicalism which inverted the terms of both the professional and political systems within which he worked. David campaigned, on a professional level, to release the hold of the French Academy on a bureaucratic system that constrained artists from practicing a style or depicting subject matter considered by the conservative members of the government organization to be outside official boundaries. A member of the Jacobin Club, the extremist branch of revolutionary politics, and elected its president in 1793, David was in fact, imprisoned for his political activities in 1794 by opponents of the Committee of Public Safety. As a festival planner, David designed time-bound, celebratory allegorical spectacles, including the *Festival of Unity and Indivisibility* on August 10, 1793 and the *Festival of the Supreme Being* on June 8, 1794 (fig. 3). These heterotopic sites furnished temporary venues for public affirmation of the new spiritual and political ideals of the Republic.<sup>77</sup>

David infuses a Revolutionary, neoclassical avant-garde in his history paintings, the highest category of academic subject matter, creating very public rallying cries on the shared stage of art and politics. His visual rhetoric draws from notions of statehood, democracy and civic morality promulgated in the Roman Republic, which were, in turn, indebted to the discourse of Periclean Athens. The grounding of David's avant-gardism in the visual ideology of the classical world is

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<sup>77</sup> For descriptions of the *Festival of Unity and Indivisibility* (1793) and the *Festival of the Supreme Being* (1794), see Simon Lee, *David* (London: Phaidon, 1999), 180-181.

clearly visible, for example, in the formulation of a composition based on Greek pedimental sculpture, *The Oath of the Horatii* (commissioned 1784; exhibited in the Salon 1785, fig. 4), a work promulgating the civic good over the individual.<sup>78</sup>

David's radical ideology was not lost on a Soviet critic who, reviewing the 1922 Red Army exhibition of works by AKHrR realist painters in Moscow, lamented the depressing character of Pavel Kuznetsov's painting *The Red Army in 1919* (1921) and called for more of the "revolutionary enthusiasm" of David and his pupil Gros.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Illustrating an historical account of Roman virtue drawn from Plutarch's Lives of the Romans, the painting transmits to the French viewing public a complex message privileging the good of the state over the individual. (Bolshevik enthusiasm for the Davidian formulary must depend on the code of political behavior privileging *polis* over the individual inscribed in David's work.) David recharges the classical theme and narrative within an innovative, neoclassical compositional format featuring a triple-arched theatrical proscenium and a frieze-like bas-relief of overlapping figures. He establishes a triangular composition whose apex meets at the upraised sword, the lines of which slope, to the left, with the triple overlay of brothers, and, to the right, with a descending line of sisters, mothers, and children. The actors are enframed, in other words, in a space modeled on that of the classical, sloping, triangular temple pediment. The implications here inscribed of tactility, solidity, and immediacy in the depiction of the gods, goddesses, and heroes that characterize Greek pedimental relief sculpture are unmistakable. David thus draws from highly charged classical narrative sculptural and architectural vocabularies in his choice of a visual structure that operates forcefully, though subtly, to proclaim the dutiful merits of contemporary civic political virtue. Rejecting almost entirely the tradition of the Rococo imaginary, and that of the *Ancien Regime* which it defined, David's new style revitalizes 17<sup>th</sup> French Classical Baroque history painting, adding a bold theatricality and a compelling immediacy born from a realism dependent on careful modulation of classical models.

<sup>79</sup> The review is quoted in Matthew Bown, Socialist Realist Painting (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 90, 472, FN 308: Pravda, 7, iv. 1923, 2. The optimism called for by the critic resounds in Lunacharsky's 1933 essay on the quality of enduring happiness in the work of the French Impressionist artist Renoir. See Anatolii Lunacharskii, "The Painter of Happiness: On Viewing Renoir's Canvases," Russian and Soviet Views of Modern Art: 1890s to Mid-1930s, ed. Ilia Dorontchenkov (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 303-304.

Indeed, French Revolutionary, Directoire and Empire culture would inflect Russian visuality and culture throughout the nineteenth-century, and during the Bolshevik Revolution of the early twentieth century.<sup>80</sup> The Napoleonic incursion into Russia left complex, lasting traces, and French remained the official language of the tsarist court. In his 1905 historico-materialist essay French Drama and Painting of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, for example, Revolutionary Marxist Georgi Plekhanov wrote extensively about the fusion of classicism and revolution in the art of David.<sup>81</sup> El Lissitzky would proclaim in 1925, “The state has always had its David . . . But at the moment a David is what we don’t have.”<sup>82</sup> In the Stalinist 1930s, the art of David, Delacroix, the Barbizon painters, and Courbet were cited as important precursors in the development and defense of Socialist Realism.<sup>83</sup>

In 1791 David presented his drawing of *The Oath of the Tennis Court* (1791, fig. 5) to the Salon, accompanied by *The Oath of the Horatii*, *The Death of Socrates*

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<sup>80</sup> The impact of Napoleonic mythology on Russian literature, ballet, popular culture, and religion is traced in Molly W. Wesling, “Napoleon in Russian Cultural Mythology,” The Age of Revolution and Romanticism: Interdisciplinary Studies (New York: Peter Lang, 2001). For a nuanced critique of intellectual histories of the significance of the French Revolution in Russia see Dmitri Shlapentokh, The French Revolution & The Russian Anti-Democratic Tradition, A Case of False Consciousness (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 1997).

<sup>81</sup> George V. Plekhanov, “French Drama and Painting of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” Art and Society & Other Papers in Historical Materialism (New York: Oriole Editions, 1974), 178-181.

<sup>82</sup> “The powers that be are attempting to create a revolutionary art from above. The state has always had a David, who paints, as occasion demands, today *Oath of the Horatii* and tomorrow the *Coronation of Napoleon*. Only at the moment we lack a David.” El Lissitzky, Moscow, 1925, to Sophie Kuppers, 1 August 1925, in Sophie Lissitzky-Kuppers, El Lissitzky, Life, Letters, Texts (London: 1968), 65.

<sup>83</sup> Bown, Socialist Realist Painting, 187.

(1787), and *The Lictors Bringing to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons* (1789). *The Oath of the Tennis Court*, an unfinished, highly detailed presentation drawing for a never-to-be executed painting, is a singular example in David's *oeuvre* of subject matter derived from contemporary historical events and reflecting the needs of this turbulent era. It depicts the solemn oath taken on June 20, 1790 in the National Assembly to establish and protect a constitution, and was commissioned by the Society of the Friends of the Constitution. The singularity of the theme is highlighted by the customary absence of current topics in paintings on view in the Salon. Thomas Crow notes:

The veteran critic Charles Villette was not the only one to remark on the general failure of the painters to immortalize the heroic deeds of the previous two years: "We are somewhat surprised," he wrote, "to see in the Salon only one picture of the great events of the Revolution. Have the artists therefore not raised themselves to its exalted level?" That failure seemed all the more acute given the fact that dissident artists were calling for the abolition of the Academy's monopoly over the exhibition, and the most impatient new talents were thus theoretically free to make themselves known.<sup>84</sup>

David and other advanced artists of the Revolutionary period, in other words, appear to have sought the advantages of the indirect discourse in their choice of theme and execution, appropriating earlier symbols, allegories, narratives, and styles in the articulation of the spirit of the Republic. Another version of indirect discourse would later characterize the unofficial art of late Cold War Russia.

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<sup>84</sup> Philippe Bordes, "*Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de David: Le peintre, son milieu et son temps de 1789 à 1792*," Paris, 1983, 69; quoted in translation in: Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 256.

Fusing elements of Classicism and Baroque Realism, David's style perfectly suited the social and political requirements of the future Emperor Napoleon, who connected his imperialistic ambitions with antiquity. In the dynamic vocabulary of Roman imperial equestrian portraiture that David employs for the portrait *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (fig. 6), it is clear that an avant-garde art practice wedded to both the heroicizing idealism of the Classical world and the naturalism of the contemporary, has transformed itself from a revolutionary code to a language of visuality proclaiming the cornerstone events of a new iconology. The outsider positions of both the political and the artistic leaders of the French Revolution have been relocated to the center of hegemonic officialdom. The inverse role of the tolerated "carnival" critic of the classical French theater tradition has been inverted; the avant-garde has fused with the status quo. Analyzing the last wave of Soviet unofficial artists we will encounter another instance of the appropriation of the visual avant-garde by a cultural bureaucracy.

The *Champ de Mars*, training field for the *Ecole Militaire* established by King Louis XV in 1780, became, on July 14, 1790, the site, replete with decorations, for the *Fête de la Fédération*, the anniversary celebration of the Revolution and the short-lived constitutional monarchy. An exhibition in the same space in 1798 promoted the new improvements in French industry, which found itself threatened by English competition.<sup>85</sup> As noted by Benjamin, it was proposed that an exhibition of paintings

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<sup>85</sup> In 1804 this same field provided the venue for a military awards ceremony presided over by Napoleon, and would later serve as the site for the 1889 *Exposition*

be included in the *Champ de Mars* exposition of industry.<sup>86</sup> One hundred ten exhibitors in the *Temple of Industry* consecrated a vision of post-Revolutionary life: the temple itself was situated in an arcaded square designed by David, boasting sixty arches. The mix of art, industry, and goods unified within the overarching structure of the neoclassical temple and arcade would characterize future national and international exhibitions. Fireworks, sideshows, merchant stalls and parades accompanied this grand spectacle.<sup>87</sup> The importance to the government of the inclusion of the fine arts in post-Revolutionary France was evident; not simply trade fairs or festive celebrations, “[these exhibitions] were outward manifestations of a nation flexing its economic, military, cultural, and ideological muscle.”<sup>88</sup>

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*Universelle*, the World’s Fair commemorating the centenary celebration of the Revolution and featuring the newly constructed *Tour Eiffel*. The field later served as the site for the secessionist Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the renowned 1937 *Exposition Internationale*. In its appropriations and reuses, the sacred secular significance of the heterotopic space of the *Champ de Mar* would endure, serving for more than a hundred years as a space set apart for events of significance (today it is graced by an amusement park). Its shifts in signification thus trace the renegotiations of the sacred secular in the propagandistic proclamation of the nation-state.

<sup>86</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 180.

<sup>87</sup> Paul Greenhalgh notes: “The strange combinations of carnival and ceremony, of circus and museum, of popularism and elitism which typified the *Expositions Universelles* therefore emerged in embryonic form at the very opening of the tradition.” Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World’s Fairs, 1851-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, 5. For a comprehensive historiography of the evolution of world’s fairs from their inception in nineteenth century industrial exhibitions until the 1939 *New York World’s Fair*, the last fair mounted before the onset of World War II. My account of this development greatly relies on Greenhalgh’s work.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

In addition to the propagandistic festivals organized by David, the Revolutionary period in France witnessed new developments in the domain of exhibiting practices on other stages, including the rise of commercial trade and industrial exhibitions. The fruits of the industry of the newly reimagined state, including the wares of the venerable *Sèvres*, *Les Gobelins* and *Les Savonneries* factories featuring examples of the applied arts of ceramic, tapestry and carpet, went on view in 1797. Proclaiming in unison the industrial and economic power of the revolutionary nation, these exhibits were displayed in the courtyard of the Louvre, now converted to government offices as well as housing the first fully public museum in France, the *Musée Central des Arts*, which had opened in 1793. Napoleon seized upon the ideological value of public exhibition in placing his trophies of war on display, not only in the Louvre but also on the *Place de la Révolution*, today known as the *Place de la Concorde*. Featured objects included an obelisk from Egypt as well as the *Rosetta Stone*.<sup>89</sup>

Between 1797 and 1849, ten national exhibitions were held in France, each one larger in ambition and size than its predecessor, establishing a continuum and a tradition for display. Exhibitions of arts and industry were also organized in England, under the aegis of The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, founded in 1754 by William Shipley to promote “ingenuity and invention.” The Society notably wished to highlight the important role of drawing in

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<sup>89</sup> The taking of military trophies is a practice extending well back in military history, at least to ancient Sumeria and the capture of the stele *The Victory Stele of Naram-Sim, Susa. Musée du Louvre*, Sb4, Paris.

the cultivation of innovation.<sup>90</sup> Industrial arts exhibitions proliferated in English towns just as they did throughout France, raising their local identities as centers of working and middle-class life, despite their distance from the political center of London. Industrial arts exhibitions were also held in New York in 1824, and in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1829, serving audiences principally composed of the citizens of those countries. In 1830, Brussels, the capital of Belgium, was the first to host another country, the Netherlands. Nonetheless, according to Greenhalgh, “So far, no exhibition had risked opening an event to the produce of a wholly separate foreign power for the purpose of generating a discourse between nations.”<sup>91</sup>

### ***The Crystal Palace Exhibition, 1851***

The idea of expanding the national exhibition to include displays of other nations emerged in France, but was defeated by xenophobic economic protectionism. Henry Cole, organizer of the British *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations* (1851, figs. 7, 8), having considered the possibility of hosting other countries while visiting the Paris 1849 exhibition, suggested to Prince Albert that the London display should have an international character. The *Great or Crystal Palace Exhibition* was the first to invite, through diplomatic channels, “all nations of the world” to participate. A supervisory Royal Commission was organized, consisting of Prince Albert as well as members of parliament and “others of official situations.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Granted a royal charter in 1847, the Society was later renamed the Royal Society of Arts. See, Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Greenhalgh, *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>92</sup> Babbage, *Origin of the Exposition*, 30.

The Commission worked through British foreign offices throughout the world, as well as the embassies and consulates of foreign nations in London, to negotiate participation in the event.<sup>93</sup> Participation was debated at the highest levels of government for those nations considering sending exhibitions. For example, Tsar Nicholas I “asked his Ministers of Foreign Affairs, State Domains and Finance to recommend whether or not Russia should participate.” Despite reservations, “the three ministers recognized the first world’s fair as an opportunity to influence public opinion in Great Britain, and Europe in general, as well as to promote the economic interests of Russian agriculturists and manufacturers.”<sup>94</sup> Attending the fair’s opening ceremonies were Queen Victoria and her court, government ministers, the foreign diplomatic corps, and the Royal Commissioners.

The famed *Crystal Palace Exhibition*, so-named for the innovative lightweight iron frame and glass building with a design based on the Romanesque arch, was constructed by John Paxton, architect of greenhouses for the Duke of Devonshire. The exhibition featured the displays of thirty-four nations, including the United States and Russia. The precepts of the 1851 exhibition, as officially proclaimed by Queen Victoria, raised the discursive site of the world’s fair from the material to geopolitical idealism: “It is my anxious desire to promote among nations the cultivation of all

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<sup>93</sup> Hermione Hobhouse, *The Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition. Art, Science and Productive Industry: A History of the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002), 43-44; Babbage, *Origins of the Exposition*, 27.

<sup>94</sup> David C. Fisher, “Russia and the Crystal Palace in 1851,” *Britain, the Empire and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, ed. Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 125.

those arts which are fostered by peace, and which in their turn contribute to maintain the peace of the world.”<sup>95</sup> Delivering, in effect, an apologia for imperialism, Queen Victoria’s sentiments were echoed much later in the introduction to the guidebook to the British Pavilion of the *New York World’s Fair* (1939): “An attempt has been made to illustrate, on such a scale as limitations of space allow, some of the outstanding features of the contribution of the United Kingdom to the arts of peace and the advancement of civilization.”<sup>96</sup> Reviewing *The Great Exhibition*, the writer “Helix” cited “the promotion of universal brotherhood through the sharing of knowledge and technology in an attitude of goodwill,” uncovering an agenda of redemptive imperialism and an ideology of universalism in the 1851 project.<sup>97</sup> In addition to the celebration of global peace secured through imperial ambition, the British intention was, as the world’s leading industrialized power, to proclaim its economic superiority and to open up British markets to the world. On the other hand, given the international exposure characterizing this first world’s fair, domestic fears circulated among what Babbage calls “the Belgravians,” on a variety of issues

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>96</sup> Great Britain, Department of Overseas Trade, Guide to the British Pavilion, United Kingdom Section (with references to the Australian Pavilion, the New Zealand Pavilion and the British Colonial Empire Section), (New York: World’s Fair, 1940), 5. Absent from both utterances is any specific reference to the specter of war, ominipresent in the nineteenth century, and looming in 1939. In fact, Germany did not participate in the 1939 New York fair, as it had done, most emphatically, in Paris in 1937.

<sup>97</sup> Helix, “The Industrial Exhibition of 1851,” Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, April 1850, quoted in Greenhalgh, Ephemeral Vistas, 17.

ranging from industrial and commercial espionage to the spread of sanitation, plague, murder and even military occupation.<sup>98</sup>

Some order was imposed: the establishment of four official entry categories, selected after argument and debate, predetermined the types of exhibitions to go on display and set the standard for future fairs. They included manufactures, machinery, raw materials and fine arts, the final category qualifying on the basis of the connection of the arts to scientific or technological innovation. International regulations concerning the size and cycle of world's fairs would not be codified until 1928,<sup>99</sup> while site-specific themes would be inaugurated in 1889. The nature and degree of inclusion of the fine arts at the site of industrial exhibitions was debated by fair-organizers, reflecting a prevailing nineteenth-century discourse in social and artistic circles centering on the role of the arts in a civilized society. A debate in Ireland, for example, in preparation for an exhibition in 1853, argued for the promotion and expansion of the category of the fine arts, founding its defense on the basis of the utilitarianism of the fine arts as an integral part of civilized society.<sup>100</sup>

Central to world's fair construction from its first site in 1851 is the polyphonic spectacle—the heteroglossia—of convening nations. The voices of proclamation and

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<sup>98</sup> Babbage, *Origin of the Exposition*, 29. Similar fears circulated during the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, for which see Richard D. Mandell, *Paris 1900: The Great World's Fair* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) 40 ff.

<sup>99</sup> Not until 1928 did nations come together to regulate the size, length and frequency of world's fairs, with the drawing up of the “Convention Relating to International Exhibitions.” *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>100</sup> Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 17.

propaganda merge in the secular, imperial mission, as objects of consumerism are juxtaposed with national patrimony or organized religion (representatives of whom frequently held meetings adjacent to the fairgrounds).<sup>101</sup> The polyvalent discourse of world's fairs has simultaneously a commercial, political, and cultural character, each functioning as an emblem of national power and identity. One French critic, Alexis de Valon, commenting on the Russian presence, lamented its poor image internationally: "It seems there is not another country in the entire world about which such a false understanding is held."<sup>102</sup> An air of Russophobia had ensued in Europe after the Congress of Vienna (1815), compounded by such accounts as the letters of the Marquis de Custine reporting on his travels in the country in 1839.<sup>103</sup> The communal assembly of exhibitors, thus, offered unparalleled opportunities to experience different global voices. On view in 1851 were displays of performances and goods from European nations and their colonies, permitting the fetishization of the objects of the spectacles and their solemnification as metonyms of the participating states. Included, for example, was a Nubian Court that quickly paved the way for imperializing exhibits such as the North African tribal village *tableaux vivants* of the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1867. The Russian display included luxury lapidary vases, ebony cases, jewels and other decorative arts showcasing the

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<sup>101</sup> Stanley Appelbaum, The Chicago World's Fair of 1893: A Photographic Record (New York: Dover, 1980).

<sup>102</sup> See David C. Fisher, "Russia and the Crystal Palace in 1851," Britain, The Empire, and The World at The Great Exhibition, edited by Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 123.

<sup>103</sup> Marquis de Custine, Letters from Russia (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

country's natural resources.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the *Crystal Palace Exhibition* provided an enduring model of an ideology of space and display, both conceptually and architecturally.

### ***Exposition Universelle, 1855***

Recognizing the ideological value of the national patrimony, Emperor Napoleon III moved to advance France as the dominant leader in European art through a strategy of enhancing displays of national art at the site of the world's fair. One measure of his success is Benjamin's proclamation of Paris as the capital of the nineteenth century.<sup>105</sup> By decree, the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* would include a much larger fine arts section, which he described as a "universal exhibition of the fine arts." "It belongs to France," the Emperor asserted, "whose manufactures owe so much to the Fine Arts, to assign to them in the coming Universal Exhibition, the place which they merit."<sup>106</sup> The 1855 Paris *Exposition Universelle* was committed to the display of international art, and within this framework, the French fine arts section included major retrospectives of artists Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Horace Vernet, Eugene Delacroix and Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps. The precedent was thus set, and the 1878 *Exposition Universelle* to follow also included a section devoted to *les arts retrospectives* in the newly constructed *Palais du Trocadero* on the hill of

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<sup>104</sup> Fisher, "Russia and the Crystal Palace," 136.n

<sup>105</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 146.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Chaillot.<sup>107</sup> The fine arts would be part of all major international exhibitions from this point on, including large-scale commissions such as Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt's mural for the *Columbian Exposition* of 1893 in Chicago.<sup>108</sup>

Also on view at the 1855 *Exposition Universelle*, both within and without the official grounds, was the work of avant-garde Realist painter, Gustave Courbet. The case of Courbet is significant, for while openly critical of the standards of contemporary society and the French art establishment,<sup>109</sup> Courbet found the means to circulate as an avant-gardist both physically within the establishment and without, that is to say, in opposition, conjoining and collapsing two binary positions, as

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<sup>107</sup> Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture*, 81. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett emphasizes the logic, power, and importance of the fine art as symbolic of the state. She uses, for her example, the resignification of Jewish ceremonial objects as art objects in an exhibition, observing that: "the exhibition integrated things Jewish into the discourse on civilization and recast Jewish particularism in the universalistic terms of art," 84. She goes further in her examination of the *Centennial Exhibition*, Philadelphia, 1876, where the marble statue *Religious Liberty*, sculpted by Sir Moses Jacob Ezekiel and commissioned by the Order B'nai B'rith and Israelites of America, fuses the particular desires of the Jewish peoples with the universalizing iconography of the American state.

<sup>108</sup> The mural, now lost, was entitled *Modern Woman*. See Griselda Pollock, *Mary Cassatt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 27.

<sup>109</sup> Working in the same period as Courbet, the *peintre-graveur* Honoré Daumier engaged in styles grounded in far more traditional representational practices. His Rembrandt-inflected canvasses, or the trenchant and literal, satiric graphics (widely disseminated through anti-government mass-media instruments including *Le Charivari*), were among the most politically radical of their time. The conservatism of his style—painted or graphic—stands in sharp contrast to the contemporary avant garde art practice of Courbet, arguing against any fatal insistence on the marriage of modernist art practices and political dissidence. After all, it is Daumier, working from a critical position outside the regime, who is sentenced to prison for his political opinions, the only French artist outside of David to be imprisoned for political belief in the nineteenth century. See Bruce Laughton, *Honoré Daumier*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

discussed in my introduction. Edouard Manet would follow his example. A Proudhon Socialist, Courbet composed narratives of contemporary life within the framework of large-scale, academic history painting and participated in the 1871 Commune.<sup>110</sup> In his depictions of everyday scenes, Courbet worked with the subject matter of ordinary life as prescribed by Charles Baudelaire, though far from the poet's urban milieu.<sup>111</sup> Courbet's paintings, through defiantly coarse and patchy brushwork, depict the mundane life of common villagers or the solemn austerity of country ritual. Not only departing from convention in the choice of subject matter, Courbet crafted a technique influenced by the Barbizon School and consisting of impastoed patches of lights and darks. This unornamented style, unsmoothed and unpolished, resulted in an intensely physical facture matching his subject matter.<sup>112</sup> Here, then, there is a fusion of technical and social radicalism in the deployment of the exalted category of history painting.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> T.J. Clark, Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 47.

<sup>111</sup> Charles Baudelaire issued a clarion call to paint subjects of urban modernity in his essay "On the Heroism of Modern Life," for the publication Salon 1846. "The pageant of fashionable life and the thousands of floating existences-criminals and kept women-which drift about in the underworld of a great city; the *Gazette des Tribunaux* and the *Moniteur* Paul all prove to us that we have only to open our eyes to our heroism." See Harrison, Wood and Gaiger, Art in Theory, 303.

<sup>112</sup> "A work of art may have ideology (in other words, those ideas, images, and values which are generally accepted, dominant) as its material, but it *works* that material; it gives it a new form and at certain moments that new form is itself a subversion of ideology." This theory underpins T.J. Clark's evaluation of the materiality, both physical and political, of Courbet's work. See, for example, his description of the *Stonebreakers* (1850) in T.J. Clark, Images of the People: Gustave Courbet and the Second French Republic 1848-1851, Greenwich: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973, 13, 79 ff.

<sup>113</sup> Benjamin narrates an interview with Courbet in which the artist preaches a future utopia in which each individual would enjoy the opportunity for the display of

Courbet submitted fourteen paintings to the *Exposition Universelle* of 1855, eleven of which were accepted for the official exhibition in the *Palais des Beaux-Arts*. The list included *The Stone Breakers* (fig.9), a painting that depicts the back-breaking, menial labor of French peasants. Rough, dry tonal patches construct a composition in which the pair of figures and the limestone shelves of the background are rendered, and therefore equalized, in similar tones, monumentalizing the stone-like solidity of the laborer. *The Burial of Ornans* (1849-50) and *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Life as a Painter* (1855, fig. 10)<sup>114</sup> were among the works rejected by the official exhibition on the basis of lack of space for s large canvases, a curious determination, as history painting constituted the highest academic category and large-scale works were the norm. In response, Courbet, set up a separate, temporary pavilion across the street from the official exhibition hall where he installed a retrospective of forty-five paintings (including the rejected works).

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individual genius within the collective social order. See Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 791. It is noteworthy that Courbet was selected by Lenin to be one of the subjects for a series of monumental sculptures of revolutionary heroes envisioned in the Plan for Monumental Propaganda (1918). See Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting*, 54.

<sup>114</sup> *The Painter's Studio* (fig. 10) as Carol Armstrong has shown, is an allegory of Courbet's practice. Here the artist assures the viewer that he can paint all manner of traditional subject matter, ranging from the academic female nude, to portraits of the aristocracy, landscapes, and religious Crucifixions for church commissions, all within the framework of the history painting. With the insertion of the working class, however, seated as equals with the elite, Courbet asserts his politics, his independence, and his opposition to the ideology of the imperial regime and the prevailing academicism of the period. The double meaning of the painting anticipates the contradictory reception given him by his official jurors. See Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 5-7.

The inclusion of the avant garde in the national pavilion, exemplified here with the Courbets that were accepted, and the clearly official sanction of his dissident pavilion, situated without, yet in proximate and deliberate juxtaposition to the exhibition, constitute a powerful statement of the modernism of the nation-state in its imperial embrace of the oppositional.<sup>115</sup> In the twentieth century, world's fairs and official national exhibitions would increasingly manipulate this double statement on the stage of both hot and cold wars.

Courbet's double gesture of inclusion and independence resounds, in turn, in Edouard Manet's relationship with the official French art world. A leading avant-gardist in the Realist period, Manet advanced subtle critiques of society in nuanced exposés of impermeable class difference and reification, made manifest in flat, matte patches and swatches of pigment.<sup>116</sup> It was Manet's practice to work within the limits of a subject matter funded by the lives of the Baudelairian heroes of modern life, the lower classes of society offered for official public spectacle in compositions appropriating venerable and beloved works by Giorgione or Titian. His work suffered a mixed official reception. Excluded from the Salon in 1863, for example,

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<sup>115</sup> Following the precedent of Courbet's 1855 pavilion, institutionalization of those artists who were refused admission by the officials of the Salon of 1863 was ordered by Emperor Napoleon III in the form of the *Salon des Refusés*, which allowed those who had been juried out to display works in an alternative space, in effect, a heterotopia.

<sup>116</sup> For a description of *Olympia*, where the materiality of Manet's technique, or "facticity" as Clark calls it, operates to communicate sociopolitical status, see T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 134-130.

*Dejeuner sur L'Herbe* (1863, fig. 11) was exhibited at the *Salon des Refusés* subsequently instituted by Emperor Napoleon III.<sup>117</sup> The *Salon des Refusés* may be viewed as a bold move on the Emperor's part (or, more probably, his ministers) to contain within the official bureaucracy—in the manner of the Bakhtinian carnival clown—those artists who were, in effect, contesting it, either through subject matter or style, or both. The scandal of *Olympia* (1863, fig. 12), ridiculed at the 1865 Salon, was surely a factor in Manet's decision, like Courbet, to open his own pavilion close-by during the run of the 1867 *Exposition Universelle*. The official sanction of this gesture implies an institutionalization or, at least, a containment of opposition at the site of the arts.

### ***Exposition Universelle, 1867***

In other arenas, the 1867 spectacle was recognized as a new stage in the modality of the world's fair. For example, an undistilled pride and creeping imperialism informs Victor Hugo's nationalistic comments in the guidebook to the exhibition. Hugo crafts a metonym for an age of colonialism in his description of the

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<sup>117</sup> On one occasion Manet addressed overtly political subject matter, adapting the prototype of Francisco Goya's *Third of May, 1808* (1812) and conjoining it with Honoré Daumier's bold approach to contemporary political events, in the service of a series of paintings detailing the execution of Ferdinand Maximilian in Mexico in 1867. The Austrian archduke's presence had been a symbol of hated imperial expansion, and Manet's portrayal of his death by firing squad conveys the calm, cold, rational calculation of his executioners in a stripped-down composition resembling, in its simplicity and directness, a political cartoon. The rifles, no more than inches away from the condemned, insistently convey the carriage of justice, in an exercise in high-profile contemporary political art to rival David.

hosting nation: “You will cease to be France, you will be Humanity...you, France, become the world.”<sup>118</sup> One key innovation of this world’s fair lay in the replacement of the single, unifying exhibition space, as in the Crystal Palace, with the construction, for the first time, of separate pavilions for different nations. The formal imposition of one nation physically on the ground of another, in a separate space constructed on the soil of guest nation in an act of temporary colonization, paralleling a nation’s official Embassy, would set the standard for future world’s fairs, as well as other exhibition venues, notably the *Venice Biennale*, itself a creation of Italian nationalism from its inception in 1895 and through its deployment as propaganda during the reign of Mussolini.<sup>119</sup>

Benjamin wrote, “The phantasmagoria of capitalist culture attains its most radiant unfolding in the world exhibition of 1867.”<sup>120</sup> He saw the displays of objects of all categories, including artwork, as being complicit with industrial capitalism. In fact, a note relates this view: “Industrial exhibitions as secret blueprints for museums. Art: industrial products projected into the past.”<sup>121</sup> Thus, Benjamin, in considering the role of industrial exhibitions as progenitors of museums, radically viewed art objects as artifacts that both constituted the legacy of industry and were cherished as unique objects. Benjamin’s insight provides a link from the earlier ethos of peace and universalism underpinning fairs from the time of the Crystal Palace, to

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<sup>118</sup> Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 116.

<sup>119</sup> Nancy Jachec, *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale 1948-64: Italy and the Idea of Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 4-5.

<sup>120</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 8.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

the emerging specter of consumerism that, added to Hugo's imperialism, would comprise the face of early twentieth-century fairs.

### ***Exposition Universelle, 1889***

The commemoration of two revolutions governed the world's fairs in both Philadelphia in 1876 and Paris in 1889, launching a new practice of site-specific fair themes. The 1889 *Exposition Universelle* (fig. 14) saw the debut of the Eiffel Tower, Gustave Eiffel's monument to the French Revolution, constructed on the sacral soil of the *Champ de Mars*. Benjamin quotes Georgy Plekhanov, architect of Russian Marxism, who commented on the significance of the 1889 exhibition.

In celebrating the centenary of the great Revolution, the French bourgeoisie has, as it were, intentionally set out to demonstrate to the proletariat *ad oculos* the economic possibility and necessity of a social uprising. The world exhibition has given the proletariat an excellent idea of the unprecedented level of development which the means of production have reached in all civilized lands—a development far exceeding the boldest utopian fantasies of the century preceding this one—... The exhibition has further demonstrated that modern development of the forces of production must of necessity lead to industrial crises that, given the anarchy currently reigning in production, will only grow more acute with the passage of time, and hence more destructive to the course of the world economy.<sup>122</sup>

For Plekhanov, the unbridled industrialization on display at a fair organized by the bourgeoisie, points inexorably to the inevitability of world crisis: the bourgeois leaders of the consumer capitalist utopia on offer in the *Champ de Mars* will surely give way to the proletariat, in the next stage of social and economic development.

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<sup>122</sup> G. Plekhanov, “*Wie die Bourgeoisie ihrer Revolution gedenkt*,” *Die neue Zeit*, 9, 1, Stuttgart, 1891, 138, quoted in Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 180.

The assertions of Plekhanov highlight, in general, the very public and communicative stage of the world's fair, and its efficacy in transmitting national ideology of any kind. Plekhanov brilliantly extrapolates the transparency of the French national message contained in the objects on view, fusing revolution with capitalism, in his Marxist consideration of the 1889 fair. Plekhanov's deductions provide clear evidence of the ideological power of exhibitions as state metonyms, a notion that precisely informs U.S. and U.S.S.R. Cold War exhibitions, as I will discuss in chapters three and four.

The 1889 fair otherwise addressed issues attending the specter of European imperial colonialism, notably in *Histoire de l'Habitation Humaine* created by Paris Opera designer Charles Garnier. Garnier's installation invoked themes of the prehistoric, the historic, and primitive, interwoven in a thinly veiled agenda of imperial legitimacy. Located immediately facing the *Tour Eiffel*, the exhibit featured displays of forty-four cultures, including Russia. The Russia House (fig. 13), constructed of traditional building materials, thematized the historic Viking and Slavic invasions and their impact on the formation of the nation. In his recreation of traditional Russian domestic architecture and his mixing of construction materials, Garnier raised issues of gender and social functions, employing stucco for the ground level of the house, where men resided, with traditional wood for the upper level, the

site of women.<sup>123</sup> Elsewhere in the fair, the *Rue du Caire et les Almées* consisted of a passageway featuring Egyptian dancing girls, performing the exotic, and representing its containment on centennial soil.<sup>124</sup>

### ***The Columbian Exhibition, 1893***

The “Little Egypt” performance was repeated at the Chicago *Columbian Exposition* of 1893, a fair formulated to commemorate the 1492 encounter. Frederick Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, renowned architects of Central Park in New York City, worked closely with the Chicago office of Burnham & Root on the Jackson Park location and exhibition layout of the fair (fig. 15). As befitted an era underpinned by the ideology of manifest destiny, the design set out to articulate “a miniature version of the national landscape.”<sup>125</sup> The fair, indeed, convened the miniature and the gigantic most notably with the Ferris Wheel (fig. 16), invented to rival the *Tour Eiffel*. For example, a guidebook features a list for time-constrained visitors of “five thousand not-to-be-missed items,”<sup>126</sup> including a largely anodyne fine arts exhibition containing nine thousand works of art, largely European, with some U.S., Canadian,

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<sup>123</sup> Charles Garnier, *L’Habitation Humaine*, Paris:Hachette, 1892, quoted in Liz Tymkiw, *Paris 1889/ Russian House, A Treasury of World’s Fair Art and Architecture*, University of Maryland, <http://hdl.handle.net/1903,1/35>, July 18, 2009.

<sup>124</sup> YouTube, film footage, *Exposition Universelle 1889: Rue du Caire et les Almees*, Serpentine Productions, July 18, 2009.

<sup>125</sup> Robert A.M. Stern, *Pride of Place, Building the American Dream* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, American Heritage, 1986), 307.

<sup>126</sup> The Columbian Exposition Guidebook, *The Time-Saver, A Book Which Names and Locates 5,000 Things at the World’s Fair that Visitors Should Not Fail to See* (Chicago, 1893).

Mexican and Japanese representation.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to the generally conservative state of the arts in the U.S., Chicago offered a vibrant arena for the rise of American modernism in commercial architecture at this date. Burnham & Root, responsible for the overall planning of the exhibition, invoked the language of neoclassicism in the proclamation of the mature republic through the designs for temporary buildings. The office of Louis Sullivan, where the young Frank Lloyd Wright served as chief draftsman, participated in the fair with the design of the Transportation Building, featuring Sullivan's trademark neo-Romanesque decorative style as the central motif of the entrance.

Russia had been reluctant to participate in the 1893 fair: the impact of George Kennan's articles for *Century* magazine (1887-89) on the repressive treatment of prisoners and revolutionaries, as well as other articles on Russian anti-Semitism, created an unfriendly climate. Nonetheless, American public and private relief response to famine and cholera (1892) impelled the Russian government to extend its gratitude, diplomatically, by participating.<sup>128</sup> The Russian pavilion, too, promoted nationalism in the form of "the first significant exhibition of Russian art ever shown in the United States." Displays ranged from highly acclaimed luxury metalwork

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<sup>127</sup> "Most reviewers thought that the quantity of work overwhelmed what little quality there was; the artworks were hung three or four deep on the walls, as if the ultimate objective was to cover every square foot of wall space." See John E. Findling, *Chicago's Great World's Fairs* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 30.

<sup>128</sup> "The desire to maintain diplomatic protocol and etiquette, in other words, was viewed as a greater incentive than the need to open new markets for Russian manufactured goods." For this chronicle of U.S.-Russian relations, see Karen Kettering, "Decoration and Disconnection: The *Russkii stil'* and Russian Decorative Arts at Nineteenth-Century American World's Fairs," *Russian Art and the West*, 71.

inscribed with Russian medieval and peasant ornamentation forms to a seventeenth-century style wooden structure, similar in design, it was claimed, to the “birth-place of Peter the Great.”<sup>129</sup> The reclamation of earlier histories, here outside the western context, parallels similar movements in the U.S. and Europe, seen, for example in Sullivan’s Romanesque entrance, above, or the Arts and Crafts Movement in Great Britain.

The fair’s objective to claim the national landscape as the patrimony of the white settlers of America intersected seamlessly with the discourse of a moralizing colonialism promulgated by Frederick Turner in his “frontier thesis” address to the convention of the American Historical Association, meeting in Chicago concurrently with the *Columbian Exposition*. Turner’s paper, “The Frontier in American History,” contained his theory of “manifest destiny,” the divinely ordained right to American western expansion. Like the arts, colonial claims would remain a permanent feature of fairs until the 1930s.

### ***The Wanderers***

While the oppositional pavilions of Courbet and Manet were constructed in deliberate proximity to the official world exhibitions, nineteenth-century Russian oppositional art went to the country by caravan, answering the call of social critic

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 63, 71.

Nikolai Chernyshevsky, in his novel What is to be Done? (1863).<sup>130</sup> The Wanderers, a federation of artists founded in 1878 who sought their livelihood outside the official world of the Academy, deployed an anti-neoclassical, Realist style and subject matter, for the purpose of exposing the harsh realities and social ills of life under the autocratic czarist regime. This band of artists circulated their canvases in traveling exhibitions throughout the Russia countryside, migrating in carnival-like caravans, with the populist intention to educate and enlighten audiences outside the cosmopolitan centers of Moscow and St. Petersburg, on social justice.

Repin's *Barge Haulers on the Volga River* (1870-73, fig. 1) was revered by Russian and international audiences since its creation and display at the 1878 *Exposition Universelle*. The work was exhibited again at the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*, just a few years after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Repin's work generally provided a model for traditional Soviet painters of the 1920s and subsequently for Stalinist Socialist Realism, and is reproduced in semi-permanent materials on Moscow buildings and the *Tverskoe* today. Repin's naturalistic style is not unlike that of French social critic and realist Honoré Daumier, whose *Third Class*

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<sup>130</sup> The work of political philosopher Nikolai Chernyshevsky, whose materialist theories were grounded in populism, agrarianism, and socialism, inflects the practice of the progressive painters and writers in nineteenth century Russia. The ideas advanced in Chernyshevsky's 1855 dissertation "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality," are redistributed in his 1863 novel What Is to Be Done?, written while he was imprisoned for critiques of tsarist policies and practices. Dostoyevsky, while he didn't agree with Chernyshevsky's thinking in full, was his sole public defender. Chernyshevsky's plea for an art of realism reflecting social problems, not unlike the position of Courbet, resounds in the practice of the Wanderers. See Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky, What is to Be Done, trans. Michael R. Katz (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

*Carriage* (1863-65, fig. 17) features sanctified peasants seated in the cheapest French railroad cars, painted in glowing Rembrandtesque brown, cream and gold tones, resembling the light-infused naturalism of the Wanderers. (Daumier would be also be venerated in twentieth-century Russia, providing prototypes of facial expression for the Revolutionary director Vsevolod Meyerhold's theory and practice of biomechanics.)<sup>131</sup> Repin had trained at the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg (founded by Empress Elizabeth in 1757), but later shunned its academic formalism, as did the other members of the Wanderers circle. The dazed eyes of the figure of another Wanderers canvas, *Holy Fool* (1885, fig. 18) by Vasilii Surikov, illustrating a subject central to Bakhtin, offers a metaphor for the condition of the artist as a critic of society. Here is the Russian holy fool at his traditional task, wandering the countryside.

Weighing the engagement of Courbet, Daumier, and the Wanderers in the representation of explicit economic, political and social inequity or outright injustice in a predominantly naturalistic style based on gradations of tone, and further considering the radical avant-gardism of Manet's coloristically subtle and stylized portrayals of class structure, sharp differences clearly emerge. These differences complicate any notion of a direct correlation that one might wish to posit between oppositional art and avant-garde art practice. In fact, as we have seen, political resistance might be aligned with both avant-garde practice as well as with traditional

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<sup>131</sup> Alma H. Law and Mel Gordon, Meyerhold, Eisenstein, and Biomechanics: Actor Training in Revolutionary Russia (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1996).

modes of representation. On the other hand, traditional academic practice was then, and would remain, the criterion for official art in many sectors of Western Europe and Russia/U.S.S.R. Meanwhile, later avant-garde practices, for example, so many of the French Impressionists or the last wave of Soviet artists described in chapter four, would seek a self-referential world outside the political sphere. These are important factors to bear in mind, given the increasingly significant role of visual representation in the construction of national identity at the site of international exhibitions.

### ***Exposition Universelle, 1900***

The 1900 Paris *Exposition Universelle*, the largest world's fair staged to date, with its vast array of miracles of industrialization—trains, diesel engines, the world's largest refracting telescope, electrical wonders, works of Art Nouveau, the new medium of film, Campbell's Soup, the labor-saving Singer Sewing Machine, the McCormick Reaper, and an appearance by the American dancer Loie Fuller—both summed up the practices of the preceding century, and opened up new spaces of discourse. In his opening speech on April 14, 1900, Alexandre Millerand, Minister of France emphasized the role of machinery and science in liberating the worker in order to address the critical tasks of improving international equality and unity, and mitigating rivalry.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> "The World Comes to Paris: 1900," [www.uoregon.edu/~dapope/106apr1.ppt](http://www.uoregon.edu/~dapope/106apr1.ppt), July 18, 2009.

In the government debate regarding French sponsorship of the 1900 exhibition, one argument advanced in favor of hosting another fair in Paris was the opportunity for the public to view the products of Russia, with which France had entered an alliance.<sup>133</sup> The diplomatic character of the fair was noted, too, in the involvement of the French Ambassador to the United States to represent the request of the United States to be allocated increased space.<sup>134</sup> The Russian Pavilion featured exhibits of the new Trans-Siberian Railway, as well as a prize-winning sparkling wine. Two Classical Baroque-styled palaces for the arts, the *Petit Palais* and the *Grand Palais*, were built for the occasion, significantly establishing permanent spaces for the display of works of art. By this gesture, the institutionalization of dedicated space for the fine arts within an overall schema of largely temporary exhibition halls, pedestrian walkways, and bridges, overlooked by the Eiffel Tower, the monument of the 1889 centennial *Exposition Universelle*, confirmed not only the legitimacy, but also the hierarchy, of the arts within the contours of the nation-state. The inclusion of a Human Zoo, inhabited by citizens of Madagascar, was an exceptionally popular feature of the neo-imperializing fair, building on the enthusiasm in 1889 for Garnier's *Histoire de l'Habitation Humaine*, and forecasting the rise of exhibitions dedicated to colonial legitimacy, culminating in the notorious 1931 International Colonial Exhibition. The *Exhibit of American Negroes* formed a counterpoint to the Human Zoo: organized by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. duBois, the exhibit featured photographs, books and other documents of African-American life.

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<sup>133</sup> Mudrak and Marquardt, *Environments of Propaganda*, 66.

<sup>134</sup> Mandell, *Paris 1900*, 56.

This *Exposition* of the new century witnessed the fusing of the language of morality with mercantilism, deploying the capitalist spectacle under the guise of ethics. Chicago businessman Elbridge G. Keith, an advisor to the American 1900 pavilion, put it plainly, linking capitalism with what he called “righteousness.” Keith commented, “if we enlarge our commerce with mankind we shall also be able to maintain higher wages for the American laborer, adequate profits for the capital employed, and benefiting them not only by our commerce, but by those higher influences which should go with our commerce—that righteousness which exalts a nation.”<sup>135</sup> Keith clearly saw both the material value of the fair in promoting American industry, and the necessity of cloaking profit in moralizing, patriotic zeal. This *Exposition* witnessed, too, the obverse of capitalist euphoria: fair visitors noted the presence of bomb-wielding anarchists.<sup>136</sup>

Many fairs embraced themes marking significant milestones in the definition of the new nation-state: for example, the 1876 Philadelphia *Centennial Exhibition* commemorating America’s declaration of its independence; the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*, celebrating the centenary of the French Revolution; and the 1893 *Columbian Exposition* in Chicago, which marked Christopher Columbus’s encounter

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<sup>135</sup> For quote see Robert W. Rydell, *Paris 1900: The “American School at the Universal Exposition* (New Brunswick, NJ: The Montclair Art Museum and Rutgers University Press, 1999), 126.

<sup>136</sup> Mandell, *Paris 1900*. 105; See also letters of Mrs. James J. Hill, American visitor to the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*: “Mrs. Tuck told us of a bomb thrower having been blown up himself in the *Madeleine* today,”- *Mrs. James J. Hill’s Impressions of Paris, May 1900* (KPBS: Prairie Home Companion, April 10, 2004).

with indigenous peoples.<sup>137</sup> The nineteenth-century French *Expositions Universelles* foregrounded the fine arts in the spectrum of objects selected for the metonymic representation of the state. Emperor Napoleon III cannily recognized the prestige of the fine arts of France, and enlarged the space and number of exhibitions devoted to the arts within the world's fair format. Occasionally, the avant-garde artist played the serio-carnavalesque role of alterity in the drama of the fair, wittingly or unwittingly validating the wisdom of the sovereignty. Thus, the practice of fine arts display became a customary feature of world's fairs beyond France during the nineteenth century, and was firmly secured as a permanent feature by the turn of the new century.

In conclusion, nineteenth-century world's fairs, rising from the practices of national exhibitions of art and industry, offered a space customarily negotiated through diplomatic channels for the temporary convening of nation-states and, increasingly, their colonies. These sites provided opportunities for the circulation of technical, industrial, agricultural, and cultural objects ranging from the mundane to the luxurious. Exhibiting nations might be geographic neighbors or located far apart; ruled by closely related leaders; and even entwined in dangerous political disputes with one another. But differences were laid aside in this different space. Richard

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<sup>137</sup> “The Philadelphia centennial exhibition (1876), and the Columbian exposition in Chicago (1893), represented more than patriotic and commemorative occasions; they also drove ahead the process of industrialization, helped forge bonds of national unity, and solidified international prestige.” See Gutheim, “Federal Participation in Two World's Fairs,” 610. Gutheim's eyewitness account, further along in his article, of the rise of what he terms “aggressive nationalism” at the site of the fair is discussed at the site of the 1937 *Exposition Internationale*.

Mandell remarks on a general spirit of international cooperation fostered by the exhibitions of the nineteenth century, commenting on its replacement by an ethos of competition attending the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*.<sup>138</sup> I disagree: competition for global markets had been built into the world's fair from its inception at the *Crystal Palace*, with the lavish display of British industrialization and its origins in trade markets and fairs.

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<sup>138</sup> Mandell, Paris 1900, 121.

## Chapter Two

### Twentieth-Century Nationalism: Selected Exhibitions, 1900-1958

Late nineteenth-century socioeconomic and geopolitical exhibition goals continued in the new century, as the purer objectives of “peacekeeping and progress,” in the words of Queen Victoria, gave way to nationalism and, in the U.S., isolationism.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, these goals perceptibly intensified in the promulgation of the nation, authoritarian or democratic, through the techniques and practices of visual display. Attending the strengthening role of the capitalist corporation in the representation of the nation was the increasingly emboldened deployment of the arts in the affirmation of imperial ambition, whether ideological or geoterritorial. Notable is the example of the 1937 *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, with the bold imagery of the adjacent Soviet and German Pavilions, and the Spanish pavilion not far away (fig. 28). Importantly, the instabilities of geopolitical realities grew increasingly transparent at the site of the fairs and exhibitions, especially in the case of the 1937 fair, though curiously prompting little, if any, political response. In a letter to the editor of *The London Times*, one fair visitor did take note of the giganticizing and propagandizing nationalism of the Soviet and German pavilions, concluding that, in the end, they would evoke derision. This letter underscores the real tameness of fair sites, even under conditions of escalating

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<sup>139</sup> Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 17.

militarism.<sup>140</sup> The neutral character of the international exhibition appears to have persisted, and expanded in importance, precluding, at least in 1937, public critique of any scale. James Herbert has reached the same conclusion regarding the neutrality of the world's fair sites.

The remarkably neutral character of international exhibitions had allowed events to be staged in the most extraordinary of circumstances, sometimes whilst wars were being fought, and often when participating nations were at political loggerheads. *The Exposition Internationale* of 1937 was the most extreme example of opposing ideologies coming together with the apparent motive of peaceful display, its abrasive oppositions signaling the effective end of the tradition. After the Second World War nations increasingly refused to participate in events where opposing regimes were to be present.<sup>141</sup>

Herbert neglects to point out, however, that at peak moments of national aggression, nations would not receive an invitation to participate, for example Germany, in the case of the 1939 *New York World's Fair*.

In this chapter I examine the increasingly complex role of the fine arts at the sites of world's fairs in the twentieth century, as that role moves from object-specific display to embrace a more comprehensive role in architectural installation and exhibition ideology. I attend, as well, to the burgeoning role of "brand" design in the

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<sup>140</sup> *Exposition* visitor C.H. Reilly commented "In an exhibition the exhibitionist buildings naturally score at first glance. The Russian pavilion culminating in its colossal chromium-plated figures, the German one with its cluster of giant columns crowned with a very imperial eagle, are bound to hold the eye to begin with. The crowd will gape at them and a certain number on entering will no doubt be impressed by the insistent propaganda of their expensive and rather vulgar decorations. The discerning, however, will soon tire of such combinations of strident architecture and realistic painting. Before the exhibition closes I am convinced that these pavilions, so striking at first sight, will be laughed at by most people." C.H. Reilly, "To the Editor of the Times," *The London Times*, July 20, 1937.

<sup>141</sup> Herbert, *Paris 1937*, 138.

visuality of the nation-state. I also trace the rise of international exhibitions independent of, but originating from, the vocabulary of the world's fair at several sites, framing these, as well, as instruments of cultural diplomacy in the promotion of national identity. These elements establish a context for understanding the politicization of art exhibitions in official post-World War II Cold War cultural diplomacy.

In a remarkable article written contemporaneously with the *New York World's Fair* of 1939, Gutheim astutely summarizes the changes in exhibition techniques from the nineteenth century to the present day and what they might signify. Reminding his reader that the *Philadelphia Centennial* of 1876 concentrated on the display of actual objects, he notes the use of newer exhibition techniques "to bring the world afar to the site of the World's Fair." Essentially, Gutheim provides a list of metonymic techniques for representation, as discussed in this introduction. As he points out, "With the advance of exhibition technique it gradually became possible to get away from tangibles and to describe some of the less concrete but often more important work of the government. ... There appear to be no inherent limitations on the visual presentation of social activity. The abstract has been made concrete and an entire new range of subject matter has been entered."<sup>142</sup> What Gutheim points to is the fact that the physical objects of nineteenth century displays have become increasingly inadequate to convey the modern state's intricate web of messages. The state can no longer be represented tangibly, by means of objects, but virtually, by means of

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<sup>142</sup> Gutheim, "Federal Participation in Two World's Fairs," 619.

symbolic structures, miniaturized displays, or mass media. Some of the great work of the state is, by its very nature, conceptual and cannot be seen. Thus, the exhibition has the power to render visible that which is invisible in the work of the nation. It hardly bears pointing out that the adjudication of the both the tangible and the intangible proceeds under the careful control of the official exhibition committee. Thus, the intangible is doubly invisible.

Miniaturization, fragmentation and gigantization prevail in the exhibitions of the twentieth-century, all oddly neutralizing that which they represent. The diorama is a noteworthy example: an exhibition technique combining miniaturization and panorama. Rising in popularity in the nineteenth-century, the diorama digested, diluted, and reduced to consumable size the display. The illusion of the viewer's control over the subject matter is mitigated by the subversion of the technique. Gutheim offers the observation that the new exhibition techniques deployed in world's fairs are also lessons learned from the corporate world, including "General Motors and other large diversified corporations," as he puts it.<sup>143</sup> In the twentieth century, entire world's fair exposition halls would be occupied by single corporations, for example, the IBM Pavilion at the 1939 Fair. The scaling up of the consumer object to require an entire pavilion creates a monolith, which is, once more, tangible and digestible to the exhibition viewer. Whatever the composition of the official World's Fair committee, its advisors or designers, the visual ideology of the dominant consumer culture clearly plays an important role in the representation of the state on

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 619.

the international playing field, vigorously recirculating the economic ideologies of the fairs of long, and not so long, ago. Gutheim does not fail, however, to notice another tendency of the fairs of the 1930s: the clear and present militarism that I address later in this chapter. Gutheim's considerations of the visual vocabulary and meaning of exhibition techniques open up a discourse of great relevance to the exhibitions to be considered in this chapter.

***Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, 1925***

Following in the established tradition of nineteenth-century Parisian world's fairs, the 1925 exhibition *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, showcased the fine arts and industrial design of France, promoting French cultural imperialism within a framework of international modernist design.<sup>144</sup> Here, earlier fair themes of peace and progress gave way to the triumphalism of taste, which the French had long claimed to dominate, due in no small part to the efforts of Emperor Napoleon III. All aspects of modern design were on offer, including the Art Deco style, christened here at the site of the exhibition, a hybrid style fusing the neoclassicizing abstraction of modernist architecture and design with the dynamic forms of the Machine Age and the patterns of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Americas.

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<sup>144</sup> See: Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, 166 ff.; Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 67 ff.; *Encyclopédie des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes aux XX siècle* (New York: Garland Books, 1977).

The Russian Constructivist architect Konstantin Melnikov, designer of Lenin's tomb on Red Square and architect of the only private home built in the Stalin era, was commissioned by NARKAMPROS, the Soviet Bureau of Enlightenment, to design the Russian pavilion (fig. 19).<sup>145</sup> Regarding the political opportunity afforded the new Soviet state, Frederick Starr comments, "Melnikov was preoccupied with the task of identifying in the hermetic vocabulary of abstract form a symbolic system from which could be fashioned a modern *architecture parlante* capable of communicating to the Parisian public that buoyancy and optimism which he found in contemporary Soviet culture."<sup>146</sup> The stripped-down geometries of Melnikov's design, featuring glass and unadorned vertical and horizontal concrete supports, contrasting with diagonals deriving from Russian peasant architecture, advance the forward-looking vision of the new Soviet state on the international stage of the world's fair. Melnikov's sculpting of space and light in the articulation of Soviet identity, in fact, won the fair's highest award.<sup>147</sup> The interior celebrated the twin pillars of the Soviet state: the peasant and the proletariat: an exhibition of peasant art complemented an exhibition of student work of VKHUTEMAS, the Moscow technical arts school, including folk art-inspired textiles by Liubov Popova.<sup>148</sup> Also

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<sup>145</sup> See: S. Frederick Starr, Melnikov: Solo Architect in a Mass Society (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 85 ff.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>148</sup> Starr describes the interior, "Thanks very likely to the influence of Maiakovskii and Lunacharskii on the selection process, numerous of the exhibits within the pavilion were executed in the same abstract but politically engage idiom that the architect had employed for the structure itself. Just as Melnikov used modern design to reinvigorate the traditional peasant building techniques, so many of the boldly figured textiles by Liubov Popova gave new meaning to the art of the peasant home

on view in the interior of the pavilion was Tatlin's model for the *Monument to the Third International*, as well as a replica of the Workers' Club designed by Alexandr Rodchenko. Victor Margolin comments: "Rodchenko's Workers' Club interior assumed a political meaning. It was a model of a proletarian lifestyle which opposed the bourgeois ones represented in most of the other pavilions."<sup>149</sup> Rodchenko's club (Melnikov too, designed several workers' clubs in Moscow) included geometric chairs and simple tables, as well as racks for magazines and posters, the currency of mass information. The Workers' Club afforded fair visitors an experience of Productivism, the fusion of Constructivist aesthetics and industry in the service of the State.

The revolutionary ideals of art and architecture on view in the Russian Pavilion were matched elsewhere in European affirmations of modernism. Le Corbusier, the French architect, designer and formulator of *L'Esprit Nouveau*, was granted one of the less visible sites at the Fair, since, in his proposal he determined to "deny decorative art," the theme of the show.<sup>150</sup> His radicalism, proposed in an accompanying brochure, called for the demolition of sections of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> *arrondissements*, cherished sections of historic Paris including the Paris Opera House, to be replaced with *L'Esprit Nouveau* high-rise complexes. Le Corbusier's

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weavers. Side by side with porcelain decorated in a primitive folkish style was flatware ornamented with motifs drawn directly from Suprematism." *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>149</sup> Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Moholy Nagy 1917-1946* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 96.

<sup>150</sup> Arthur Chandler, "The Art Deco Exposition," *World's Fair Magazine*, VIII, 3, revised 2000, [www.charon.sfsu.edu/publications/PARIS\\_EXPOSITIONS/1925EXPO.html](http://www.charon.sfsu.edu/publications/PARIS_EXPOSITIONS/1925EXPO.html), July 17, 2009.

authoritarian claims for a new order are not unlike the bold declarations of the Italian Futurists, once favorites of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.<sup>151</sup> Here, the darker side of nationalism seeped into the 1925 world's fair, as evident in the Italian display, where by this date, Mussolini had shifted in his aesthetic tastes from the Futurist polemics of a cleansing art toward neoclassical architecture and design, distinctly on view in the *Exposition's* Italian Pavilion. Its absolutist architecture, dominated by a monumental, bronze portrait of the dictator in the antique manner, symbolized Mussolini's passionate revival of the ancient Roman Empire.<sup>152</sup> Overall, geopolitical differences, disputes and disagreements dictated the list of participants for this inter-war world's fair. Germany was not invited to participate, while the U.S., as well as several other countries, declined to exhibit, suggesting, at least on the part of the U.S., the climate of isolationism that arose in the wake of World War I.

### ***Soviet Export Exhibitions, 1920s-1930s***

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<sup>151</sup> The article "Purism," co-authored by Le Corbusier and Andree Ozenfant and published in their journal *L'Esprit Nouveau*, 4, 1920, contains a provocative section entitled "System." Here, the process of mechanical selection, one tenet of their ideology, is positioned within the discourse of an inevitable, natural selection. See Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, "Purism," Harrison and Woods, *Art in Theory*, 240.

<sup>152</sup> See Barbara McCloskey, *Artists of World War II* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 87-88. Mussolini's new visual ideology was set in complete opposition to the Futurists, who had proclaimed in their 1909 manifesto that "a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the 'Victory of Samothrace' (the Hellenistic figural sculpture of a winged Nike, once adorning the port entrance to the Greek island of the same name, and on view in the Louvre). Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism," Harrison et al., *Art in Theory, 1900-2000*, 147.

In addition to the architecture and displays of the 1925 Soviet pavilion described above, export shows independent of world's fairs flowed from the Soviet state to western venues in the 1920s and 1930s. These exhibitions fell into two categories: independent displays and entries in multi-nation cultural projects. In both cases, they promoted the Soviet ideology in major European urban settings. Art had played a central role in sociopolitical communication from the formation of the Bolshevik state: Party strategies had included the deployment of propaganda trains painted with revolutionary imagery to inform, unify, and rally the peasantry (recalling the Wanderers' caravans) or outdoor pageants (in the style of Jacques-Louis David), presented in front of the Winter Palace, restaging key Revolutionary events. The Revolution was, in fact, the catalyst for, and the fulfillment of, avant-gardist fantasies. Certainly the fusion of avant-garde ideologies and practices with Revolutionary politics in the advancement of the utopian, communist society is striking, and one that rehearses the intertwining of art and politics that characterized David's work. In this moment, Russian avant-garde practice lived out the euphoria of its conviction that it participated in the advancement of a hitherto historically unprecedented utopian, socialist society.

The enduring image of the young Soviet artist in the service of the Revolution is no better exemplified than in the 1920 founding of VKHUTEMAS by Party leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin to train artists and architects in Moscow for new Soviet industry. Meanwhile, at the Vitebsk Art School, pioneering abstractionist Kasimir Malevich had also formed an institute, UNOVIS (loosely translated as "the

champions of the new art”) to explore and expand the theoretical dimensions of Suprematism (see, for example, *Aeroplane Flying*, 1915, fig. 108). Finally, for the Productivists of the 1920s, avant-garde art had become a fully operative part of the economic system, at the expense of a critical relationship within the social circulation of the Revolution. This symbiosis constitutes a defining transitional moment for the mutual articulation of aesthetics and politics.<sup>153</sup>

The work of El Lissitzky, avant-garde Constructivist and Lef artist, designer and architect, is pivotal in this examination of the increasing importance of the visual art exhibition in the definition and representation of the state, whether in its participation in international exhibitions and world’s fairs in the 1920s and 1930s, or within its own borders. It is in the work of Lissitzky, as well as his collaborators, including artists, designers and architects, that the strains of fine arts and technical

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<sup>153</sup> As with the Wanderers and the Soviet artists, western art in many instances was predicated on the desire to effect social change, particularly, as I have shown, in the case of Gustave Courbet (see chapter one). Just as in the Soviet experience, the work of Mexican muralist Diego Rivera called for a *rapprochement* between art practice and revolutionary politics, claiming with apodictic rectitude that: “All painters have been propagandists or else they have not been painters.” See: “The Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art,” originally published in *Modern Quarterly*, 6, 3, Autumn 1932; Harrison and Woods, *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, 424. Rivera, having participated in the PanAmerican Exhibition in Los Angeles, 1925, traveled to Moscow in 1927 for celebrations marking the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. There, his interest in Renaissance-inflected muralism was strengthened by his experience of murals on view in workers’ clubs. Rivera’s aesthetic theory demanded an art as full of content as the proletarian revolution, and one marked by strength, warmth, and clarity: he offered Surrealism, as the style best fitting revolutionary renewal. Couching his demands in the language of the 1910 Mexican Revolution, he called for the end of capitalism and the complete liberation of the arts. Together, Rivera, Trotsky and Breton signed the Trotsky-Breton 1938 manifesto “Towards a Free Revolutionary Art,” from which emerged the short-lived International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Art.

production converged seamlessly with Soviet political imperialism to redefine and reposition the predicates of exhibition design. Indeed, the influence of techniques devised or popularized by Lissitzky and his colleagues was global, as seen, for example, in the work of Edward Steichen, creator of *The Family of Man* (see p. 163), as well as in the projects of Nazi and Fascist propagandists.<sup>154</sup>

Invited by Marc Chagall to join the Vitebsk art school in 1919, Lissitzky came under the influence of Malevich. In addition to his formulation of Suprematism, Malevich also theorized exhibitions and museums, advocating the establishment of state museums throughout Russia as a basic human right. Malevich viewed existing museums as the “zero” of forms, a concept underlying his view of conventional painting and his subsequent radicalization of both the intent and content of art. Art exhibitions, essentially, had a political function: “All art exhibitions must show projects for the transformation of the image of the world.”<sup>155</sup> Thus, Malevich’s views on exhibitions and institutions were commensurate with the norms of the new Bolshevik state. Malevich experimented with the predicates of exhibition installation in the *0.10 Exhibition*, 1915, the first public display of Suprematism (fig. 109). Malevich regarded “the museum walls as the planes on which the works should be placed in the same order as the composition of forms are placed on the painterly

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<sup>154</sup> For a detailed account of Edward Steichen’s exhibition design practice for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, See: Christopher Phillips, “The Judgment Seat of Photography,” *October*, 22, Fall 1982, 27 ff.

<sup>155</sup> See K.S. Malevich, *The Artist, Infinity, Suprematism: Unpublished Writing 1913-33*, Vol. IV (Copenhagen: Borgens Forlag, 1978), 5, 13.

plane.”<sup>156</sup> Bold in his claims, Malevich’s installation resulted in a concentrated, collage-like juxtaposition of multiple canvases on wall surfaces, punctuated by the famous “icon corner,” the traditional Russian domestic space for personal icons, translated here into the place of honor for his renowned *Black Square*.

Working with a range of agitprop commissions, from festival decoration to mass-distributed Revolutionary posters, Malevich’s pupil Lissitzky produced the unparalleled icon of the Revolution, *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* (1919, fig. 20), a mechanically reproducible poster anthropomorphizing abstraction in the service of the Russian Civil War narrative. A member of NARKAMPROS, headed by Commissar Anatoly Lunacharsky, Lissitzky is thought to have been dispatched to Berlin in 1921 as cultural ambassador in conjunction with *The First Exhibition of Russian Art*, on view in Van Diemen Gallery, Berlin.<sup>157</sup> This show of the work of Constructivist artists, organized by artist David Shterenberg, Commissar in Charge, included posters, architectural design, pottery, paintings and constructions by artists such as Naum Gabo, Vladimir Tatlin, Alexandr Rodchenko, and Lissitzky. In Berlin, together with Ilya Ehrenberg,<sup>158</sup> Lissitzky published a multilingual journal entitled

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<sup>156</sup> Iulia Lebedeva, “Avant-Garde Art in the Permanent Exhibition of the Tretyakov Gallery in the 1920s and 1930s,” *The Russian Avant-Garde: Representation and Interpretation* (Russian Museum: St. Petersburg, 1998), 139.

<sup>157</sup> The exhibition traveled to subsequent venues in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. For discussion see Matthew Drutt, “El Lissitzky in Germany 1922-25,”- *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet: Photography, Design, Collaboration*, ed. Margarita Tupitsyn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>158</sup> Ehrenberg later coined the term “the thaw,” referencing the relaxation of restraints in the Khrushchev era. First published in the U.S.S.R. in 1954, the novel was released

*Vesch gegenstand/Objet*, and, in this period, formed alliances with avant-garde European artists including Dadaist Hans Arp and *De Stijl* architect Theo Van Doesburg. In this inter-war period, the movements represented by these artists were among the most prominent examples of artistic groups effectively transgressing national borders, as did the pre-World War I movement of Cubism. As Lissitzky's alliance with European art groups suggests, cultural transnationalism offered the potential for the colonization of the values of the Comintern, the nation-less branch of the Soviet Communist Party, in the late 1920s and 1930s.

During this period debates circulated in European circles regarding the function and form of the visual exhibition, as they did in the Soviet Union. Lissitzky, Van Doesburg and German Dadaist Hans Richter attended the *Ersten Internationalen Kongress Progressiver Kunstler*, the Congress of the International Union of Progressive Artists, in Dusseldorf in May, 1921. There, a proposal for an international union of artists met resistance from the three artists, who offered a joint rebuttal entitled "Declaration of the International Fraction of Constructivists of the First International Congress of Progressive Artists." Matthew Drutt briefly mentions the artists' participation in the congress, which was crucial for the public enunciation of the principles of collectivist exhibition and art practice.<sup>159</sup> Deeply objecting to the wide commercialization of art exhibitions, the trio charged, "The Union: IV. It is

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in the U.S. in the following year. See Ilya Ehrenburg, *The Thaw* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1955).

<sup>159</sup>Drutt describes the congress as "a failed attempt at uniting artists under a common cause without regard to nationality." See Drutt, "El Lissitzky," 12.

obvious from the founding manifesto that the Union envisages a series of initiatives *aimed principally at furthering the international business of art exhibitions*. The Union is thus effectively planning *to pursue an entrepreneurial politics of colonization*.<sup>160</sup> Van Doesburg, Lissitzky and Richter, thus, sensed a thinly disguised marketing strategy underwriting an increasingly globalized and lucrative economy of art for export.

Intent to move the spirit of the congress away from imperialism and the clutch of the gallery, the artists defined the role of the avant-garde artist. For them, the progressive artist does not pander to bourgeois emotion, but rather strives for a universal language. The only type of international art society equipped to fulfill these aims must be predicated on, first, the collectivizing rules of science and technology which offer a “method of organizing our *shared life in general* [for this and following, authors’ italics].” Second, progressive artists must “recognize that art has *ceased to be a dream world* that opposes itself to the world of reality, that it has *ceased to be a means for unveiling cosmic mysteries*. *Art is a universal and real expression of the creative energy which organizes the progress of humanity*. That is

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<sup>160</sup> The artists further objected to gallery exhibitions as a form of dystopia, in favor of utopian, non-commercial exhibitions: “*We repudiate the art exhibitions of today as warehouses for the commercial exchange of things that are simply ranged alongside one another in an intrinsically unrelated manner*. We stand today between a society which does not need us and a society that does not yet exist. That is why the only exhibitions acceptable to us are those which *demonstrate* what we still wish to accomplish (projects, plans, models) or what we have already accomplished.” See Theo van Doesburg, El Lissitzky, and Hans Richter, “Declaration of the International Fraction of Constructivists of the First International Congress of Progressive Artists,” Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*, 315, for this and the following excerpts.

to say: art is a tool of the universal process of labour.” This declaration shifts abstraction from the aesthetic hermeticism of Malevich’s Suprematism or the romantic synesthesia of Kandinsky towards a function in material society, consonant with the Productivist agenda. Lissitzky’s exhibition designs would bear witness to his efforts to achieve what he, Van Doesburg and Richter perceived to be the purpose of art and exhibition practice: social progress through the workman-like harnessing of creative energy.

Benjamin Buchloh has examined at length the integration of political, aesthetic and material attitudes in the work of Lissitzky and other practitioners. He claims that the Constructivist interest in *faktura*, the systematic investigation of the materiality, tactility, and tools of the process and production of object-making paralleled research in the construction of the sociopolitical state.<sup>161</sup> In addition, *faktura* embraced questions concerning the placement of the object in exhibition space, and its relationship to the viewing spectator. Lissitzky’s European and Soviet projects reflect these concerns, and the importance of this aspect of his practice. In fact, just prior to his death in 1941, Lissitzky claimed in his autobiography that, “In 1926 my most important work as an artist began: the design of exhibitions.”<sup>162</sup>

Lissitzky’s early experimentation in the redeployment of temporary exhibition space,

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<sup>161</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “From *Faktura* to *Factography*,” *October*, 30, Fall 1984, 82 ff. Buchloh builds on the research, published in the year previous to his article, of Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 98-99.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 24; also FN 24, which cites Lissitzky, *Proun und Wolkenbugel*, VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1997, 115.

leading up to the 1926 epiphany, was evident in the installation of the *Prounenraum* (*Proun* may be translated: “project for the establishment of a new art”), in the *Grosse Berliner Kunsaustellung* (1923, fig. 21). With the *Prounenraum*, Lissitzky translated the small-scale Constructivist experimentations of Rodchenko into large-scale projects integrating the three-dimensional spatiality of the exhibiting venue. The gallery may be seen as the support for the objects in its embrace, replacing the traditional canvas or pedestal. The original plan included the floor, thus proving the key importance of the entire exhibition space in Lissitzky’s thinking. A letter by Lissitzky confirms this as well as the integral significance of the viewer in the activation of the space.<sup>163</sup>

For the Dresden and Hannover *Demonstration Rooms, Cabinet of Abstract Art* (1926, fig. 26), Lissitzky reconfigured the display space as a cabinet, integrating traditional museum display technique with Constructivist design innovation. Lissitzky stated that the exhibition space was to be a “kind of showcase, or a stage on which the pictures appear as the actors in a drama (or comedy). ... Everything must be based not on colour but on the inherent properties of the material; then the colour

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<sup>163</sup> Drutt quotes Lissitzky’s description of the space in a letter published July 1923 in the Dutch Constructivist journal, *G*: “The equilibrium I seek to attain in the room must be elementary and capable of change, so that it cannot be disturbed by a telephone or a piece of standard office furniture. The room is there for the human being – not the human being for the room.” Drutt, “El Lissitzky in Germany,”- 14, also FN 17, which cites Lissitzky’s essay, “Proun Room,” Great Berlin Art Exhibition (1923), published in Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky, life, letters, texts* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1980).

(sic) of the pictures, of the painting, will shout out (or sing) without restraint.”<sup>164</sup>

Vertical lattice relief constructions sheathed movable wall panels: both lattice relief and panel possessed an inherent capacity to change the viewer’s perception of light and shadow, depending on the spectator’s viewing angle, the placement of the panels and the changing conditions of ambient light. This design was permanently installed as *The Abstract Cabinet*, in the Provinzialmuseum, Hannover, around 1930 (fig. 27).

Lissitzky’s intention to engage and activate the viewer by means of the changeability of the installation reflects the dynamic mobility of the Soviet state at this time, theorized as “Culture One” by Vladimir Paperny.<sup>165</sup> Looking back from the vantage point of the post-Thaw 1970s in the Soviet Union, Paperny characterized the Revolutionary art movement of the historical avant-garde as one of dynamism and perpetual motion, commensurate with the fluidity, energy and progression of the Revolution itself. Examples offered by Paperny include Vladimir Tatlin’s model for the *Monument to the Third International*, a spiral framework consisting of three parts rotating continuously at different speeds of motion. Paperny also notes the textual claims of Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov, as well as artist Malevich. Paperny, quoting from Vertov, states, “I have,” says Culture One, “henceforth freed myself forever from human immobility, I am in constant motion.” Drawing from Malevich,

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<sup>164</sup> See Drutt, “El Lissitzky,” 22, also FN 56, which cites letter from Lissitzky to Küppers, February 8, 1926, published in Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky*, 74.

<sup>165</sup> Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Vladimir Paperny, “Movement-Immobility,” *Tekstura, Russian Essays on Visual Culture*, ed. and trans. Alla Efimova and Lev Manovich (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

he describes, “an instance of creative tempo, rapid shift in forms; there is no stagnation, there is only turbulent movement.”<sup>166</sup>

Economic pressures forced the young Bolshevik state to reallocate scant available art funds from the autonomous spheres of art, as articulated in the project of Tatlin or the proclamations of Malevich, to industry, generating the Constructivist-based theory and practice of Productivism, the logical development of the Revolutionary avant-gardist tenet of the artist as worker. In all these instances, official acceptance of the experimental, progressive, abstract art practices of Culture One as the visual language most capable of articulating the pure ideals of the Revolutionary state, secured the high rank of the avant-garde artist within the new Soviet state structure. In its articulation of Culture One, Lissitzky’s design for Dresden (1926) demonstrates a concentration on the fabrication of a temporary exhibition space different from ordinary experience that goes further than Melnikov’s 1925 Russian Pavilion design. The earlier design, though featuring the mobility and dynamism of contemporary Moscow architecture and design practice, relied on the contrasting diagonals of wooden peasant architecture. In fact, Lissitzky’s work, though relying on the conventions of interior exhibition space, must constitute the earliest instance of the radicalization of temporary exhibition design.<sup>167</sup> While his

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<sup>166</sup> Dziga Vertov and Malevich, quoted in Vladimir Paperny, “Movement-Immobility,” 56-57.

<sup>167</sup> For commentary on the political nature of Lissitzky’s design innovation, see Ulrich Pohlman, “El Lissitzky’s Exhibition Designs,” *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet: Photography, Design, Collaboration*, ed. Margarita Tupitsyn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) 52.

mentor Malevich had experimented with exhibition design, the conventional underpinnings of the *0.10* installation—a collage-like juxtaposition of multiple canvases on wall surfaces, punctuated by the “icon corner”—form a sharp contrast to the shifting lines and planes of the Lissitzky project.

Meanwhile, in the 1920s, as Lissitzky and others were formulating the active, dynamic designs of Culture One, tensions between the avant-garde and traditional artists that had surfaced from the beginning of the Soviet state, generated a succession of debates and exhibitions whose contours would lead to dramatic changes in the status of the avant-garde in the next decade as Culture Two gradually rose. Any conservative artist, and there were many, committed to the continuation of traditional, naturalistic Russian academic art was not merely threatened by the rise of the avant-garde, but also lost patronage and status. As Malevich’s brother-in-law Evgenii Katsman commented, “Malevich became rich, while we, realists, during the first five years were going around poor and starving.”<sup>168</sup> But the traditional position was vindicated in this era by a rising tide of artistic and Party preference for a return to realism, exemplified in the work of the members of ARKhK and the OST painters, of which Aleksandr Deineka was the most notable member (see p. 125).

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<sup>168</sup> Evgenii Katsman, T. Khvostenko, *Vechera na Maslovke bliz Dinamo. Za fasadom proletarskogo iskusstva*, vol. 2, (Olympia Press, 2003), 161-62, as quoted in Maria Bulanova, “Soviet Art: A Perspective on a Twentieth-Century Phenomenon,” *Soviet Dis-Union: Socialist Realist & Nonconformist Art* (Minneapolis: The Museum of Russian Art, 2006) 12, FN 8.

As Buchloh shows, this effect is noted in Lissitzky's work, too, as he shifted subtly from Culture One to Culture Two in a move toward *factography*, as Buchloch shows. Buchloch traces the evolution of his exhibition design toward "simultaneous collective reception ... modeling the increasing collectivism of the Soviet state."<sup>169</sup> For Buchloch, a crisis of representation and audience relationships befell Lissitzky and fellow Constructivists in their evolving formulation of art practice for the masses. The solution was to be found in the renewal of "iconicity in representation," a return to legible, representational imagery through the deployment of photography that dispenses with earlier experimentations in both abstraction and the properties inherent in materials in favor of the documentary, that is, *factography*.<sup>170</sup> The realism implicit in the concentration on the single, legible image as the vector of the narrative, a feature of the documentary, is consonant with the emerging aims of Socialist Realism in the production of comprehensible, ideological images.

The technique of photomontage, according to Buchloh, provided the link between *faktura* and *factography*. Created in Russia by Gustav Klutis in 1919 (for an example of this technique deployed in a later poster design, see fig. 22), both Rodchenko, and Lissitzky began working with the juxtaposition of photographic fragments inherent in the photomontage process in 1922. The mechanical nature of the technique, incorporating production, reproduction, and mass distribution, suited the Constructivist goal to reach wide audiences. Klutis distinguished Soviet

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<sup>169</sup> Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 94.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 98, 103.

photomontage from its western affiliate, Dadaism, by virtue of its militant and political nature in Soviet practice.<sup>171</sup> The technique of photomontage was hailed by Lissitzky and others as harking back to the early Revolution, providing, as it did, a mass media instrument for education, commensurate with the other tools of agitprop, including typography and advertising propaganda.<sup>172</sup> For Lissitzky, the politics of art required turning away from the conventional practices of painting and sculpture and the production of the unique object, in favor of a new monumentality. The new conditions of monumentality would arise from the necessary conditions of what he called the “social requirements of our epoch and the artist’s mastering of new technology. Buchloh terms these social requirements as “simultaneous collective reception,” or, simply put, consumer demand.<sup>173</sup>

For the *Pressa* exhibition (Cologne, 1928, fig. 24), an international consortium of displays of newspaper and book publishing, Lissitzky called his design a “typographic kino-show.”<sup>174</sup> Working as a collective of agitprop graphic designers and artists, Lissitzky’s team produced a large-scale, 72 x 11 foot photomontage—what exhibition co-designer Sergei Senkin called a “photofresco”—made up of an assembly of photographs taken at different angles and distances, unfolding

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 94; Margarita Tupitsyn, “Back to Moscow,” *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 30, also FN 25, which cites Lissitzky, *Khudozhnik v proizvodstvo*, 7.

<sup>174</sup> Polhman notes Russian Formalist Osip Brik’s 1928 observation that “photography was the basis of cinematography,” clearly pointing to a wide discourse of the media in the period of Lissitzky’s design work. See Pohlman, “El Lissitzky’s Exhibition Designs,” 56.

panoramically in time.<sup>175</sup> This monumental juxtaposition of photographs in the construction of a history of the Soviet publishing industry and its influential role in the education of the masses, may be viewed as the aesthetic embodiment of dialectical materialism. Since he does not appear to have used film in his display, Lissitzky's comparison of the still images of his "photofresco" to the cinema is striking and demonstrates an understanding of motion film as, in effect, the unfolding of a series of discrete frames in time to simulate the effect of movement. The effect on one admiring critic at the time was precise: "Propaganda, propaganda, that is the keynote of Soviet Russian exhibitions, whether they be in Cologne or Dresden."<sup>176</sup> This quote points up a further radicalization in international exhibition making: both the immediacy and persuasiveness of the promotional rhetoric, as formulated by the design elite.

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<sup>175</sup> "Photofresco" may be Buchloh's mistranslation of what is generally termed "photofrieze." See Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 104. For the national Soviet exhibition of the previous year, the 1927 *All-Union Printing Trades Exhibit*, Moscow, Lissitzky, as well as design team members, including Gustav Klutis, similarly focused on graphics and its engagement with industry in the construction of the socialist state. Lissitzky's success with the 1927 exhibition secured his position as the ideologically conformist, design representative of the U.S.S.R. abroad. Renowned in the west, the Soviets recognized his propaganda value in promoting abroad the Soviet state. *Pressa* (1928) was a trade show, and not an exhibition of art; the Russian entry for *Pressa* designed by a collaboration of artists under the direction of Lissitzky, was Lissitzky's first foray into propaganda. See Tupitsyn, "El Lissitzky," 34. The exhibition catalogue marked the publication of Lissitzky's *Productivist Manifesto*. Here he emphasized the political power of photomontage in influencing and educating the public. The iconic, panoramic photomural for the *Pressa* exhibition reveals Lissitzky's shift to *factography* and intellectual shift away from dialectical materialism in the scaling up of a single photographic image, a technique he would engage through the 1930s, especially in his magazine work for Joseph Stalin, entitled *The U.S.S.R. in Construction*. See Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 104 ff.; Margarita Tupitsyn, "El Lissitzky," 26-27, 29.

<sup>176</sup> Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," 106.

The international *Film und Foto Exhibition* (Stuttgart, 1929, fig. 25) introduced a new element in Lissitzky's work: an innovative exhibition design system consisting of interchangeable struts and surfaces, which made possible the creation of support surfaces tailor-made to the requirements of the objects on display. This system appears to have been suggested to Lissitzky by the work of Austrian architect Friedrich Kiesler, whose "elementary architecture" consisted of L- and T-systems of armatures and panels created for the *Internationale Ausstellung neuer Theatertechnik* in 1924, an exhibition with which Lissitzky was also involved.<sup>177</sup>

In Lissitzky's large body of exhibition work, which also included the *International Hygiene Exhibition* (Dresden, 1930, fig. 26), he advanced a vision of spectacle as sociopolitical statement on the international stage. It consisted, first, of the massive deployment of mass-media photography, a medium of central aesthetic and ideological importance in the construction of the thematic narrative. Second, in the placement of the materials in the exhibiting space, Lissitzky's intention was to draw the viewer actively into the space, in order to engage fully with the work, through simple and unfamiliar means. Objects were placed in unusual locations, on the ceiling or high up on the vertical wall, while the walls themselves might be moveable. Thus the exhibiting space became, first, a dynamic, actually or apparently moving, environment, one that was consonant, in the beginning, with the aims of the Bolshevik state, and later became a powerful and moving documentation of the

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<sup>177</sup> Polhman, "El Lissitzky's Exhibition Designs," - 55-56, figs. 2-3.

claims of Soviet Stalinism. Lissitzky's pioneering design for the *Pressa* photofrieze, produced in conjunction with Sergei Senkin, combined the nineteenth-century panorama with dialectical photomontage.<sup>178</sup> This radical solution would inform the work of informational exhibition designers including the Nazi and World War II American work of Bauhaus designer Herbert Bayer and American architect Paul Rudolph, who served as installation designer under Edward Steichen for the exhibition *The Family of Man*, on view in Moscow, 1959 (see: chapter three).<sup>179</sup> Lissitzky's shift from hermetic, modernist materiality to the documentary object reflects a general trend in Soviet art in the 1920s and 1930s. As Matthew Cullerne Bown comments, "what was emerging as 'modernism' in the West was written out of official versions of artistic evolution as a decadent, temporary phenomenon and castigated as 'cosmopolitanism,' 'formalism,' and 'subjectivism.'" The imperative of the imperial Soviet message precluded aesthetic experimentation in favor of clear, persuasive circulation of informational propaganda, and Lissitzky was quick to

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<sup>178</sup> For commentary, see *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, fig. 6; 59, figs. 7-8; 62, fig. 13; 64, fig. 16. See also Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography." Phillips comments: "Bayer's own contrasting idea of the aims of the modern exhibition descended from El Lissitzky's revolutionary use of repetitive photographic/typographic clusters in the late 1920s, mediated by the Bauhaus' rationalization of Lissitzky's techniques in the 1930s." Phillips includes the project *Road to Victory*, created by Museum of Modern Art curator Steichen, in this genealogy: "The impact of 'Road to Victory' depended largely on the ingenious installation devised for Steichen by Herbert Bayer, who had left Germany in 1938." The installation included curving paths and enlarged documentary photographs. *Ibid.*, 41 ff.

replace his bold early efforts with the ideology of the documentary, as Buchloh has made clear.<sup>180</sup>

***Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, 1931***

The propagandistic transnationalism of the Lissitzky-designed export projects promoted an international sociopolitical system not confined to the U.S.S.R. This form of transnationalism forms an interesting juxtaposition to the forces of imperial colonialism, which had been a dominant force for decades in Europe, and made explicit within the exhibition format at the site of world's fairs, as I have shown. In both discourses, a presumption of moral imperative underlies an imperial intent. Since the nineteenth century, the colonial theme was included in world's fair spectacle, and rose in strength to be considered self-sufficient to form the exclusive thematic program for national and international exhibitions.<sup>181</sup> Exhibitions were held in Marseilles in 1906 and 1922, as well as Great Britain in 1924-25, culminating in the 1931 *Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris*, organized by the French Ministry

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<sup>180</sup> Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, "Introduction,"- *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917-1992*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>181</sup> For example, the Charles Garnier-designed *Habitation Humaine* for the 1889 *Exposition Universelle*; the Dutch East Indies Pavilion for the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*; the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, celebrating the Lewis and Clark exhibition, which included a U.S. display of villagers of the Philippines, a territory newly acquired as spoils of the Spanish-American War, 1898, as well as a group of Pueblo Indians. See Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, *passim*.

of Colonies and mounted in Vincennes, a suburb of Paris (fig. 42).<sup>182</sup> A para-world's fair, this exhibition, the last international fair exclusively devoted to colonialism, featured many familiar ingredients, including the participation of such imperializing nation-states as Belgium, Italy, Holland, and the U.S. as hosts.<sup>183</sup> The construction of a human zoo and a Senegalese village were, by now, customary and anticipated features of international spectacle, here constituting a statement of the imperative of French colonial imperialistic incursion in North Africa and Indochina. The exotic, native architectural styles of Africa and Polynesia on view in the 1931 exposition grew out of the popularity of the colonial section of the 1900 fair. The *Musée des Colonies* was the only pavilion representing both colonizer and colony—France and its colonies—in a single space.<sup>184</sup> The purpose of this exhibition was to stimulate investment and to encourage the public's pride in the French colonies. The nineteenth-century colonial modality of "assimilation" was giving way to the notion of "association." Nonetheless, for Morton, "The world of colonial association was, therefore, predicated on the precise and subtle differentiation of peoples, societies, and cultures into racially based hierarchies." Following this logic, the pavilions maintained a strict, separatist architectural hierarchy: a variant of Art Deco for the metropolitan pavilions, and "native" styles for the pavilions of the colonies.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>For description and commentary see Patricia A. Morton, "National and Colonial: The *Musées des Colonies* at the Colonial Exposition, Paris, 1931," *The Art Bulletin*, 80, 2, 1998, 357-377 and *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000).

<sup>183</sup>The U.S. sent a model of Mount Vernon, the Georgian-style boyhood home of first U.S. president George Washington.

<sup>184</sup>Morton, "National and Colonial," 357.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., 359-360.

At the urging of the Comintern, the French Communist Party joined ranks with the Anti-Imperialist League and the French Surrealists to protest the 1931 *Colonialise* exhibition with the creation of an inverse: *La Verité dans Les Colonies*, an exhibition housed in the 1925 Melnikov building, now serving as headquarters for the French Communist Party, as well as several trade unions.<sup>186</sup> Writers Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard, as well as painter Yves Tanguy, participated in the formation of the exhibition. On view were cultural objects of Africa, Oceania, and North America, many signifying redemption from their otherwise colonial fetishization in Vincennes. Loans of non-European art drawn from the personal collections of Surrealists André Breton and Eluard were juxtaposed with examples of European cultural fetishes, including objects of the Catholic Church. Surrealists noted the “landlord mentality” of the imperialists in an article published in *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* in the same year.<sup>187</sup> Also included in the counter-exhibition was a photographic display of human abuse, including one image of the lynching of African-Americans. The imperial dehumanization of the colonial subject, as evidenced in these counter exhibitions, dramatically juxtaposed with an exhibition of the work of the Communist Party on another floor of the same building. Here, a theme of human value underlay the construction of the Soviet state. The implication of the juxtapositions was clear: the evidence sharply weighed in favor of

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<sup>186</sup> The following summary is based on: Amanda Stansell, “Surrealist Racial Politics at the Borders of ‘Reason’: whiteness, primitivism, and negritude,” *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*, ed. Raymond Spiteri and Donald LaCoss, Studies in European Cultural Transition, 16 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 116 ff.

<sup>187</sup> *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution*, nos. 3-4, 1931.

the humane code of the nation-less and non-imperialistic Comintern, a party and philosophy offering a benign alternative to the physical abuses of European and American imperialism on view in the exhibitions.

At these two sites, the cultural and political issues at stake were complex: Josephine Baker, famed African-American performer and cultural idol in Paris, had been nominated Queen of the Colonies for the *Exposition Coloniale*, but could not accept the honor as she was not a French citizen. She did preside at ceremonies in 1937 marking the reopening of the *Musée de l'Homme*, a wing of the *Palais du Chaillot* which was an institution regarded by some as a centerpiece for cultural colonialism, and a focus of dispute amongst the Surrealists. A favorite of Surrealist Georges Rivière, Baker further complicated issues by her performance in the film *Princess Tam Tam*, a complex cinematic validation of French colonialism.<sup>188</sup>

Concurrent to the French exhibition, the 1931 *Anti-Imperialist Exhibition*, mounted in Moscow was, indeed, conceptualized along ideological lines similar to the French exhibition. Both provided emphatic retorts to the western colonial enterprise that, at the same time, affirmed the goodwill of the Communist International.<sup>189</sup> Organized by the Russian Association of Proletarian Artists and the

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<sup>188</sup> *Princesse Tam Tam*, black-and-white film, directed by Edmond T. Greville (Paris, Studios Pathé-Nathan, 1935).

<sup>189</sup> For a brief description of the exhibition see Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 122; for participation of the John Reed Club, see: Matthew Baigell, Milly Heyd, ed., *Complex Identities:*

Federation of Organizations of Soviet Artists, its internationalism was affirmed by the participation of the U.S.-based John Reed Club, which provided ninety-six works, principally by U.S. political cartoonists, including Jacob Burck, Yosi Cutler, Louis Lozowick, Morris Pass, William Siegel and Adolf Wolff. The exhibition themes included “Black Working People in the Capitalist U.S.” and “Fascism and Social Fascism.”<sup>190</sup> Paradoxically, the indictment of western imperialism explicit in this exhibition as well as the *Verité* exhibition above, notably evidenced in the inclusion of dissident U.S. artists critical of their contemporary sociopolitical history, overlooked the colonialism inherent in the exhibition goals of the Communist International.

***Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne, 1937***

The year 1937 was marked by dark events in the intricate network of international art exhibitions and politics.<sup>191</sup> Dictator and artiste manqué Adolph Hitler oversaw the systematic ridiculing and savaging of progressive art of the twentieth century in the staging of the exhibition *Entartete Kunst*, at the *Haus der Kunst* in

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Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art (Montclair: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 145 ff.

<sup>190</sup> The first exhibition sent to the Soviet Union by the John Reed Club, the show was mounted in the Museum of New Western Art, Moscow, before traveling to other venues in the Soviet Union; see Baigell, Complex Identities, 145 ff.

<sup>191</sup> For insightful description and commentary, see Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, “1937,” 1 (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 281-285.

Munich (fig. 41). Included were works by international and national artists, George Grosz, Vassily Kandinsky and Emil Nolde who, ironically, was a charter member of the Nazi Party. Hitler paranoiacally suspected an alliance of political radicalism and modernist aesthetics in early twentieth-century avant-garde practice. Hitler's instrumentalization of the avant-garde as the enemy of the Fascist regime in the exhibition's sweeping act of iconoclasm was both surgical and stunning. Nazi aesthetics reposed in the revival of neoclassicism, exemplified in the nude male figural sculptures of Arno Breker, whose work, as seen in *Readiness* which is slightly later in date (1939, fig. 29), rehearses the sculptures of the Renaissance and Antiquity. Commenting on the abuses of the Nazi regime, Adorno chillingly refers to Hitler's preference for neoclassicism: "The more torture went on in the basement, they more insistently they made sure that the roof rested on columns."<sup>192</sup> Hitler's recuperation of neoclassicism represents a perversion of the visual ideology of neoclassical Revolutionary France, paralleling Mussolini's appropriation of neoclassicism in his construction of the neo-Roman imperial imaginary. Hitler's direct involvement in policy-making in the arts, seen in this dark tale of exhibition travesty, stands in striking contrast to Joseph Stalin's relative indifference to the arts, except in the domain of film.

A troubled intellectual climate prevailed in France in 1937, as reports on the abuses of the Moscow show trials began to reach the west. Internal debates ensued among the French Surrealists regarding the nature of Stalinism, the dilemma of

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<sup>192</sup> Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 49.

Trotsky, and the conditions of continuing allegiance to the French Communist Party.<sup>193</sup> Imperial nationalism would dominate the 1937 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne* (fig. 28). Writing nearly contemporaneously in 1939, Gutheim commented:

By the time the Paris 1937 exposition had opened, it was clear that the structure of the modern exposition had radically altered. No longer was commercial expansion the primary consideration, and no longer was the tone one of constructive internationalism. With the *Adler*-topped granite shaft of the Nazi German government glowering at the stainless-steel sculpture of a group of workers which crowned the adjacent building of the U.S.S.R., it was clear that political propaganda and bitter and aggressive nationalism were the primary note.<sup>194</sup>

Gutheim's account marks a radical shift at the site of the world's fair from the cornucopia of national plenty—goods, popular entertainment, the elite arts—to a cultural combat zone reflecting escalating international tensions. The political forces underlying the fair were quite explicit, yet the inherent neutrality of the world's fair context appears to have precluded intense debate.

The 1937 Fair was the first to deploy on a grand scale, at the sites of the Spanish Republic, German and Soviet pavilions, symbols of military aggression and imperial ambition in architecture, painting, and sculpture. Picasso's grisaille canvas *Guernica* (1937, fig. 30) hung in the International Style Spanish Republican pavilion

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<sup>193</sup> “By late August 1936, the construction of the Soviet pavilion [for the 1937 *Exposition Internationale*] was well underway when news of the Soviet show trials reached Paris. On 3 September, André Breton gave a speech at the meeting at *La Mutualité* advertised as ‘The Truth about the Moscow Trials’, denouncing the trials and execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers. See: Sarah Wilson, “The Soviet Pavilion in Paris,” *Art of the Soviets*, 108 ff.

<sup>194</sup> Gutheim, “Federal Participation in Two World's Fairs,”- 621.

designed by architect José Sert. Picasso, painting in Paris, reached back to the planes and solids of his earlier Synthetic Cubist and Surrealist styles in the construction of a work set in powerful opposition to the Nazi-supported, Franco regime of his homeland. Specifically, the painting protested the inhuman Nazi bombing of the citizens of the tiny Basque village of Guernica in 1937. In this, perhaps the most audible work of twentieth century art, the shrieks and cries of the four female figures, conveyed in line, shallow plane and monotone, are pitched at a high, nearly unbearable emotional register. Meanwhile, the neoclassical pavilion of Hitler's Third Reich, designed by state architect Albert Speer, was adorned with the Nazi emblems of the swastika and the *Grand Prix*-winning eagle designed by Kurt Schmid-Ehmen. Breker's sculptures, and the work of others, decorated the grounds and interior of the pavilion, convening medieval and neoclassical forms and symbols in the Aryan imaginary.<sup>195</sup>

Vera Mukhina's Socialist Realist monument *Worker and the Collective Farm Laborer* (1937, fig. 31) stood atop the neoclassicizing Russian Pavilion created by Boris Iofan (winning architect for the commission for the Moscow Palace of the Soviets<sup>196</sup>) and faced the Speer pavilion. The stainless steel sculpture is steeped in the ideology of state-ordered Socialist Realism, celebrating the new Soviet Man and Woman, a key discourse of the regime. Like Lissitzky and Malevich, Mukhina had cast off her early modernist experiments as a student in Paris. Here, the physical

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<sup>195</sup> Foster, Krauss, et al, *Art Since 1900*, 284.

<sup>196</sup> On view in the pavilion was a scale model of Iofan's Palace of the Soviets, which was never built. See Wilson, "The Soviet Pavilion," 111.

machinery of her personifications of the individual in the service of the state is conveyed through conventional representational devices of western figurative art. The pair is modeled on the Greek ideal of beauty, as specifically conveyed in the Hellenistic *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Stalinist ideological engineering, encapsulated by Mukhina in this arresting sculpture, chillingly belied the inhuman cruelty and terror meted out in this period, the height of the purges and show trials. Meanwhile, within the Soviet pavilion, objects and displays promoted the rapid industrialization of the state in a non-hierarchical and varied assemblage: photographs, a tractor, a diamond-and-ruby encrusted map of the U.S.S.R., and a selection of Socialist Realist paintings.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> See Anthony Swift, "Soviet Socialism on Display at the Paris and New York World's Fairs, 1937-39," *Kunst und Propaganda im Streit der Nationen 1930-1945, Deutschen Historischen Museums Berlin and The Wolfsonian-Florida International University, Miami, Dresden: Sandstein Verlag, 2007, 183 ff.* In similar fashion, art exhibitions within Soviet borders in the later 1920s and 1930s documented the shift back to realism and to traditional painting practice. They included: the *Jubilee Exhibition of the Art of the Peoples of the USSR* (1927); a survey of fifteen years of art in the Russian Federation, held in Leningrad and Moscow, again in celebration of the 1917 Revolution (1932); and an all-union exhibition of art commemorating the fifteenth and twentieth anniversaries of the Red Army (1933, 1938). Smaller exhibitions celebrated the Five-year Plan in the Visual Arts, Transportation, and other themes of the Soviet state. The signal exhibition of the decade in the U.S.S.R., however, remains the inaugural 1939 *All-Union Agricultural Exhibition*. The exhibition included giant Socialist murals, the installation of Vera Mukhina's iconic statue of the *Worker and Farm Laborer*, just recently on view at the Paris *Exposition Internationale* and a giant statue of Stalin. Over two hundred buildings celebrated agriculture and the brotherhood of the Soviet state. The exhibition would endure, to be renamed *Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy* in the 1950s and to include a space pavilion in 1966. For chronology and description of these exhibitions, see: Bowne, *Socialist Realist Painting*, p. 86 ff.

The reaffirmation of the conservative style of academic realism, emerging in the later 1920s, had been both theorized and institutionalized by the date of the 1937 fair. In 1932, the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered the dissolution of all artistic groups and the creation of the single Union of Artists of the U.S.S.R. This was followed by Andrei Zhdanov's 1934 call for Socialist Realism: an art promoting images of the optimistic present in the service of the Revolutionary future and proscribing individualism and formalism in favor of a didactic art of the masses. Socialist Realism became the official creed of the Stalinist Party, and by 1937, had replaced the avant-garde as a propaganda tool of the Communist state, paralleling moves in all other spheres of Stalin's U.S.S.R.<sup>198</sup>

Culture Two is the term Paperny uses to describe the hardening conditions of the Stalinist era, including the immobilization of the Soviet population, its calendar,

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<sup>198</sup> In his 1934 speech, Zhdanov proclaimed: "Comrade Stalin has called our writers 'engineers of human souls.' ... we must depict reality in its revolutionary development. In this respect, truth and historical concreteness of the artistic depiction must be combined with the task of the ideological transformation and education of the working people in the spirit of Socialism. This method of artistic literature and literary criticism I what we call socialist realism... To be an engineer of human souls means to stand with both feet on the ground of real life. And this, in turn, denotes a break with the old-style romanticism that depicted a nonexistent life with nonexistent heroes and that spirited the reader away from the contradictions and oppression of life to an unreal world, to a world of utopias. Romanticism cannot be alien to our literature, which stands with both feet on the firm basis of materialism; but it must be a romanticism of a new kind, a revolutionary romanticism ... Soviet literature must be able to show our heroes, must be able to catch a glimpse of our tomorrow. This will not be a utopia, because our tomorrow is being prepared today by our systematic and conscious work... Create work with a high level of craftsmanship, with high ideological and artistic content!" Andrei Zhdanov, Speech, All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, August, 1934, quoted in John E. Bowl, Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism (New York: Thames and Hudson Inc, 1976), 293-294.

its arts, indeed, time itself. On June 16, 1930, “time froze one hour ahead of the international system.”<sup>199</sup> Paperny draws the distinction between the motion, dynamism, ebullience and forward-thinking energy characterizing the experiments of the historical avant-garde, and the stability, stasis, and weight of Stalinist Social Realism that followed in its wake. In Stalinist Russia, picturesque scenes of sunny optimism, material abundance, and the assurance of a bright future belied the violent realities of state-sponsored terror in its many cruel forms, in particular, artificially induced famine, show trials and purges (see, for example, Sergei Gerasimov, *A Collective Farm Festival*, 1937, fig. 119). The Socialist Realist mandate, though heavily couched in ideological aphorisms, was dangerously capricious in its absence of specifying detail. Transgression bore a heavy price, including arrest, interrogation, torture, trial, imprisonment, and/or death.

The Paperny model of motion versus stasis points up a fundamental irony: while Stalinist Social Realism called for an evolutionary and futuristic art depicting “the truthful depiction of reality in its revolutionary development,”<sup>200</sup> it suppressed the art of the avant-garde which, in fact, possessed the visual framework to imagine

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<sup>199</sup> Paperny, *Tekstura*, 60.

<sup>200</sup> “The resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), dated 23 April 1932, ‘On the restructuring of literary and artistic organisations,’ abolished all artistic groupings of whatever kind and with them the last vestiges of creative freedom in the country. The Union of Soviet Artists was established and became a powerful instrument of ideological control over all Soviet art. 1934, the year of the first Writers’ Congress, saw the formulation of the principle of ‘Socialist Realism, which is summarized in the brief formula: ‘the truthful depiction of reality in its revolutionary development.’” See Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer, *Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, 1977), 84.

the dialectical and spiraling movement of the state toward its fulfillment. Paperny's construct, thus, contradicts Groys's formulation of the Stalinist state as the fulfillment of the avant-garde aesthetic.<sup>201</sup> Another curious aspect of Culture Two is that 1930s Stalinist Socialist Realism resonated globally, and not just in the perverse retro-classicizing formulas of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, but also in the European *rappel a l'ordre*, American Social Realism, and Diego Rivera's commitment to the revolutionary naturalism of proto-Renaissance muralist Giotto di Bondone.<sup>202</sup>

Many artists adapted seamlessly to the new Stalinist aesthetics: Vera Mukhina shifted her formal vocabulary, as did Lissitzky, whose exhibition practice, as we have seen, reformed to the requirements of the emerging Stalinist state. Malevich, too, shifted to a new space, modeling figures of peasants redolent of both the geometric forms of revolutionary Suprematism and the sacral secular figures of French nineteenth-century Realist painter Jean-Francois Millet (see, for example, *Reapers*, 1928-29, fig. 120).<sup>203</sup> Further, Malevich's figures were organized within a composition constructed according to the rules of conventional perspective, more acceptable in the prevailing currents of realism.

By edict the avant-garde suffered a complete reversal. Many artists found spaces of accomodation to combine progressive abstraction with Socialist Realist

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<sup>201</sup>Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism.

<sup>202</sup> Diego Rivera, "The Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art," Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Art in Theory 1900-2000, Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2003, 424.

<sup>203</sup> See, for example, Jean-Francois Millet, *The Angelus*, 1857-59, *Musée d'Orsay*, Paris.

narrative, either through necessity or by conviction. Socialist Realism prohibited religious, erotic, formalist, and anti-Soviet subject matter in art,<sup>204</sup> in favor of an art proclaiming the glorious revolutionary present and future.<sup>205</sup> The expansive imprecision of Zhdanov's speech, however, exposed the ideological confusions and contradictions in the policies of the Stalinist state, as Blakesley and Reid comment:

Socialist Realism for its part, ratified as the 'sole method' for Soviet artistic production in 1932, was defined from the start by reference—and sometimes in antithesis—to the art of the West, as well as in relation to a canon derived from the Russian past. The question of which aspects of the ideologically alien art of bourgeois and feudal societies might be redeemed under socialism was settled variously at different times, as the artistic factions struggled for power and resources. In the absence of any clear definition of the style and technique appropriate to socialist realism in the visual arts, however, modernism, identified as the 'anti-human' art of the capitalist West, played a crucial role as socialist realism's defining other.<sup>206</sup>

The impact of the official imposition of Socialist Realism automatically in all practices of arts and letters was to classify as oppositional any artist working outside its framework; within the regime, aesthetic experiment equated with the outsider, which was exiled, outlawed, repressed, or silenced. The utopia of Revolutionary Russia was, thereby, eclipsed by the dystopia of Socialist Realism, a frictionless universe brooking no opposition or alternative in works carefully choreographed, meticulously staged, and widely disseminated. Stalin's mythologizing dream world was reflected in sun-filled, often cinematically inspired, canvasses brimming with

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<sup>204</sup> Alla Rosenfield, "Soviet Nonconformist Art: Its Social and Political Context," Socialist Realist & Nonconformist Art (Minneapolis: The Museum of Russian Art, 2006), 21.

<sup>205</sup> Censorship of three of the four categories of narrative listed has returned to contemporary Russia.

<sup>206</sup> Blakesley and Reid, Russian Art and the West, 12.

optimism, and lacking any individuality.<sup>207</sup> By command, belief in the promise of the Soviet state to come, inscribed the numbingly uniform faces of smiling crowds, happy workers, healthy youth, and well-satisfied elders, as seen in Sergei Gerasimov's *A Collective Farm Festival*. (1937, fig. 119).

In the U.S.S.R., regularly scheduled exhibitions of Socialist Realist Art were augmented by mass reproductions of paintings for posting at sites of social collectives. Though the prescriptions shifted, the basic ingredients of the artistic practice included acceptance of the Classical Greek architects and sculptors, Italian Renaissance painters, the Dutch artist Rembrandt, and above all the French painter Gustave Courbet, hero of the 1871 Paris Commune, revered for the materiality and realism of both his art and his politics. The Socialist Realist movement was at once anti-utopian (a bright revolutionary future was not to be secured on the foundation of a false utopia, but through work and struggle) and set against the Revolutionary avant-garde, which it eclipsed.

Some level of tolerance were evidenced across the registers of the arts, including Stalin's accommodation to, and working partnership with, avant-garde filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. Stalin's fascination with American jazz, dance, film and even palm trees is reflected in works of Socialist Realism including *New Moscow*

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<sup>207</sup>Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: The MIT Press), 2002; See also *Dream Factory Communism: The Visual Culture of the Stalin Era*, Boris Groys and Max Hollein, eds. (Frankfurt: Schirn Hall, 2003).

by Yuri Pimenov (1937, fig. 33), the composition of which includes a pretty young girl, Hollywood-style, seen from the back, driving a convertible in downtown Moscow, her face reflected in the rear-view mirror. Similarly, his preference for the Hollywood-inspired film *Jolly Fellows* (1934) evidences his accommodation to aspects of western culture. For Arch Getty, examples such as this suggest the General Secretary's actual indifference to art theory or practice as promulgated under the banner of Socialist Realism. Getty describes Stalin's rule as one of a Mafia-style leadership, in which Stalin ruled as a "capo," delegating leadership of "his neighborhoods" to his lieutenants who competed against each other for greater control. Stalin was thus removed from the day-to-day governing operations of his nation. Internecine rivalries in all spheres were, then, responsible, at least in part, for the dangerous caprice of decisions and decrees across the registers of the arts. Getty describes Stalin as, "being indifferent to whatever art was ... Socialist Realism may have been in-fighting among traditional versus avant-garde artists."<sup>208</sup> From this point of view, repressions of artists working outside Social Realism in the 1930s, then, were the result of professional power plays. Seen in this light, the Soviet conditions parallel the struggles between American conservative artists and their sympathetic conservative congressional supporters and the exhibition organizers of the avant-garde, erupting in the projects of *Advancing American Art*; the fine arts exhibition of Brussels 1958; or the *American Exhibition*, Moscow, 1959.

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<sup>208</sup> Arch Getty, author interview.

*The World's Fair, New York, 1939*

By 1939, politics had seeped even further into the world's fair, this time held in Flushing Meadow, Long Island, New York (fig. 32).<sup>209</sup> The Victorian-era *topos* was resurrected in the fair's theme, "Building the World of Tomorrow: for Peace and Freedom." Celebrating the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington, fair organizers, in a darkening international climate, aimed to build on the vision of the first president. Amidst increasing militarization and imperial aggression globally, geopolitics dominated the mood of the fair. Germany was not invited to participate; later in the year its tanks would roll into Poland. Italy appears to have sent only a statue of Mussolini. The U.S.S.R. did not return in the second year of the fair. While the public had demonstrated very little reaction to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Nazi invasion of Poland, outrage over the Soviet invasion of Finland in 1939 created a hostile climate in New York.<sup>210</sup> This stands in sharp contrast to the neutrality of earlier fair spaces, or the affectlessness of visitors. Herbert's perception of the remoteness of the displays of the 1937 fair from the worlds they represented, is, in a sense, both affirmed and reversed here, as geopolitical realities intervened.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> For description and commentary of Soviet presence at the 1939 Fair see: Anthony Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow at the New York World's Fair, 1939,"- Russian Review (57, 3, July 1998); Tony[sic] Swift, "The Soviet Union at the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century World's Fairs," Factotum Projects, [www.factotum.org.uk/projects/the\\_fair/fair08html](http://www.factotum.org.uk/projects/the_fair/fair08html), July 5, 2009.

<sup>210</sup> Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow,"- 375.

<sup>211</sup> See FN 36.

Two monumental, geometric forms in the style of eighteenth-century French architect Charles-André Boulle dominated the arcs and right angles of the fairground map of Queens, a footprint consisting of seven geographic and thematic zones. The three-sided, needle-nosed Trylon reached for the sky like a reductivist *Tour Eiffel*, overseeing a landscape rich in cultural and corporate association. Meanwhile, the Perisphere, a cool orb resembling a planet and symbolizing for fair organizers the vision of the future, was gigantic, as described in the fair guidebook: “eighteen stories high, it is as broad as a city block, its interior more than twice the size of Radio City Music Hall.” This construction contained “Democracity,” a “planned and integrated garden city of tomorrow.” The Trylon, “symbol of the Fair’s lofty purpose,” derived from “tri,” three-sided, and “pylon,” soared as a “gateway to the theme building.”<sup>212</sup> The pure, geometric forms comprising the exhibition logo here claimed the modernist International Style—a style incubated at the Bauhaus, and in the studios of *De Stijl* and *L’Esprit Nouveau*—for the American patrimony.

The guidebook clearly articulates the design brief for the exhibition, indicating that the pavilions, as they are temporary in nature, were to be stripped down and unornamented.

The architectural scheme of the New York World’s Fair was conceived and executed with the aim of frankly expressing the temporary nature of the buildings and at the same time maintaining complete aesthetic harmony in the Fair’s architectural, sculptural and landscaping plan. While the control of the Fair’s Board of Design over Fair-constructed buildings was more definite than that imposed on exhibitors who erected their own

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<sup>212</sup> Official Guidebook of the New York World’s Fair 1939 (New York: Exposition Publications Inc., 1939), 43.

structures, the exhibitors were nevertheless held to expressions that would not impose unfairly in mass and scale on neighboring buildings or on the general street effect.<sup>213</sup>

The economy of the temporary thus necessitated a restraint, resulting in positive qualities of dignity, unity, and even the expression of the democratic: “The result of this restraint, agreed upon by all in the common interest, is evidenced by the dignified effect of the main avenues of the Fair such as Constitution Mall, the Avenue of the Patriots, and the Avenue of Pioneers.” In other words, a unity was wrought out of a series of interesting diversities, and thus an ideal of democratic expression was achieved. Limitations as to scale and dimension yielded an ideal, rational uniformity: “There was an absolute conviction that buildings must be made to look what they are—temporary exhibit structures. Since it was decided by the fair organizers to emphasize the frankly temporary nature of the buildings, they were constructed with large blank wall surfaces and without the superposition of meaningless architectural forms.” This guidebook description provides, in essence, a succinct definition of the economical, modernist International Style.

Imitations of either historic architecture or permanent materials were not permitted, excepting the sector devoted to the separate U.S. state exhibitions. Here various traditional architectural forms were used, “each related to the current architecture of the period of the particular State’s colonization [sic]” ... where permission was granted to recall key moments in the history of the Republic through

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., for this and following quotations, 31-32.

larger scale, period architecture.<sup>214</sup> Here, the U.S. committee seized the opportunity afforded by having the fair on American soil, an opportunity familiar to the French, to emphasize the historical values of the United States. The architectural recreation of milestone events in the nation serve to affirm a solid and secure foundation from which to move forward in the progress of the nation. In effect, the old world was contemporized, and the new world historicized, inverting the classic relationship of America and its European progenitors. The stripped-down modernism mandated for participating nations represented U.S. appropriation of European architectural practice, itself symbolic of avant-garde sociopolitical urges for new world orders.

The intent of the U.S.S.R. project was to cultivate relations with the west, and in particular the U.S., which had only recognized the Soviet state in 1933, well after Europe in 1924.<sup>215</sup> The Soviet pavilion was designed by architects Boris Iofan and Karo S. Alabian, with exhibition installations by El Lissitzky and others. It featured, once again, a model of Iofan's unbuilt Palace of the Soviets constructed in semi-precious stones, Fabergé-style, in the mode of the 1937 fair map. The pavilion design was celebrated in the American press for its monumentality, costly materials, and symmetrical design. The exhibition also included paintings and sculptures of leading Soviet Socialist Realist artists, peasant handicrafts, and "masterpieces of Soviet cinema."<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Official Guidebook XXX, 32

<sup>215</sup> Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow," 365.

<sup>216</sup> Iofan's design for the Russian pavilion bears many similarities to the streamlined Art Deco style of Rockefeller Center, New York, 1930-1939, principal architect

A life-size copy of the interior of the new and dazzling Mayakovska station of the Moscow Metro system (opened on September 11, 1938) featured engineering innovations clad in elegant neoclassicizing, arched colonnades of rhodonite and marble, for which station designer Alexei Dushkin received the Grand Prize. At Mayakovska, thirty-four oval mosaics by renowned Soviet artist Alexandr Deineika, created in the style of Renaissance artist Andrea Mantegna, formed false oculi at the center of the domed ceilings (fig. 34). The works celebrate Soviet technology and its heroes, the swimmers, parachutists, pilots, skiers and vaulters who defy the forces of nature, weightlessly suspended, as they are, in icon-like envelopes of cosmic space.<sup>217</sup>

Deineika, a quintessential survivor of the Stalinist period, framed numerous narratives of workers, from fresh-faced, beauteous female factory workers bursting with the promise of the Revolutionary state (*Building New Factories*, 1926, fig. 35), to aviation heroes of Stalinist Russia (*Parachutist Over the Sea*, 1934, fig. 36), to the flower of Soviet youth at play in fields of sun-dappled flowers (*Collective Farm Girl on a Bicycle*, 1935, fig. 37). Deineika, who traveled to the West and was imprisoned

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Raymond Hood. The figure of a worker atop a pylon, serving as the focal point, resembles a trophy. For commentary and discussion of reception of the 1939 in the America press, see Sona S. Hoisington, "Soviet Schizophrenia and the American Skyscraper," *Russia Art and the West*, ed. Blakesley and Reid, 164 ff. and FN 38. For description of luxury exhibitions, see Swift, "The Soviet World of Tomorrow," 369.

<sup>217</sup> The twin themes of explorer and hero, or exploration and salvation, dominated Soviet society and art in the 1930s. Socialist Realist paintings celebrated aviators and parachutists, as, for example, in *Parachuters Above the Sea* (1934), and *Over the Pole to America* (1938), both by Deineika, who also supplied illustrations for a children's book celebrating the pilot G.F. Baidukov.

briefly for political inconsistencies, produced a body of work that combined modernism with the requirements of official Socialist Realism.<sup>218</sup> Distinguishing Deineka's Stalinist narrative-based work from the illustrational kitsch of such Socialist Realist painters as Alexandr Gerasimov is an evanescent edge of abstraction.

Deineka had come to prominence with *OSt* (Society of Easel Painters) (1925-1932), an association resurrecting many of the tenets of realism in opposition to the pure abstraction of Constructivism. Deineka, however, fused the abstraction of the avant-garde with a figural realism, safely anchoring his designs in the principles of the more two-dimensional mass-market poster art. Deineka silhouetted linear, bodiless figures against a shallow ground, unlike many of his more conventional Social Realist colleagues, yet often his work shares with them the application of filmy scrimms of even light, creating an ever-so-slightly out-of-focus honeyed veil, not unlike motion pictures of the 1930s. His images of the New Man and New Woman typify the proletariat as well as the shining icons of the positive heroes of Social Realism. Just as with Lissitzky or Malevich, Deineka's work offers evidence of a modicum of

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<sup>218</sup> In an article examining Deineka's relationship with Socialist Realism, Christina Kiaer comments: "This essay argues that the transition from Deineka's more overtly Modernist and experimental images of collective labour of the 1920s to his more obviously Socialist Realist depiction of the collective body of the mid-1930s resulted not from his 'bending to the prevailing wind' of official pressure but rather, or at least so, from his own changing vision of what constituted appropriate revolutionary art." While I agree with her detection of a change in subject matter, I maintain that modernism underlies the work of the 1930s. See Christina Kiaer, "Was Socialist Realism Forced Labour? The Case of Aleksandr Deineka in the 1930s," Oxford Art Journal, 28, 3, 2005, 321.

modernist mobility within the Stalinist state, a level of experimentation permitted within the ineffably elusive parameters of Socialist Realism.

Besides the Russian Pavilion outlined above, Soviet presence at the 1939 Fair also included a separate Arctic Pavilion, celebrating the heroes of the Soviet exploration of the icy north.<sup>219</sup> The emotional significance of Arctic exploration, and the impact, specifically, of the contemporary *Cheliuskin* rescue (1934), under the command of Mikhail Vodopianov and its mythologization in Soviet culture cannot be overemphasized: the creation of the separate pavilion in New York is witness to the cult of redemption.<sup>220</sup>

On the brink of World War II, the 1939 *New York World's Fair* made claims for a new American role as custodian of world cultural patrimony. Through exhibitions, commissioned sculptures, and other modes of image making, the Fair presciently forecasted the “American Century,” shortly advanced by Henry Luce, son of missionaries and publisher of Life Magazine, in a 1941 editorial in the magazine.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Official Guidebook, 147.

<sup>220</sup> The highest distinction in the Soviet Union, the title “Hero of the Soviet Union,” was created in 1934, surpassing the Order of Lenin in the hierarchy, and was awarded to the pilots participating in the successful aerial search and rescue of the crew of the steamship *Cheliuskin*, which sank in Arctic waters, crushed by ice fields, on February 13, 1934. See Karen Petrone, Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), 76 ff.

<sup>221</sup> For discussion of the ‘American Century’ see Francis Francina, “Revision, Revisionism and Rehabilitation, 1959/1999: The American Century, Modern Starts, and Cultural Memory,” Journal of Contemporary History, vol. 39, no. 93, 97-116; Lisa Phillips, The American Century: Art and Culture 1950-2000 (New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1999).

The U.S. program called for thirty-five commissioned sculptures and fifteen murals, most of them by artists little-known today, except for a sculpture by Gertrude Whitney and murals by emerging Abstract Expressionist artists Willem de Kooning and Arshile Gorky. An Art Deco sculpture entitled *Speed/Communication* featured a woman astride a galloping horse, its Pegasus-like wings shaped like lightning bolts, the artery of its belly standing out like a cable of the communications industry (fig. 43). In addition, the vocabulary of gigantizing neoclassicism informed a seventy-nine foot high stainless steel statue of a standing worker lifting a star, resounding with the authoritarian monumentality of the Mukhina and Breker sculptures seen in Paris in 1937.

Fusing the values of capitalism with the fine arts, a recurrent theme of U.S. world's fairs exhibitions from the late nineteenth century, the U.S. committee organized an exhibition of fine art entitled *Masterpieces of Art* for display in the Communication and Business Zone of the fair. According to the guidebook this was "a large project installed in twenty-five galleries," with a collection of paintings and sculptures surveying the history of European art from the Middle Ages to 1800. "Valued at \$30,000,000 it represents one of the most important exhibitions of old masters ever displayed under one roof."<sup>222</sup> The exhibition included five hundred and fifty loans from "leading museums and collections" in America as well as the Louvre, the Uffizi, the National Gallery of London, and the Rijksmuseum. The guidebook painstakingly lists the names of all the major paintings on view, a roll call claiming

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<sup>222</sup> For this and following quotation, see Official Guidebook, 81-82.

the rich European patrimony for America. While the generosity and risks involved in shipping important works of art to the 1939 *World's Fair* were at once seen as “astonishing, foolhardy, and possibly indicative of the uncertainties of the time,” the idea was advanced of an American safe haven in a perilous era. The shifts in geopolitics implied in the guidebook statement were made clear in the case of the Magna Carta, the lodestone of civil society, installed in the British Pavilion of the fair for safe-keeping.<sup>223</sup>

The AT&T and Radio Corporation of America pavilions were also located in the Communications and Business Zone containing *Masterpieces of Art*. Indeed, the presence of two other pavilions in this zone, the York Safe & Lock Company and the Mosler Safe Company, symbolically ensured the security of the highly valued art exhibition. Elsewhere, the capitalist imprint was seen in the pavilion of the National Cash Register Company, a gigantic forty-foot high structure designed in the shape of

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<sup>223</sup> Following the run of the Fair, and throughout World War II, the document remained on deposit in Fort Knox. Judith Huggins Balfe discusses the varying purposes and consequences of cultural exchange exhibitions in the U.S. in the aftermath of World War II. She notes that the intention of exhibitions sent from Holland, England, France, Berlin and Vienna under the organizational leadership of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, was, first, to express gratitude to the U.S. for the safekeeping of masterpieces on European soil and, second, to affirm an ethos of universalism under the leadership of the U.S. “Now, however, the message of the Old Masters, of European origin but at least temporarily on American soil, was the unity of mankind and the triumph of Western civilization over economic, political and military conflicts and competition. As such, these exhibitions of blockbuster proportions legitimated the formal organization of the wartime Allies under NATO, and the founding of the United Nations.” Thus, the ideology of U.S. security implicit in the 1939 World's Fair was fulfilled in the circulation of post-World War II exhibitions similar in character to the 1939 exhibition *Masterpieces of European Painting*. See Judith Huggins Balfe, “Artworks as Symbols in International Politics,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 1, 2, Winter 1987, 198.

the industrial product, and billed, P.T. Barnum-style, as the world's largest cash register. The transgressive images of gigantic dinosaurs that constituted the corporate logo of Sinclair Oil Company, fused the cultures of capitalist industry and Paleolithic archeology, uniting past, present and future in the recuperation of ancient fossil material as modern energy. *Futurama*, the visionary exhibition to be seen in the General Motors Pavilion, featured a film ensuring safety and security in the imaginary of the world to come of 1960, through "science and research."<sup>224</sup> The promotional film, made by Jean Hady Pictures, displayed a moving panorama of cars traveling the new multi-lane express highways of America. U.S. highways ribboning across agricultural fields reclaimed through "universal electrification and the transportation networks of highways and cars, fueled with fossil fuel," led directly to "spiritual retreats, resorts and power plants ... in the world of tomorrow." "Transportation conquers space and brings us together," declared the film's narrator. The bold claims and missionary prophecies advanced in these pavilions and displays limned a unifying vision of a more spiritual and cosmic world, made possible by peacetime energy.

Both the *Exhibition of Contemporary American Art*, (also known as *American Art Today*) and the Temple of Religion were located in the Community Interests Zone. The show, mounted in the Contemporary Arts Building specially constructed for the fair, featured works selected by committees of museum directors and artists,

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<sup>224</sup> YouTube, [1939 World's Fair](#), parts 1 and 2, May 24, 2009.

including American Modernists Stuart Davis, Paul Manship and William Zorach.<sup>225</sup> Meanwhile, the U.S. Federal Building, with pylons forming the twin towers of the judiciary building, was designed in a simplified vocabulary consisting of an unornamented stripped-down, neoclassicizing modernism. The guidebook states, “It is hoped that the American Nation will play an important part in bringing about greater sense of harmony in the relationships of the countries of the world” on a page facing a tourist advertisement enjoining visitors to see West Point Military Reservation, which features “thrilling resorts,” “historical high spots,” “inspiring spectacles,” and is “convenient to New York.”<sup>226</sup> The juxtaposition of the two pages is no accident, and reflects rising militarization in the closing moments of the inter-war period. Just as Herbert had noticed at the site of the 1937 fair, the diplomatic formalities, festivities and celebrations, all captured on film of the 1939 Fair, formed a thin and fragile surface over the pressurized geopolitical realities of an unresolved Europe.<sup>227</sup> In fact, the 1939 *World’s Fair* was the last exposition to be produced before the outbreak of World War II. Fairs planned for Tokyo (1940) and Rome (1942) never took place.

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<sup>225</sup>Official Guidebook, 82. In a burst of nostalgia, Robert Rosenblum hailed the exhibition checklist as “the most representative and democratically selected exhibition of the work of living American painters, sculptors and printmakers ever assembled.” See Robert Rosenblum, Remembering the Future: The New York World’s Fair from 1939 to 1964 (New York: The Queens Museum, 1989), 139.

<sup>226</sup>Official Guidebook, 151-152.

<sup>227</sup> “It is clear that the *Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne*, despite the pacific intentions of its French organizers, had become a forum for the expression of dangerous nationalist belligerence. In the Trocadero gardens, in short, the forces of war threatened to pinch off at its middle the axis of social and military peace demarcated by the Eiffel Tower and the monument to the concord of nations situated in the Place du Trocadero. See Herbert, Paris 1937, 35.

The Amusement Zone, one of the seven thematic zones of the fair, included the intertwining of exotic cultures in the reconstruction of the Bendix Lama Temple. Here an eighteenth-century Manchurian structure featured an erotic show of semi-clad girls dancing the “Passion of Love” to tempt the young priest. The “Million Dollar” Aquacade, by famed entertainer Billy Rose, featured chaste water ballets by “brilliant beauty girls,” in the words of the guidebook.<sup>228</sup> Also installed in the Amusement Zone, and performing a carnivalesque inversion of the solemn thematic processions of the other zones, was *The Pavilion of Venus* by Surrealist artist Salvador Dali (fig. 38).

The grotto-like texture of the encrusted pink and white exterior continued in the interior spaces, where Hollywood décor reigned in the red satin sheets, red velvet roofing, and other elements of display.<sup>229</sup> Fusing the venerable *Birth of Venus* by fifteenth-century Italian painter Sandro Botticelli with a send-up of Rosean aquatic choreography in a hilarious recreation of the birth of the goddess from the sea, Dali’s project crossed all boundaries at this largest of all world’s fairs. He mocked the sanctimoniousness of exhibitions of the elite arts and played on the voyeurism of peep-shows, quite close by, including renowned industrial designer Norman Bel Geddes’s “Crystal Ladies,” featuring near naked dancers, or the so-called “Living

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<sup>228</sup> Official Guide Book of the New York World’s Fair 1939, 52.

<sup>229</sup> See Ingrid Schaffner and Eric Schall, Salvador Dali’s Dream of Venus: The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World’s Fair (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).

Magazine Covers, with illustrations of topless models for a putative magazine entitled “Romantic Life.” Visitors entered through a pair of gartered, female legs to behold three room-size dioramas: first, “Living Liquid Ladies,” consisting of a swimming tank with topless swimmers; second, Venus the dreamer, featuring a live, nude Venus reclining on rose satin sheets; and third, a remounting of *Rainy Taxi* (fig. 39), the sensation of the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*, organized in Paris the year before. Dali’s funhouse pointed up the absurdities of so many fair juxtapositions and disjunctions. From the *Masterpieces* exhibition of fine arts in the Communications Zone which also featured industrial commodities, to the beauty queens swimming in the Billy Rose aqua-ballet, which Dali rhymed with the sea birth of the deeply venerated, ancient goddess of love, Dali made explicit the junctures of the high and low arts. Thus, his pavilion, inverting and subverting the elite and popular arts in a fair zone officially dedicated to entertainment, recuperated the role of the Bakhtinian “fool” at the fair.

The Surrealist art dealer Julien Levy had suggested the project to Dali, but control was lost to the corporate sponsor, a rubber magnate intent on using the displays for product advertising, including mermaids’ tails and other rubber props. Dali’s manifesto, “The Declaration of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His Own Madness” (a play on the French Revolutionary Declaration) was written in response to this literal corporate takeover; he walked out, returning the next year with a slightly abbreviated spectacle, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Indeed, this decade had been one of turmoil for Dali in many spheres, including his expulsion from the

Surrealist movement by André Breton in 1934 for his refusal to denounce Fascism and his insistence on the apolitical nature of art. The Surrealists increasingly engaged politically in the inter-war period, as exemplified by the 1931 exhibition *La Verité dans Les Colonies*; the Manifesto of A Free and Revolutionary Art, co-authored by Breton, Leon Trotsky and Diego Rivera (1938); and in the publication Surréalisme in the Service of the Revolution.<sup>230</sup> In 1939, the year of *The Dream of Venus*, Breton nicknamed Dali “Avida Dollars,” an anagram of the artist’s name, meaning “eager for dollars,” taking note of what he perceived to be Dali’s seduction by U.S. capitalism. While Dali’s project for a 1939 Bonwit Teller store window may have galled the Surrealists, this window actually forms the logical conclusion to early Dada and Surrealist display techniques and fascinations, including Eugène Atget’s photographs of storefronts, and Marcel Duchamp’s double-paned window displaying the commodification of sexuality, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (1915-1923). In fact, Dali’s serio-comic inversions of the icons of elite and popular cultures, seen in *The Dream of Venus* in the Amusement Zone of the fair, created a living tableau epitomizing his concept of what he called “delirious capitalism.”

***Coda: Brussels, Exposition Universelle et Internationale, 1958***

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<sup>230</sup> André Breton, Leon Trotsky, and Diego Rivera, “Manifesto of a Free and Revolutionary Art,” first published by the Partisan Review, Fall, 1938; reprinted in: Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou, Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 597 ff.

The 1958 exhibition in Brussels, *Exposition Universelle et Internationale*, the first world's fair held in the aftermath of World War II, reconvened several important features of the earlier fairs of the century, now on the stage of the Cold War. The pavilions of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. faced each other, recalling the compelling juxtaposition of the German and U.S.S.R. pavilions of 1937. The theme of the fair, "A New Humanism," attempted to re-right a world devastated by the deployment of U.S. nuclear bombs in Japan in the closing days of World War II. The release of nuclear energy could not be recaptured, and by this date the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., both armed with nuclear arsenals, were locked in "non-hot" combat for world leadership, in the face of the possibility of an apocalyptic military confrontation. *The Atomium* (fig. 40) designed by Andre Waterkeyn, provided a powerful logo, with a message that was emphatic and clear, "a fitting symbol for the first World's Fair of the Atomic Age."<sup>231</sup> The enormous, nearly three hundred thirty-five feet high steel diagram of the atomic structure signaled man's harnessing of nuclear energy for peace, security, leisure and affluence. Further, the giant atom served as a model for global unity, a theme under revision by the United Nations after the failure of the League of Nations.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> YouTube, Universal News Reels, July 18, 2009.

<sup>232</sup> Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty*, 95: "The Belgians wanted to present their nation as the temporary "world capital" and promised to welcome those organizations dedicated to international cooperation. Their exhibition would become a "universal museum," they hoped, a place where individuals from around the globe could discover what they had in common with others. This was to be, as much as any historical world's fair, a celebration of "one-world" sentimentality, only with an emphasis placed squarely on Western Europe as the new center of world civilization. By 1958 jet travel had indeed made the globe accessible for many middle-class people who believed that they could have an effect on world peace by building

The Belgians had hosted fairs in the years 1905, 1910, and 1913. The 1958 fair helped Belgium to shape for itself an important role as both an advocate for peace and a zone of neutrality in Cold War politics, redeeming a status secured in 1839 by the Treaty of London, an agreement of the Great Powers and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands.<sup>233</sup> The fine arts section of the 1958 fair included masterpieces from the modernist canon, for example, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Fauvism, and Surrealism. Despite the aims of the Belgian government and the symbolic assurances of *The Atomium*, aspects of the U.S and U.S.S.R. pavilions revealed the charged atmosphere, politically and ideologically, in the early stages of the Cold War. Edward Durrell Stone, architect for the U.S. pavilion, was clear in the architectural allusions embedded in the structure. Stone designed a circular plan, made in reference to the Roman Colosseum, while the tissue of steel, glass and plastic represented, for the architect, an update of the Crystal Palace.<sup>234</sup> Within the pavilion, exhibition display techniques included a bombardment of images in a 100-foot wide map of the United States, and the Circarama provided by Walt Disney, featured a three hundred-sixty degree panorama of metonymic scenes of American life. Charles and Ray Eames would utilize similar techniques in their design work for *The American Exhibition* in Moscow in the following year (see p. 158). The roots of these displays

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international friendships and business contacts.” Concepts of universalization, individualism, globalism, flight, and speed, all values of the 1950s, float freely in this description of the ambitions of the 1958 World’s Fair.

<sup>233</sup> The Treaty of London guaranteed Belgium’s independence from the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, of which it had been a part since 1815. In exchange, the treaty required Belgium to maintain permanent neutral status.

<sup>234</sup> See Rydell, World of Fairs, 193.

in the exhibitions of Lissitzky are evident: in fact, as Buchloh shows, they had already cycled through a life as propaganda tools for the Nazi and Fascist governments.

The Cambridge Study Group, a design committee appointed for the planning of the U.S. pavilion, convened at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for International Studies. In its methodical selection and planning for the themes and strategies for the exhibition, the team made a deliberate effort to block exhibitions of the fine arts in favor of artifacts of material culture. It called for the exclusion of the fine arts “so that culture would be seen as part of everyday life.” Hot dogs, fashion shows, and other fragments of American consumer life were privileged in the pavilion.<sup>235</sup> The committee’s recommendation was overruled, however, and exhibitions of American folk art and Native American art were accompanied by a show of young American contemporary painting and sculpture, largely featuring the work of the second generation Abstract Expressionists.

Shortly after the fair opened, U.S. outrage broke out in Congress and the press concerning two facets of the exhibition: a selection of abstract art, and a photographic display entitled *Unfinished Business* which depicted the conditions of race relations in the U.S. The latter was intended to paint a more candid view of America. The art press joined forces with congressional observers to decry the exhibition as unrepresentative of American painting. The Nation, in fact, lambasted

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<sup>235</sup> For film footage of the fashion show see YouTube, etolage #52392, July 18, 2009.

the exhibition as “The Decadent Pavilion.”<sup>236</sup> Eisenhower dispatched George Allen, U.S. Information Agency director, to investigate the allegations. Allen’s report recommended the addition of a few pieces of “less abstract art” as well as the expansion of “*Unfinished Business*” with photographs focusing on U.S. health.<sup>237</sup> Eisenhower declined to take action, in contrast to his actions in response to objections to *The American Exhibition* in Moscow in the following year.<sup>238</sup> Meanwhile, U.S. exhibition organizers turned to the Whitney Museum, which responded with a supplemental exhibition of fifteen works of classic American painting.

The Russian pavilion featured achievements in technology, most notably *Sputnik*, the space satellite that had launched successfully on October 4, 1957. Eisenhower had unsuccessfully submitted the Open Skies Proposal to the Soviet government at a 1955 summit conference in Geneva, advancing the concept of mutual inspection of military installations. Russian supremacy in space, which would include Yuri Gagarin’s achievement as first man in space a few years later in 1961 was a matter of great concern to the U.S. government and American public, inflating fears of nuclear peril. (President Ronald Reagan’s Star Wars speech of the late Cold

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<sup>236</sup> Michael L. Krenn, Fall-out Shelters for the Human Spirit (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 136.

<sup>237</sup> Robert W. Rydell, World’s Fairs, The Century-of-Progress Exhibitions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 209.

<sup>238</sup> Eisenhower commented, in a letter to Commission General Cullman: “You know me too well to believe that I would set myself as a critic of any artistic exhibition. I send you this communication for study and not as a directive.” See Krenn, Fall-out Shelters, 136.

War was a science fiction-style attempt to address continuing fears.)<sup>239</sup> The prominent display of a model of *Sputnik* symbolically represented a grave security threat to the U.S.. The militarism of the Soviet pavilion, which elsewhere featured pristine displays of machinery and technology, was clearly implied by a full-length statue of Lenin posed in front of an enlarged detail from the widely known Socialist Realist painting by Aleksandr Gerasimov depicting *Stalin and Marshall Kliment Voroshilov at the Kremlin* (1938).<sup>240</sup> The overt juxtaposition of the two national pavilions facing each other, following the 1937 model, concretized their apocalyptic, nuclear rivalry, ironizing the pacifist symbol of *The Atomium*.

Brussels would be the last significant site of encounter between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. within the framework of world's fairs or other international exhibitions. In fact, both nations adopted the predicates of the temporary space as a para-military battleground, as I will show in chapter three. The neutrality of exhibitions sites in the twentieth century, as I have shown in this chapter, did not preclude bold visual affirmation of political realities, in fact, it appears to have encouraged it.

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<sup>239</sup> President Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on National Security," March 23, 1983.

<sup>240</sup> For film footage of Russian Pavilion showing Gerasimov reproduction, statue of Lenin, the Sputnik installation, and displays of giant, gleaming pieces of machinery, see YouTube, etolage #52388; etolage @52387, July 18, 2009.

## Chapter Three

### Cold War Constructs: Diplomatic and Cultural Histories of the Exhibition Space

In this chapter I argue that the abiding characteristics of the international exhibition space, beginning from its origins in the early nineteenth century as I have discussed in chapters one and two, continued to play a significant role in the U.S.-U.S.S.R. relationship during the Cold War. I will sketch a brief history of U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cold War (1945-1991) cultural exchange relationships, their initiatives, intentions, and implications within the field of visual arts exhibitions. I also focus in depth on one exhibition project, *The American National Exhibition* with two of its components, *The Painting and Sculpture Exhibition* and *The Family of Man*, staged in Sokolniki Park, Moscow, 1959, which, together with *10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (see discussion: chapter four) may be seen to frame a narrative of major visual art exhibition exchanges over this historic period. Overall, this chapter studies examples of the shifts in cultural relations and political attitudes between the Cold War superpowers. While early Cold War scholarship has mined the field of cultural exchange extensively, and produced several thorough historical surveys,<sup>241</sup> comparable work in late Cold War evidence is still in its infancy.<sup>242</sup> The

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<sup>241</sup> Recent studies include: David Caute, *The Dancer Defects* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), in which the author offers a narrative of U.S. exhibition activity in Europe and the U.S.S.R. prior to 1980, and counters revisionist histories recirculated by Frances Stonor Saunders; Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who*

evidence demonstrates that the two superpower nations appropriated, in several instances, the temporary space of art exhibitions as a political weapon in the Cold War, a space that, while subject to change throughout its long history dating back to the world's fairs of the nineteenth century and despite various eruptions, has maintained its status as a time-based, neutral zone.

### ***Cultural Exchange and Exhibitions in the Early Cold War, 1945-1962***

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Paid the Piper: the CIA and the Cultural Cold War (London: Granta Books, 1999), republished in 2000 as The Cultural Cold War/The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters (New York: The New Press, 2000), which chronicles covert CIA support for journals including Partisan Review, Encounter, and Kenyon Review, and includes a chapter on the Museum of Modern Art International Program, groundlessly expanding the allegations of Central Intelligence Agency collusion set forth by Eva Cockcroft (see FN 292 ); Michael L. Krenn, Fall-out Shelters for the Human Spirit: American Art and the Cold War (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), which examines post-World War II cultural diplomacy up to approximately 1970; and Richard T. Arndt, The First Resource of Kings (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2005), which provides a lively, anecdotal survey of U.S. cultural diplomacy.

<sup>242</sup> The term “cold war” is credited to Bernard Baruch in a speech to the South Carolina House of Representatives, April 16, 1947. The financier and presidential advisor stated, at a ceremonial unveiling of his portrait, “Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war. Our enemies are to be found abroad and at home. Let us never forget this: Our unrest is the heart of their success. The peace of the world is the hope and the goal of our political system; it is the despair and defeat of those who stand against us. We can depend only on ourselves.” See [www.history.com](http://www.history.com), July 11, 2009. My definition of the late Cold War period commences with the Geneva Summit agreement forged by Mikhail Gorbachev, President and General Secretary of the U.S.S.R., and Ronald Reagan, President of the U.S.A., November 1985. This agreement restarted exchange programs after a period of abeyance, the so-called “Carter Chill” beginning from Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 and President Jimmy Carter’s decisions to “institute economic sanctions there, and what appears to be a decision to cut back a broad range of cultural ties.” See Judith Weintraub, “Hermitage Exhibition Now in Doubt” (*Washington Star*, January 10, 1980, YRPFA). The Cold War expired in 1991, with the dissolution of the U.S.S.R.

A U.S. Department of State memorandum dated January 11, 1980 to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (the former broadcasting throughout the Soviet bloc, the latter, specifically targeting the U.S.S.R.), produced during the tense period following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, summarizes its Cold War activities and permits an historical entry point for the investigations of this chapter.<sup>243</sup> The memo makes reference to the earliest U.S. formulations of cultural exchange policy in the period of World War II, when Averill Harriman, Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1943-46, had proposed to officials of the U.S.S.R. a reciprocal agreement. In his proposal, Harriman suggested the organization of student and performing arts exchanges between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., as well as distributions of print and film media. The U.S. wanted to put in play an image of intellectual life in a free society, through the promotion of emblematic media thought to be of greatest interest to Soviet audiences. Harriman's proposals, would, if realized, in effect reconstruct media forms familiar to the Soviet public as sites of western freedoms, in the articulation of individualism and self-expression. Harriman had selected instruments most vulnerable to censorship, and it is not surprising that his efforts, for the most part failed.<sup>244</sup> A request from the U.S. Department of State to the Soviet Union, October

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<sup>243</sup> Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, RL22/80, "Cultural Exchanges as a Barometer of U.S.-Soviet Relations," January 11, 1980, YRPA.

<sup>244</sup>On another and an earlier front, U.S. official practice had already been inaugurated on the eve of World War II with the circulation of American works from the Museum of Modern Art, New York, under the leadership of Nelson Rockefeller and the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, to venues in Latin America. The purpose of the tour was to influence the opinion of the Latin American elite in the confrontation with Nazi Germany. See Judith Huggins Balfe, "Artworks as Symbols in International Politics," 200. Balfe claims, without providing evidence, that the Latin American initiative was successful in achieving its goal.

1945, for example, went answered.<sup>245</sup> This early evidence suggests that efforts toward cultural exchange were typically thwarted by policies of information control in the Soviet state, a government practice reaching back to nineteenth-century tsarist Russia.<sup>246</sup>

From the beginning of American efforts during World War II to formulate policies of cultural incursion into the U.S.S.R., it is evident that U.S. diplomats sought resources from the sphere of the creative and performing arts in their project of the exhibition of the values of a free society on Soviet soil. For the most part, an

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<sup>245</sup> The following account is based on: Yale Richmond, U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins? (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986); Yale Richmond, Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Yale Richmond, Practicing Public Diplomacy (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); and Walter L. Hixson, Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

<sup>246</sup> The Division of Cultural Relations was created within the U.S. Department of State in 1938, establishing cultural diplomacy as an official function of government. The office was created in particular to address the influence of Nazi fascism in Central and South America. Today, the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs oversees these governmental activities. The transformation of cultural diplomacy from its origins in missionary work to an interventionist instrument of government policy is commented on by William Glade: "A secular replay of the old missionary impulse, cultural diplomacy was conceived as persuasively telling the story of America's cultural accomplishments." See William Glade, "Art, Culture and the National Agenda," edited by Harvey Feigenbaum, Globalization and Cultural Diplomacy, Washington D.C.: Center for Arts and Culture, 2001; [www.culturalpolicy.org](http://www.culturalpolicy.org), November 29, 2009.

Frank Ninkovich remarks: "For many, culture had a very important role to play, as the war seemed as much a conflict of ideas as it was a matter of power politics." See Frank Ninkovich, "Cultural Diplomacy in Historical Perspective—from 19<sup>th</sup> Century Worlds Fairs to the Cold War," Conference, "Arts and Minds: A Conference on Cultural Diplomacy, April 14-15, 2003, Columbia University, 28. Similarly, the U.S.S.R. established VOKS, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which was renamed the U.S.S.R. State Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries in 1957.

ethos of “warts and all” would govern official practices throughout the Cold War.<sup>247</sup> In other words, in the realm of the arts, the U.S. appears to have maintained, or strained to do so, a hands-off policy with regard to the decisions of museum directors, curators, and other agents in the creation of representative exhibition “images” of the U.S, despite objections from conservative congressional leaders. Official policy from the 1940s, however, resulted in cultural exchange projects that were complicated on political and intellectual levels. The exhibitions I will discuss involved issues entangling the American political left and right, and the complexities and contradictions within those categories. Indeed, a striking feature of the Cold War epoch is the intellectual convictions of government and contributing citizens that clashed with reactionary right critique in the construction of the artistic products of cultural exchange.

The complexity of America’s geopolitical and cultural relationships with the Soviet Union is evident from the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution and the founding of the U.S.S.R. in 1922, and leading up to the Cold War era. The U.S. did not formally recognize the U.S.S.R. until 1933, though it sent considerable support, as

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<sup>247</sup> In a consular report dated 1/10/74, Yale Richmond describes a visit of a newly-appointed U.S.I.A. director, Frank Shakespeare, to the U.S.I.A.-organized exhibition *Education USA*, on view in Leningrad June 1969. “Mr. Shakespeare was critical of several aspects of the exhibit ... Mr. Shakespeare ordered removed from the exhibit about a dozen American books on education which he believed reflected unfavorably on the United States. My Cultural Officer and I thought it was a mistake to remove the books ... Littell, Verner and I argued for retaining the books, since we believed they were not damaging to the U.S., and that some material showing the U.S., ‘warts and all,’ would add to the credibility of the exhibit in the eyes of Soviet visitors.” See Yale Richmond, Unpublished Report, “Encounter No. 1” Tab C., 1/10/74, YRPA.

well as observers, during the famine of 1921.<sup>248</sup> The two states joined forces as allies over a decade later, during World War II, following the signal events of 1941: the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June, and U.S. entry into the war in December, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This alliance, indeed, followed upon a period of incredulity and skepticism, with the 1939 U.S.S.R.-Germany Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the Soviet invasion of Finland—events that precipitated great disillusionment with Soviet supporters in the United States and beyond. In the 1920s, journalists, writers, activists and performers had traveled to the Soviet Union to investigate the conditions for a global, classless society proposed by the Soviet Communist International. Walter Benjamin, Diego Rivera, Theodore Dreiser, Langston Hughes,<sup>249</sup> and Paul Robeson are among many who witnessed firsthand the Soviet experiment. Kate Baldwin has demonstrated the specific theoretical affinities between African-American intellectuals and the architects of Communism, as they adjudicated social inequality and injustice within the framework of an international movement rising up against Western domination. Her study examines notable African-American intellectuals and creative artists, including Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Dubois, all of whom visited the

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<sup>248</sup> For a general history of the U.S.S.R., see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia, sixth edition (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>249</sup> For an account of his trip to Moscow (1929), see Walter Benjamin, Moscow Diary (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929); for an account of Theodore Dreiser's Moscow visit (1927) see Theodore Dreiser and James L. West, eds., Dreiser's Diary (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); for an account of Langston Hughes' aborted Moscow film project (1932), see Langston Hughes, The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: I Wonder as I Wander, v. 14 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

U.S.S.R. and engaged the theory and practice of Soviet communism.<sup>250</sup>

Many U.S. intellectuals of the 1930s writing for journals such as Partisan Review and Politics, deeply embraced the beliefs, values, and politics of Soviet Communism as an antidote to the disillusionment of the First World War and the Depression, across the spectrum of political, economic and social issues. Influential art historians and art critics, including Meyer Schapiro, Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg to name a few, constituted a circle of fellow travelers with New York artists including Jackson Pollock, Stuart Davis, Barnett Newman and many others. The convictions of their idealism, however, began to shift and, for many, to disintegrate, in the face of evidence becoming available, just as it did in Paris, concerning the 1936-38 Stalin purges and show trials, the U.S.S.R. military alliance with Nazi Germany, the German invasion of Poland and the Soviet invasion of Finland.<sup>251</sup> The chasmic split between theory and practice in the U.S.S.R. forced an unbreachable rupture in relations between many U.S. intellectuals and Stalinist

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<sup>250</sup> “In the name of an international movement poised to challenge Western domination, Soviet Communism established an interracial alliance between ‘blacks’ and ‘whites,’ and it was this cross-racial affinity between Russians and blacks as marginalized, world historical ‘others’ that enabled, in part, the belief that the Soviet alternative was preferable to that of the United States.” See Kate A. Baldwin, Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain, Reading Encounters Between Black and Red, 1922-1963 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 2. Baldwin links the rhetoric of African-American Diaspora internationalism with the Comintern, both ideologies transcending racial and geo-political boundaries, and argues that the Soviet project offered a new perspective for U.S. black intellectuals in their project of national resistance.

<sup>251</sup> See Serge Guilbault, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1985), 27 ff.; Andrew Hemingway, “Meyer Schapiro and Marxism in the 1930s,” Oxford Art Journal, 17, 1, 1994, 13-29; Sarah Wilson, Art of the Soviets, 108 ff.

Communism, resulting in rising support for exile Leon Trotsky. Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, for example, who overtly fused art and politics in a body of work influenced by the Soviet avant-garde (Rivera visited Moscow in 1929), produced a tract on revolutionary art with Leon Trotsky and Surrealist André Breton.<sup>252</sup> Rivera's U.S commissions for murals in Detroit, San Francisco and New York enriched practices of American Social Realism, including the work of Thomas Hart Benton, teacher of Jackson Pollock. Benton remained, however, resolutely conservative in his politics.<sup>253</sup> Rivera's extraordinary relationship with American capitalists, despite the level of capitalist critique overt in his works, was soured only by the rupture with Nelson Rockefeller over the inclusion of a portrait of Lenin in the destroyed mural *Man at the Crossroads* (1932-34). The problem, in fact, of how to separate art and politics in the wake of the devastating Stalinist revelations is one that motivated critic Clement Greenberg as he formulated his argument for the modernist autonomy of art, the notion of an art for art's sake.<sup>254</sup> Greenberg disavowed the practices of Stalinist Socialist Realism in his 1939 essay, "The Avant-garde and Kitsch,"<sup>255</sup> and noted in an

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<sup>252</sup> See André Breton, Diego Rivera and Leon Trotsky, Manifesto: Towards a Free and Revolutionary Art, Dwight McDonald, trans., Partisan Review, IV, 1, Fall, 1938, 49-53.

<sup>253</sup> For commentary on American mural projects by Rivera see Diego Rivera, My Art, My Life (New York, Norton, 1986); Linda B. Downs, Diego Rivera: The Detroit Industry Murals (New York: Norton, 1999); Luis Martin Lozano, Diego Rivera: The Complete Murals (Hong Kong: Taschen, 2008).

<sup>254</sup> For discussion of the impact of the abuses of Stalinism on the development of Greenberg's theories of autonomy and opticality, see Robert Storr, "No Joy in Mudville: Greenberg's Modernism Then and Now," High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture, ed. Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik (New York: Abrams, 1980), 163-168.

<sup>255</sup> Clement Greenberg, "The Avant-garde and Kitsch," Art and Culture (Boston: Beacon Books, 1967).

addendum to another essay of the same year, "Art in the Thirties in New York," that "Someday it will have to be told how anti-Stalinism, which started out, more or less, as Trotskyism, turned into art for art's sake, and thereby cleared the way, heroically, for what was to come."<sup>256</sup> The example of Greenberg alone offers evidence that the U.S. military alliance with the Soviet Union in 1941, would necessarily have disturbed U.S. intellectuals. Averill Harriman's efforts during the mid-1940s to open up a space of cultural exchange between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., had they been productive, would equally pose questions that the Soviets, for one, were unwilling to address.

Only after Stalin's death in 1953 and the secret denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress in 1956 did the U.S.S.R. indicate any official willingness to import U.S. programs. In this period that has come to known as the "Khrushchev Thaw," the Boston Symphony Orchestra was permitted to perform in 1956, and permissions for extended study were granted to visiting U.S. scholars.<sup>257</sup> Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* toured Russia in 1955, and, while the U.S. Department of State issued visas to the performers in the cast, it provided no funding for the tour, due to concerns that "the play would confirm the Soviet contention that the U.S. suppressed civil rights." President Eisenhower, nevertheless, praised the cast as "ambassadors of the

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<sup>256</sup> Clement Greenberg, Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957-1969 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), ed. John O'Brien, 19, FN 2.

<sup>257</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of the limits and freedoms permitted in the period of the Khrushchev Thaw see Stephen V. Bittner, The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

arts.”<sup>258</sup> (Paul Robeson did not participate; his passport had been rescinded by the U.S. Department of State in 1951, under provisions of the McCarran Act of 1950, a federal law enacted to investigate and to control subversive individuals or groups suspected of subversive activities related to and in sympathy with Communism or Fascism). Eisenhower’s public approval of the tour offers a distinct contrast to the cautiousness of the State Department. Indeed, differences of opinion, tensions and disagreements among executive leaders, conservative members of congress, agents of cultural diplomacy, and artists were not uncommon throughout the Cold War, as I will show.

At the Foreign Ministers Conference at Geneva in 1955, Great Britain and the United States jointly proposed a seventeen-point program for exchanges with U.S.S.R. in the fields of information media, culture, education, science, sports and tourism. Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, formerly a key member of Stalin’s Central Committee, rejected these proposals, accusing the west of interference in internal Soviet affairs. Molotov did signal, however, a potential willingness on the part of the Soviet Union to consider bilateral, and possibly multilateral, agreements of mutual interest.

While it is clear that the U.S.S.R. would not have been receptive to an exhibition of art in the 1940s, the U.S. had already mobilized American art as a tool of cultural propaganda abroad, in the context of the short-lived exhibition *Advancing*

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<sup>258</sup> Baldwin, *Beyond the Color Line*, 202-204.

*American Art*, organized by the U.S. Department of State for tour in Europe and South America in 1947.<sup>259</sup> The exhibition included seventy-nine modernist paintings and watercolors purchased by the State Department expressly for the exhibition. This show was part of a larger program of art exhibitions conceived by the new Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs of the State Department to enhance the cultural prestige of the United States abroad. Right-wing congressional, media, and public furor over the modernist work selected for the show was immediate and effective. The outcries stemmed from two objections: the alleged Communist Party or fellow traveler affiliations of several artists in the exhibition and the non-objective nature of the pieces. The art was too different from the American regionalist, social realist work familiar to American audiences through the W.P.A. projects. Largely apolitical and abstract, with the exception of Ben Shahn's *Hunger* (fig. 44) or *Worksong* (fig. 46) by Robert Gwathmey, the checklist for *Advancing American Art* included works by Georgia O'Keeffe, John Marin and Stuart Davies, depicting scenes of American life, still life, and landscape. Jacob Lawrence's streetscape of Harlem was optimistic in character, featuring a gleaming white post-World War II apartment building in the center of the neighborhood. Newly appointed Secretary of State George C. Marshall, under congressional pressure, recalled the show, declared the works surplus property, and put them up for sale. The State Department officer in charge of the exhibit, J. Leroy Davidson, who hoped ultimately to transfer responsibility for artistic exchanges to the private sector, resigned in protest and his

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<sup>259</sup> For this and following discussion see Taylor D. Littleton and Maltby Sykes, *Advancing American Art: Painting, Politics, and Cultural Confrontation at Mid-Century* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1989).

position as visual arts specialist was eliminated. According to Littleton and Sykes, audiences who attended the short-lived show in Prague were notably impressed; the Soviets immediately began the process of organizing a similar exhibition of their own. The twin issues of modernism and Communism would haunt succeeding U.S. sponsored fine arts exhibitions in Europe and the U.S.S.R.; ultimately resulting was the détente-era relinquishment to the private sector of American museums, foundations and corporate sponsors organizational responsibility.

Other examples of American right-wing political suppression of U.S. national exhibitions in the 1950s, in the wake of McCarthyism, include the 1956 project *Sport in Art*, selected by Sports Illustrated Magazine and organized by the American Federation of Arts. The exhibition was mounted and shut down in Dallas, Texas, prior to an intended venue in Australia.<sup>260</sup> Another American Federation of the Arts project of the same year, *100 American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, organized for European tour, suffered the same fate.<sup>261</sup> Right-wing outrage at the political affiliations of some of the artists chosen for these exhibitions triumphed.

*The American Exhibition* of 1959 would constitute both the first official U.S. exhibition of any kind, and the first major exhibition of the art of advanced American artists, to be mounted in the U.S.S.R. Muscovites, however, had an opportunity prior

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<sup>260</sup> For a history of *Sport in Art* see Krenn, Fall-out Shelters, 105 *passim*.

<sup>261</sup> Marilyn S. Kushner, "Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959: Domestic Politics and Cultural Diplomacy," Journal of Cold War Studies 4, 1, 2002, FN 4, online.

to the 1959 exhibition to view demonstrations of action painting. Despite the advice of the U.S. Department of State not to participate in what was anticipated to be a highly propagandistic event, one hundred-sixty Americans journeyed to Moscow for the 6<sup>th</sup> International Youth and Student Festival of 1957, where little-known U.S. action painter Harry Colman practiced in the Workshop of Free Art and displayed reproductions of notable Abstract Expressionist works.<sup>262</sup> The importance of this show, and the 1959 exhibition that would follow to Soviet artists cannot be overstated: within the context of dissimulating Socialist Realism, the sense of freedom, individualism, and emotion conveyed by little-known painter Harry Colman and the reproductions he brought with him was pivotal.<sup>263</sup>

### ***U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cultural Exchange Agreements, 1958-59***

In 1958, exhibition exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. was negotiated and formalized in the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement, the first bilateral cultural exchange agreement between the two nations.<sup>264</sup> The Lacy-Zarubin document was to serve, without major revisions, as the basic U.S. government policy statement on

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<sup>262</sup>Kadi Talvoha, "Workshop of Free Art in Moscow," *Archives in Translation*, Kumu Art Museum, 7 March-29 June 2008, [www.ekm.ee/showdoc.php?id=230](http://www.ekm.ee/showdoc.php?id=230), July 11, 2009.

<sup>263</sup> Ekaterina Degot, *Contemporary Painting in Russia* (New South Wales: Craftsman House, 1995), 3. See also Susan E. Reid, "Toward a New Socialist Realism," *Russian Art and the West*, 227.

<sup>264</sup> The agreement was named for the two chief negotiators and signatories, William B. Lacy, Special Assistant to President Eisenhower on East-West Exchanges, and Georgy Zarubin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States.

East-West exchanges for more than a decade. Ideological rhetoric was center stage from the start of negotiations for cultural exchanges in general between the two countries. As Hixson describes it, the space of negotiation and exchange pitted Eisenhower's campaign of a "softened psychological warfare" and "gradual, evolutionary cultural infiltration" against Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful coexistence."<sup>265</sup> Truman's 1950 definition of the Cold War as a "struggle, above all else, for the minds of men," was expanded in Eisenhower's 1953 declaration that "we are now conducting a cold war ... [ours] will defeat all forms of dictatorial government because of its greater appeal to the human soul, the human heart, the human mind."<sup>266</sup> Cultural diplomacy was part of the national security arsenal, as, armed with an idealistic mission to universalize U.S. values, America affirmed its goal to "open the Soviet Union to Western influences in order to change its foreign and domestic policies."<sup>267</sup> Exchange had taken on signal importance for the U.S. with the Soviet launching of *Sputnik* on October 4, 1957. The export of a persuasive American consumerist modernism bore a greater urgency in a cold war competition now bound into a Sputnik-driven race for control of the cosmos. Specifically, global control was now funded from the vantage point of the heroic cosmodogs, whose

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<sup>265</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 119. Eisenhower's perception of the conflict as psychological received the highest validation in remarks by Mikhail Gorbachev following the 1989 Malta Summit. "Mr. Gorbachev said he and Mr. Bush agreed that 'the characteristics of the cold war should be abandoned. The arms race, mistrust, psychological and ideological struggle, all those should be things of the past' he said." See Andrew Rosenthal, "The Malta Summit; Bush and Gorbachev Proclaim a New Era for U.S.-Soviet Ties; Agree on Arms and Trade Aims,"- *New York Times*, December 4, 1989.

<sup>266</sup> "Internal memorandum, National Security Council 5607, 'East-West Exchanges,'" June 29, 1956, YRPFA.

<sup>267</sup> Yale Richmond, author interview.

mythic status is celebrated in Cold War Soviet imagery.

The Soviet goal for exhibition exchange was believed by American observers to be predicated on access to western science and technology, with the following objectives: the opportunity to showcase what Khrushchev claimed, in this *Sputnik* era to be the more advanced Soviet science and technology; political normalization and improvement of international relations; import of foreign currency; and travel for the intelligentsia.<sup>268</sup> The intentions of the U.S., which had never before entered into a bilateral cultural exchange agreement, were both general and specific. America had already affirmed its goal to “open the Soviet Union to Western influences in order to change its foreign and domestic policies” in an internal memo, “National Security Council 5607, ‘East-West Exchanges,’” dated June 29, 1956.<sup>269</sup> Both President Eisenhower and diplomat and presidential advisor George Kennan saw cultural exchange as a means to challenge Soviet policies and to fulfill the U.S. mission to universalize western values.<sup>270</sup> Richmond notes, in this context, that the U.S. intention was to “Europeanize” and “westernize” the Soviet Union, which included the goal of stimulating consumer desire.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Richmond, *U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 4-9. Martin Walker defines the intelligentsia as the educated, professional class. See Martin Walker, *The Waking Giant: The Soviet Union Under Gorbachev* (London: Michael Joseph), 1986, 189-190.

<sup>269</sup> National Security Council 5607, YRPFA.

<sup>270</sup> George F. Kennan, *Address to the International Council at the Museum of Modern Art*, (Museum of Modern Art Archives, May 1956), 131 [mf35; 110].

<sup>271</sup> Richmond, author interview.

The Lacy-Zarubin Agreement stipulated the removal of all barriers to the free flow of information, discussion, criticism and debate. Therefore, as a condition of the agreement, the U.S. side demanded an end to censorship, a moratorium on the jamming of Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Liberty broadcasts, and a commitment to free travel on both sides. Cultural exchanges were just one component of a pact that listed potential reciprocities in a wide range of fields. This document constructed a framework for reciprocal national exhibitions on topics ranging from science and technology to culture.<sup>272</sup> Soviet officials, interested for the most part in the import of scientific and technological exhibitions, displayed a seeming indifference to opportunities for U.S. cultural displays within their borders. Throughout the period, in fact, the Soviet Union would privilege both the import and export of science and industry projects, while the U.S. favored cultural exhibitions. Soviet lack of interest in the importation of cultural exhibitions would harden into efforts to bar them, given the enthusiastic reception for these projects with Soviet audiences. Despite the perceived threat posed by *Sputnik* and the dominance of Soviet space science in this era, the U.S. appears to have demonstrated little interest in actively seeking out Soviet technology exhibitions, possibly predicated on a perception that the information circulated would be of little real value.

For both nations, the export of exhibitions on any topic permitted extended

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<sup>272</sup>Topics included: metallurgy, mining, electronics, machine tools, cattle-breeding, medicine, agriculture, radio and television, horticulture, and issues pertaining to youth. For detailed list of exhibitions see USIA, "Special International Exhibitions U.S. Information Agency: East-West Exchange Exhibits in USSR" (1979); USIA, "USSR Exhibitions in U.S." (January 4, 1984), YRPA.

incursions into the other's terrain and its audiences. How cultural exchange would operate within this special, time-based space was put simply by playwright Archibald MacLeish, Assistant Secretary for the Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs in the 1940s. Writing for the *Magazine of Art*, in a swell of rhetorical period neohumanism, MacLeish claimed: "political dialogue in itself was inadequate to resolve international tensions in the postwar world. An additional dialogue was needed: one that would touch the spirit."<sup>273</sup>

A follow-up agreement in 1959 featured the addition of the phrase "cooperation in exchanges." Possibly a neutral insertion, or an ornamental flourish based on earlier language, the phrase signaled a willingness on the part of the joint powers to move beyond thrust-and-parry, cultural combat toward a new site of joint needs and desires. The possibilities for cultural imbrication opening up from a shared political will would remain fragile, tenuous and, at times, dormant. A generation later, the space would reopen with the exhibition *10 + 10*, a joint U.S. and U.S.S.R., project, discussed in chapter four.

***Exhibition Exchange 1959: The Soviet Exhibition of Science, Technology and Culture, New York and The American National Exhibition, Moscow***

The Lacy-Zarubin Agreement opened up a space for an unprecedented project

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<sup>273</sup> See Littleton and Sykes, *Advancing American Art*, 25.

of exhibition exchange between the U.S.S.R and the U.S. in 1959, and one whose political expediency was immediately understood. The U.S.S.R. *Soviet Exhibition of Science, Technology and Culture* went on view in the New York Coliseum, while *The American National Exhibition*, organized by USIA director George Allen in collaboration with Llewellyn Thomson, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, was installed in Sokolniki Park, Moscow. Nicholas Cull relates Thomson's claim that "the exhibition would be worth more to us than five new battleships, and may well have an impact on the whole course of future Soviet American relations."<sup>274</sup>

The Soviet project celebrated the harvest of industry and technology in the U.S.S.R., notably the achievement of *Sputnik*, with some ten thousand separate displays featuring space capsules, machinery and other hardware, as well as photographs depicting the cultural life of its peoples.<sup>275</sup> The exhibition was not unlike so many mounted by the U.S.S.R. at the site of world's fair exhibitions from the beginning of the Communist state in its celebration of its accomplishment. The exhibition, supplied with Russian guides well skilled in turning awkward questions

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<sup>274</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, *The Col War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy 1945-1989*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 163.

<sup>275</sup> Arthur Barron, "Russia's Best Foot Forward," *The New Leader*, XLII, 28, July 20-27, 1959. Barron wrote: "About two million Americans will have seen the Soviet Exhibition before it leaves. What kind of impact will it make on them? If they come with an open mind, they should leave with three distinct impressions. First, that it would be a fatal mistake to underestimate the Russians. They are tough. They are out to beat us. And they have come a long way. Second, that Soviet life is hard. It offers a few comforts, no luxuries. Third, that there is little room for individual freedom in the Soviet system." Details of this exhibition have been largely lost in the subsequent literature. See Barron, 8, YRPFA.

around, appears to have been received with enthusiasm in New York.

Packing the full force of Eisenhower's plan for "cultural infiltration," the format of the *American National Exhibition* in Moscow mobilized world's fair strategies, deploying discrete visual displays in separate pavilions in the metonymic representation of the state. The exhibition included several key components (besides the renowned kitchen<sup>276</sup>), including a geodesic dome by Buckminster Fuller (fig. 47); *The Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture*, an exhibition of contemporary American work; a multi-screen film presentation of American life by Charles and Ray Eames (fig. 48); and the photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* (fig. 49), first organized by Edward Steichen in 1955.<sup>277</sup> The fine arts exhibition was selected by a presidentially-appointed jury which included: Lloyd Goodrich, director of the

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<sup>276</sup> The kitchen was part of a recreated ranch-style home consisting of displays of American consumerist design, and constituting a site of "choice" immanent in western capitalistic democracies. This pavilion was the platform for the "kitchen debate" between Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Vice-President Richard Nixon.

<sup>277</sup> Museum of Modern Art, [The Family of Man; The Greatest Photographic Exhibition of all Time – 503 Pictures from 68 Countries - created by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art](#) (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1955). For analysis of this ground-breaking exhibition see Eric J. Sandeen, [Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America](#) (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995). Christopher Phillips, in discussing the exhibition, comments that "One can, with Allan Sekula, see productions like 'The Family of Man' as exercises in sheer manipulation; but one can also see in their enthusiastic reception that familiar mass-cultural phenomenon whereby very real social and political anxieties are initially conjured up, only to be quickly transformed and furnished with positive (imaginary) resolutions." Further on, Phillips states: "One would by no means be mistaken in seeing Steichen as MoMA's glorified picture editor, sifting through thousands of images from different sources and recombining them in forms reflecting the familiar mass-cultural mingling of popular entertainment and moral edification." See Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," 45-46, 48. See also, Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture,"- [Social Text](#), 1, 1979, 130-148.

Whitney Museum of Art; Henry R. Hope, chair, Fine Arts Department, Indiana University; sculptor Theodore Roszak; and Franklin C. Watkins, member of the faculty, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>278</sup> Watkins, chair of the jury, affirmed the belief that, “it will be charged with vitality and the sense of freedom that marks our character.”<sup>279</sup> The exhibition, in other words, constituted an allegory of American national identity. On view was a canon of American art, including works by Ashcan, Precisionist, Social Realist, and Regionalist artists of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as Surrealist and Abstract Expressionist painters, notably John Sloan, Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, Georgia O’Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, Arshile Gorky, Mark Tobey, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, and Willem de Kooning. Painters Barnett Newman and Adolph Gottlieb were, inexplicably, not included in the show. Works included genre, landscapes, portraits, works of abstract expressionism and figural sculptures, familiar thematics from the 1947 exhibition. While no catalogue appears to have been published for the occasion, the checklist is preserved in a United States Department of State Official Training Book for Guides, a booklet prepared for the army of Russian language-trained U.S. youth available on site to direct and educate Soviet visitors (standard protocol for all U.S. exhibitions circulating in the U.S.S.R.).<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> My description and analysis of *The American Exhibition* is principally based on the published study of Marilyn S. Kushner. See Kushner, “Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition,”- 6-26. For *Official Training Book for Guides*, see *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>279</sup> Franklin Watkins, “U.S. Art to Moscow,” *Art in America*, v. 2, no. 2, spring, 1959, 91, as cited in Kushner, “Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition,”- 6-26, FN 5.

<sup>280</sup> For *Official Training Book for Guides*, see Kushner, “Exhibiting Art,” 22.

The controversy surrounding the 1947 exhibition *Advancing American Art* resurfaced in the organization of the 1959 Moscow show. Representative Francis E. Walter, chair of the House Un-American Activities, responded to the charges of Wheeler Williams, president of the conservative American Artists Professional League regarding the *Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture* checklist. Recirculating the double fears of modernism and Communism, Williams singled out *Welcome Home* by Social Realist painter Jack Levine (c. 1959, fig. 50) as anti-American, described Pollock's *Cathedral* (1947, fig. 44) as a "meaningless scribble," and claimed that more than half of the sixty-seven artists chosen for the exhibition bore past affiliations with the Communist party. During one-day congressional hearings, Williams generalized specific complaints with the claim that the intentions of Communist sympathizers in the U.S., including artists, museum directors, and teachers, was to destroy both America's culture and its faith. Committed to the exhibition's ideological value, and unwilling to perform Soviet-style censorship on the public stage of the Moscow center, Eisenhower did not permit the exclusion of works already selected, but sent twenty-seven additional pre-modernist works as a balm, including paintings by George Caleb Bingham, Mary Cassatt, William Merritt Chase and George Catlin. The effort led by conservative, right wing artists, with vested interests in governmental commissions, to politicize the apolitical work on exhibition failed completely.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> President of Columbia University prior to his presidential election, Eisenhower's stewardship of the advanced arts in the wake of right-wing congressional opposition,

While the statistics of the congressmen were generally correct, by the beginning of the 1950s, many artists and intellectuals had largely reshaped their 1930s idealism in the wake of Stalinist realities. French existential philosophy offered an alternative, as painters, philosophers and writers transformed beliefs in an international collectivism into the ethical responsibilities of individual situational experience, submitting faith previously invested in Communist socialism to the freedoms of individualistic democracy. This commitment to subjectivity and personal action continued, however, to go against the grain of a capitalistic post-World War II America invested in consumer culture, thus positioning the American avant-garde once again as oppositional, in the minds of conservatives. This was not a position without great difficulties emotionally and intellectually, as the forces of the Cold War and continuing McCarthyism gathered, pitting the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. against each other, and Americans against themselves.<sup>282</sup>

As described by Hixson, the fine art section of the 1959 *American National Exhibition* was well received among general Soviet audiences, who commented on the freedom implied in the wide array of styles and subject matter. Khrushchev,

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both in the example of the *Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture* and with *Porgy and Bess* is noteworthy, and bears further study.

<sup>282</sup> In the words of William Phillips, co-editor of the *Partisan Review*, “Let us face the unpleasant fact that the political situation is a truly desperate one, and that all the old liberal and socialist panaceas are nothing more than face-saving gestures now.” For this quote, and full discussion of the politics of the period 1945-50, see Nancy Jachec, “The Space Between Art and Political Action: Abstract Expressionism and Ethical Choice in Postwar America,” *The Oxford Art Journal*, 14, 2, 1991, 18-29; 27.

however, enraged by a female nude sculpture by Gaston Lachaise, hurled homophobic invectives: “Only a homosexual could have done such a statue since he obviously didn’t think much of womanhood.”<sup>283</sup> Lachaise’s trademark distortions of the human body, involving expressive individualizations of figural poses extracted from classical idealism, had clearly irritated the inbuilt affiliation of the new leader with academic Socialist Realism. This tirade would resound a few years later with his 1962 visit to the *Manezh* exhibition in Moscow, where, once again, the premier mobilized gender bias in a larger rant against unofficial artists. Khrushchev’s resort to homophobia as one element in his critique of western or unofficial Soviet work is evidence, on one level, of a lack of sophistication or education. On another level, the perceived threat to the human figure reconstitutes itself as a threat to the state, on terrain now conceded, even if temporarily, to the adversary, here the U.S. in the case of the 1959 exhibition, or to the unofficial Soviet art movement in the 1962 exhibition. The move from consideration of the individual object to the perception of universal peril thus operates as a microcosm of East-West tensions. Dwight Eisenhower, responding to both congressional and private criticism of Abstract Expressionist works contained in the U.S. Pavilion at the 1958 *Exposition Universelle et Internationale* in Brussels, and unwilling to escalate any cultural wars, deferred decisions on censorship. These responses reflect the tensile levels with regard to issues of freedom of expression and censorship in the circuitry of both U.S. government-sponsored export exhibitions and in Soviet exhibitions in the period of the Khrushchev Thaw. In the case of the *Manezh* tirade, it is quite possible that

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<sup>283</sup> Hixson, Parting the Curtain, 205.

Khrushchev was attempting to placate the conservative, neo-Stalinist wing of the Party, in the wake of the Soviet defeat in the Cuban Missile crisis.

*Glimpses of the U.S.A.* (fig. 48), a multi-screen film by Charles and Ray Eames on view in Fuller's geodesic dome, constituted a third term in the complex syntax of the 1959 Moscow exhibition, recalling a similar exhibition on view at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. This installation comprised 2,200 slide images of America assembled on film and projected on seven 20 x 30 foot screens. Reconvened on film were photographic images shot by family and friends, featuring sharp-focused, close-cropped details of everyday American life pan-U.S.A (fig. 51). The particularization of the seductive details, when projected on screen murals of many times their original size, reconstituted an ideological totalization of American society.

### ***The Family of Man***

Photographer and theorist Allan Sekula's analysis of the photographic exhibition *The Family of Man* (fig. 49) provides a starting point for consideration of the ideologies implicit in official, national exhibition making in the period of the early Cold War.<sup>284</sup> This photography exhibition, selected by Edward Steichen, a practicing

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<sup>284</sup> Allan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," *Art Journal*, 41, 1, spring 1981, 15-25. Blake Stimson, in considering Sekula's propositions, poses the question: "What would it mean, in other words, to experience political identification realized through a process of cultural homogenization rather than heterogenization?" Stimson's essay is a meditation on the formal logic of the Steichian exhibition design to achieve this propagandistic goal, in which he articulates his theory of the "pivot point" as an

photographer and curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art, and circulating internationally beginning in 1955, featured five hundred and three photographs taken by two hundred and seventy-three photographers from sixty-eight countries. Ultimately it was seen by nine million viewers in thirty-seven countries. These numbers, staggering in scale, were heavily circulated in the period promotion of the exhibition, reinforcing the giganticizing claim of the title of the accompanying publication: The Family of Man: The Greatest Exhibition of All Time—503 Pictures from 68 Countries—created by Edward Steichen for The Museum of Modern Art, New York.<sup>285</sup>

Sekula critiques the power of photography anywhere as a medium of communication “within the larger context of a developing capitalist world order,” casting it as a monetarist instrument in economic and political colonization.<sup>286</sup> Sekula troubles the exhibition’s claim that photography functions as a universal language, operating autonomously in and amongst separate nations (the conceptual foundation of the *Family of Man* exhibition), stating, “the photograph is invariably accompanied by, and situated within, an overt or covert text.” The text underlying *The Family of*

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interstitial operation. Stimson reaffirms the logic of universalization operating in the project, in discussing Edward Steichen’s photograph of an audience at the exhibition, with one of the photographs in the background: “they each enter into the space of the other—they both become part of a common crowd.” See Blake Stimson, “Photographic Being and *The Family of Man*,” The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2006), 69, 71.

<sup>285</sup> Edward Steichen, The Family of Man: The Greatest Exhibition of All Time-503 Pictures from 68 Countries-created by Edward Steichen for The Museum of Modern Art, New York, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955).

<sup>286</sup> For this and following, see Sekula, “Traffic in Photographs,” 16.

*Man* is the abstraction, universalization and mythologization of the family (fig. 52), “which serves as a metaphor also for a system of international discipline and harmony” operating under the paternalistic guidance of the United Nations General Assembly (fig. 53).<sup>287</sup> A familiar postwar trope, the concept of universal accord safeguarded by international peacekeeping had been advanced by industrialist and failed presidential candidate Wendell Wilkie as early as 1943, with the publication of the widely-read One World.<sup>288</sup> A postwar U.S. construct of a newly ordered, unitary cosmos inspired by the late Wilkie and like-minded thinkers underpins *The Family of Man*. That Sekula fails to mention the exhibition’s Moscow venue within the body of his article is interesting, for several reasons. First, within the same article he briefly rehearses Eva Cockcroft’s allegations of a covert Cold War alliance between the CIA and the Museum of Modern Art. Second, Sekula’s critique of the totalizing collectivism implicit in the Steichian thematic merits further consideration in view of the intellectual predicates of his arguments concerning the commodification of photography. Finally, reference to the Moscow venue would precisely prove his point, in the presence on Soviet soil, the territory of “the enemy,” of a commodified language of universalism.

There is a clear counterpoint to the *topos* of universalism as an exhibition thematic and strategy, and its problematization by Sekula, in the triumph of individualism advanced in the painting and sculpture section of *The American*

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>288</sup> Wendell Wilkie, One World (London: Cassell, 1943).

*Exhibition* in Moscow. The checklist included, as we have seen, work from selected American modernisms, notably Abstract Expressionism (already “art historical” by this date), the kind of work that Serge Guilbaut has argued to have been used by the U.S. government to propagandize American values of freedom of choice and self-expression in the 1940s.<sup>289</sup> In this light, the circulation of paintings marked by a strong sense of individualism in style and/or subject matter, in the foreign zone of Sokolniki Park, would offer a striking contrast to the dehumanization implicit in Stalinist collectivism, itself a perversion of the collectivism celebrated in the *Family of Man* photographs. These two exhibitions promoted an American cultural life cemented in a set of freedoms comprising individualism, self-expression, choice, and voluntary participation in the universal collective. Taken together, the two exhibitions express a split subjectivity circulating within the exhibitions, one whose logic is useful for examining past, present, and future international strategies from this key Cold War site, helping us to better understand the mythologies of the Cold War, east and west, manifest in migratory exhibitions.

*The National Exhibition*, the first major exposure of U.S. avant-garde art to Soviet artists, appears to have strengthened young Soviets in their resolve to operate outside the realm of academic-bureaucratic Socialist Realism promoted in the academies of Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>290</sup> Seen through the lens of the Sekula-Guibaut model, the

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<sup>289</sup>Serge Guilbaut, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>290</sup> John Bowl, 10 + 10, 17; Degot, Contemporary Painting in Russia, 3.

U.S. emblemized the concept of artistic communities or movements, bound together in a collective embracing the individual pursuit of self-expression, in particular, with the exhibition of works of the Abstract Expressionist movement. The exhibition may be seen, also, as a subtle gesture on the part of the U.S. government to its public, as well as to Soviet audiences, in the wake of the McCarthy era, in the circulation of works made, in several cases, by artists who had been sympathetic to, or members of, the Communist party in the 1930s. On one level, the exhibition signaled the containment of the opposition in the United States; on another level, it reinforced earlier and existing intellectual ties between the creative artists of America and the artists and writers of the Soviet Union, and, more importantly, the Soviet viewing public. On another level, it conveyed the national ideology of U.S. Bill of Rights-guaranteed freedom of expression in an open society. On another level, still, given the checklist of painters for *The Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture*, the exhibition extended the notion of forgiveness in the return of the American prodigal son, the errant Communist Party member or fellow traveler of an earlier decade, to the democratic collective. Finally, the logic of this narrative, played out in the public space of Sokolniki Park, may have reinforced Khrushchev's own position, in attempting to reconcile conservatives and liberals within the Communist Party in the early days of the Thaw, an effort that would engage, perplex and frustrate him throughout his tenure as General Secretary.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> See William Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era (New York: Norton, 2003), 306 ff.

### *Conspiracy Theory*

Watergate-era revisionist theories of the history of Abstract Expressionism and its place within the national ideology circulated in response to the triumphalist publications of Sam Hunter and Irving Sandler.<sup>292</sup> By the 1970s, the canonical view of Abstract Expressionism as epitomizing American freedom and individualism within the body politic, promoted most famously earlier by Greenberg in writings for the Partisan Review,<sup>293</sup> and its circulation in U.S. international exhibitions, could all too easily be viewed as an instrument in the colonialization of American ideological values in the Cold War struggle, given the era's skeptical view toward government. Following these arguments, artists once associated with Communism were exploited for their struggles for self-expression, and could be foregrounded as freedom fighters in the covert, international propaganda wars of the Cold War. Max Kozloff's article "American Painting During the Cold War" (1973) launched the salvo, questioning the relationship between art movements and national identity politics, linking Museum of Modern Art-generated traveling exhibition programs to the USIA, which was "able to mount, without interference, a number of successful programs abetted and amplified by the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York."<sup>294</sup> Yet, with *The Family of Man* we have already seen that the institutions worked together

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<sup>292</sup> Sam Hunter, American Painting of the Twentieth Century (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

<sup>293</sup> See, for example, Greenberg's essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch."

<sup>294</sup> Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," Artforum, 11, 9, May 1973, 49.

publicly in the circulation of projects. Stacy Tenenbaum has noted a comment by USIA spokesman A.H. Bending, at a meeting of the American Federation of the Arts in 1953, that the “government should not sponsor examples of our creative energy which are non-representational...works of avowed Communists.”<sup>295</sup> Further, Alfred Barr’s introduction to the catalogue for the 1958-59 MoMA European touring exhibition, *The New American Painting*, draws a firm line between art and politics. His claims for an existential freedom of expression emphasize that “[the artists represented] defiantly reject the conventional values of the society which surrounds them, but they are not politically engaged.”<sup>296</sup> In other words, for Barr, freedom of expression and the refusal of society in the cultural arena do not, in America, imply or necessitate leftist political activism. It is possible that Barr here is staking out an apolitical position befitting his role as intermediary between the extremes of left and right, both of whom share a belief in the inherent politicization of art. Barr’s advocacy of the apolitical renders political origins irrelevant, as the work is made over as an allegory of freedom. It is also possible, however, that the statement suggests that Barr, and the U.S. government, are playing a high-stakes game, as several of the artists included in the exhibition were once communist sympathizers. The exhibition, therefore, offered a subtle staging of nonconformity in a new, post-

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<sup>295</sup> Stacy Tenenbaum, “The Triumph of ‘The New American Painting,’ MoMA and Cold War Cultural Diplomacy,” *Artists and Patrons in Post-War Britain*, Courtauld Research Papers No. 2 (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2001), 132.

<sup>296</sup> Alfred Barr, *The New American Painting* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1958).

See Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 42.

McCarthy era. The move here is from the suppression of the avant-garde to its valorization and circulation, possibly as a Cold War tool. In the new post-McCarthy climate of first amendment freedoms, valorizing self-expression with impunity, artistic refusal may now shift to the critique of cultural and socioeconomic values in an expanding, post-World War II society.

Writing a year after Kozloff, Eva Cockcroft drew damaging parallels between MoMA's international circulating exhibitions program and projects of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), with a special focus on the 1958-59 European tour of the exhibition *The New American Painting*. These parallels provided Cockcroft the opportunity to insinuate undocumented links between the two institutions. The Museum of Modern Art responded twenty years later with the in-house publication of a lengthy article commissioned from *The New York Times* art critic Michael Kimmelman. The article was based on museum archival research, and answered Cockcroft's charges regarding the 1958-59 show, by stating that MoMA had been invited by European curators to organize and circulate the project.<sup>297</sup>

The outrages, moves and counter-moves registered by critical conspiracy theorists and institutional defenders has by now congealed, and is historicized in the

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<sup>297</sup> Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum*, 12, 10, June 1974; Michael Kimmelman, "Revisiting the Revisionists: The Modern, Its Critics and the Cold War," *The Museum at Mid-Century, At Home and Abroad*, Studies in Modern Art 4 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994). Kimmelman's project was financed by wealthy Texans, Perry and Nancy Lee Bass, whose son Sid served in various advisory capacities to the Museum of Modern Art, including board and committee memberships.

literature. This discursive space may be viewed as a period piece, and its limits must be set. I have shown the active and visible role of the U.S. government, its agencies and its international partners, in promoting ideology—basically propaganda—through exchange programs with the Soviet Union, the prototypes for which emerged from postwar traveling exhibitions in Europe. Nonetheless, covert CIA financing of scholarly journals, popular media, and student exchange has been documented, beginning with the 1967 Ramparts magazine exposé. In this regard, it is useful to consider Ninkovich's articulation of the roles of the USIA and the United States Information Services (USIS). As he points out, "The cultural-exchange programs are internationalist, concerned with promoting long-term mutual understanding between peoples. The information programs, by contrast, are in the nationalist tradition: largely one-way in direction and more political in thrust."<sup>298</sup> Ninkovich implies a potential aggression in the informational side, perhaps misleading to the scholars examining the documents. The first definition, of course, describes the USIA. The connections established by Cold War scholars between the CIA and American literary life fall into the informational, nationalist camp. Weighing the evidence, the links between the USIA, which represented the cultural, internationalist branch of U.S. government, and MoMA appear to have been transparent from the inception of cultural exchange. The majority of contemporary Cold War scholars endorse the Kimmelman position; yet the damage to MoMA's credibility endures. Gregory Guroff, head of the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative, when asked his views on the

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<sup>298</sup> Frank Ninkovich, U.S. Information Policy and Cultural Diplomacy 308 (New York: Foreign Policy Association, 1996), 3-4.

debates and superpower exchanges in general, merely commented: “nothing would happen without the involvement of our government.” One might read the revisionist claims of the 1970s as inversions of earlier McCarthyite right wing denunciations of artists with Communist or fellow traveler affiliations, noted in the controversies surrounding *Advancing American Art* and the *Exhibition of American Painting and Sculpture*; in this round, museum officials and artists seem to be operating in cooperation with the U.S. government.

### ***Early Cold War Exchange: Observations***

Hixson and Richmond note the chronic difficulties attending the organization and circulation of American exhibitions abroad, whether for export to Europe or in the Soviet Union. These issues which would haunt the entire era. First, a dire lack of federal funds is tied to the persistent absence of any meaningful metric for gauging the impact and efficacy of cultural programs in meeting U.S. goals. The lack of a crisp, precise rubric formed a sharp contrast to the gleaming statistics of the military-industrial complex.<sup>299</sup> Ambassador Jack Matlock comments that, absent such metrics, it is generally believed that while the cost of cultural projects has been paltry in comparison to the colossal defense build-ups, their cost-effectiveness, has been

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<sup>299</sup> Ninkovich quotes historian Chester Pach’s project to demonstrate that military aid programs lacked strategic, measurable objectives, in terms of demonstrating increases in national security, and Ninkovich calls them “largely symbolic.” Ibid., 49.

significant.<sup>300</sup> Nonetheless, the lack of concrete gauges impeded the growth of cultural exchange. Secondly, and more importantly, as Hixson relates, “Many Americans sharply opposed the very concept of a democratic society engaging in propaganda, which in its essence entailed manipulation of mass opinion. The term ‘propaganda’ possessed such a pejorative connotation that it eventually became necessary for its advocates to employ euphemisms such as ‘public diplomacy.’”<sup>301</sup> The term “public diplomacy” was deliberately inserted as a replacement term for “propaganda” in U.S.I.A. discourse. In this regard, the Soviet Union has maintained notable transparency: cultural affairs were conducted more or less under the supervision of chiefs of propaganda. Vasily Zakharov, Minister of Culture at the end of the Cold War, had in fact served in the Ministry of Propaganda prior to his cultural appointment.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Matlock stated: “as compared with defense and intelligence budgets, the amounts spent on cultural programs were ‘peanuts’. As a payoff on an investment, we got a real bargain, and these dollars were the best spent money.” Matlock conceded, however, that it was impossible to measure the impact of cultural exchange programs in relation to other U.S. projects in terms of agency in meeting the decades-old goals of U.S. cultural diplomacy.

<sup>301</sup> Hixson, Parting the Curtain, xii. James Critchlow concurs: “By the 1960s and 1970s it had become clear that ‘propaganda’ in the sense of disinformation or manipulation was not a suitable tool for a democracy and that slanted news, especially if presented with truculence and bombast, would not gain credibility.” The new term ‘public diplomacy’ was meant to be a repudiation of ideas of ‘propaganda.’ Today public diplomacy is defined rather narrowly by the State Department as ‘engaging, informing, and influencing key international audiences’.” See James Critchlow, “Public Diplomacy during the Cold War: The Record and Its Implications,” Review of Yale Richmond, Cultural Exchange and the Cold War (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), Journal of Cold War Studies, 6, 1, winter 2004, 83.

<sup>302</sup> Zakharov, speaking to a reporter in February 1988, on the first visit of any Soviet Culture Minister to the United States since the Carter sanctions, referred to his previous position as First Deputy Chief of the Central Committee Propaganda

Opposition also emerged from those who viewed culture as a preoccupation of the elite, who saw little evidence of any impact, or whose professional interests were threatened by the advancement of avant-garde practices. The American public's prejudice against advanced art practices, its anti-Communism, and a traditional aversion to any federal government interference in Bill of Rights freedoms are all intertwined in the objections to the exhibitions. Paradoxically, as we have seen, it is the final objection that actually underlay, throughout the period, the platform of cultural diplomacy: the promotion of individual freedom of expression. The outcome of early cold war exchange in the visual arts may be viewed for the U.S. in hindsight as the exposure of Soviet citizens to an American ideology of Bill of Rights guarantees, in both the private and public sectors. U.S. citizens were not exposed to Soviet art through government-organized exhibitions in this period. For both nations, the export of exhibitions on any topic permitted extended, time-based incursions into the space of the other, providing reciprocal opportunities for the provision of information and influence. Accordingly, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Soviet Ministry would remain wary of the possibilities created by these exhibitions for espionage or defection throughout the era.

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Department and described propaganda as information, "In the United States, usually it's something bad, whereas the original sense had to do with spreading knowledge, educating people. I'd like to revive the original sense." Zakharov drew the distinction between government control of information and what, in essence, constituted a Bolshevik definition of distribution of information to the masses. See Caryn James, "For Soviet Official, Good Will and Flu," *New York Times*, February 6, 1988, YRPA.

### *The Emergence of Culture Three*

Perhaps because he was writing in the liminal period of the 1970s, Paperny does not define Culture Three. In fact, it may be possible to begin a theoretical discussion of Culture Three with Khrushchev's disavowal of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, itself symptomatic of the conditions of more liberal ways of thinking within the Communist Party in the post-World War II years. Khrushchev's "secret speech" brought to the world stage awareness of the Stalinist crimes and the possibilities for a renewal of, freedoms, albeit limited, in the Soviet state. This period is known familiarly as "The Thaw" after a novel by Soviet author Ilya Ehrenburg, early colleague of Lissitzky.<sup>303</sup> The Thaw gave rise to art practices by official artists in non-conformity with the ideological tenets of Socialist Realism and/or the official style. Stephen Bittner contends that these practices began to be permitted or, at least tolerated, because of their quality of truthfulness in offering a convincing portrayal of the realities of Soviet life.<sup>304</sup> It was precisely the value of truth that Khrushchev had upheld in his secret revelation.

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<sup>303</sup>First published in the U.S.S.R. in 1954, the novel was released in the U.S. in the following year. See Ilya Ehrenburg, The Thaw, Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1955.

<sup>304</sup> Bittner cites the example of the publication of Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. "Even though the standards that governed literature, music and the arts loosened significantly in the 1950s and '60s, the party never challenged the validity of socialist realism. Consequently, many of the most important cultural products of the thaw came to light precisely because their proponents framed them as important contributions to the socialist-realist canon. For example, Aleksandr Tvardovskii, the editor of the journal *Novyi mir* (New World), claimed that Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's landmark novella about the gulag, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, confirmed 'the unchanging meaning of the tradition of truth in art' and countered "false innovationism of the formalist, modernist sort." See Bittner, The

Western European art, not seen since 1949, was put back on display at The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, as well as the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, which hosted a major exhibition of the work of Pablo Picasso, a member of the French Communist Party, in 1956. In 1957, the *Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students* was staged in Sokolniki Park, on the perimeter of Moscow, the site two years later of the ground-breaking *The American Exhibition*. This era witnessed, too, the temporary reintroduction to Soviet audiences of the artists of the early twentieth century Russian avant-garde, including a 1960 Lissitzky exhibition at the State Mayakovsky Museum, Moscow; a 1961 exhibition of the Revolutionary poster art of Gustav Klutsis and the sculpture of Mikhail Matiushin; and exhibitions in 1962 of Tatlin and Malevich. Western art journals were made available to limited audiences in libraries, and western collections of the historical Soviet avant-garde were forming, including the renowned holdings of Canadian embassy official George Costakis, who opened the doors of his Moscow apartment to colleagues and artists for viewings of works by such artists as Rodchenko and Malevich.

### ***The Severe Style***

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Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw, 107, quoted from: Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-64, Priscilla Johnson and Leopold Labedz, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 212.

The official U.S.S.R. Union of Artists, working together with the Academy of Arts and the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture, to teach, circulate and promote Socialist Realism, continued to ensure training, jobs and benefits for artists within the system. The first gallerist in post-1991 Russia, academic artist and teacher Aidan Salakhova recounts the experience of her father Tair Salakhov, an official artist and the last Secretary of the Union before the dissolution of the Soviet Union: “the system was the art academy and the government system. You paint factories, paint portraits. This system was later [at the end of the Cold War] broken: there were problems of paying official artists [after the disintegration of the U.S.S.R.]”

Salakhov, an Azerbaijani Socialist Realist artist, rose to official power in Moscow, finding space within the limitations of official art for abstraction in his private figural work and in his narrative. His work is characteristic of the celebrated Severe Style, practiced by liberal-leaning members of the Moscow Union of Soviet Artists (MOSKh).<sup>305</sup> The Severe Style was committed to a realism of mood and atmosphere, quite opposite to the relentlessly sunny optimism of the Stalinist era. Salakhov’s imposing, horizontal *Portrait of the Composer Kara Karayev* (1960, fig. 54), portrays Karayev dressed informally, relaxed yet alert, seen in profile and rather

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<sup>305</sup> “If we take the left-wing Moscow Union of Soviet Artists (MOSKh) it was representing intellectual art—an official art with a liberal twinkling. I am speaking about Nesterova, Nazarenko, the whole “severe style.” They were always oriented to the, probably, not so wide but powerful stratum of Soviet intellectuals. In my opinion, the art of that stratum, promoted by the Administration but not focused on the society—has been gone completely.” Andrey Yerofeev, interview, *Here and Now, Contemporary Art in Russia*, Moscow: Moscow Center for Contemporary Art, 2004, 25.

close-up, with his piano in the background, the composition forming a mosaic of geometric, intersecting planes lit by tones of blue, grey and black, a style quite similar to western abstraction of the 1950s. The stack of music books on the piano is punctuated by a volume at top teetering unnaturally, in a move that echoes the painting of *Builders of the Bratsk Hydroelectric Power Station* (see p. 179). The slightly unstable stack of music books points to the right, echoing, as it were, the dynamic, right-arching curve of the composer's body. A clear light highlights the composer's back, his lower right profile, and the topmost book, which suggests the workmanlike character of the life of a musical composer. Despite, then, the abstracting elements, the narrative is consistent with the tenets of Socialist Realism.

Salakhov absorbed western trends through books, journals and catalogues secretly brought into the U.S.S.R. or acquired on his western travels, which included a trip to the U.S. in 1968.<sup>306</sup> Nowhere in western journals, however, were there to be found a movement as evocative of the conditions of post-war reconstruction as the Severe Style. By day a bright star of Socialist Realism, by night evidently a passionate modernist, Salakhov moved further into abstraction, producing, for example, an unpublished painting of the cosmos, including a pair of extremely simplified human figures and a *sputnik*, rendered in large blocks of pure color and geometric form. His daughter Salakhova recounts, "I recently saw in his home [while she was preparing an exhibition of his work in celebration of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2008] an unpublished piece, dated 1962, 2 x 8 meters, of a man and woman flying

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<sup>306</sup> Salakhova, author interview.

into space with a *sputnik*...white-blue color for background painted in more modern style...other paintings in his studio consisted of only three colors: black, blue, red, one, three clouds, or a red tractor dated 1959. [These works] were very strange.”<sup>307</sup> Salakhov never publicly exhibited this work,” according to Salakhova. Salakhov’s private experimentation was not uncommon, as many official artists worked independently in the genres of landscape, still life, and private portraiture. Salakhov’s interest in western trends continued in the late 1980s when, as Secretary of The U.S.S.R. Union of Artists, he officially promoted modernist practice in the public sphere, working closely with American artist Robert Rauschenberg on a mutual exchange of exhibitions, including a Rauschenberg project in the U.S.S.R. in 1989, and an export exhibition in Florida of admittedly rather anodyne Soviet art by official union members.<sup>308</sup>

Another example of the Severe Style, *The Builders of Bratsk Hydroelectric Station* by Viktor Popkov (1960-61, fig. 55), features five state workers engaged in the construction of this now-legendary power station completed in 1955. One female, posed frontally and horizontally on a beam, is posed with three men standing, one crouching and one seated, all against a dark background. A clear, full light shines evenly on the figures from the foreground, and the overall effect is one of a

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<sup>307</sup> Salakhova, author interview.

<sup>308</sup> Aidan Salakhova, daughter of Tair Salakhov and a practicing academic artist in her own right, made history as the first private gallerist in Moscow in 1991. Author’s note: regarding Salakhova’s account of Salakhov’s official work with Rauschenberg, sadly this renowned U.S. artist passed away before final arrangements had been made by the author to interview him concerning his exchange work. See Salakhova, author interview; Pace Gallery, Correspondence.

proscenium stage. Like Salakhov's composer, these heroes of the state are presented as dedicated laborers, dressed for the job, but without the sunshine and smiles of a former Socialist Realism. The curious placement of a blue pencil on the worker at the right bears further examination. This pencil is not securely positioned over the worker's left ear, but floats unsupported between his hat and ear. The pencil, in fact, appears to be pasted on his head, boldly projecting forward, in a *trompe l'oeil* effect, which, like the composer's books, destabilizes the work. Such *frissons* would appear to test the boundaries of formalism, firmly condemned in Socialist Realism of a generation earlier, and complicate any conventional understanding of an unofficial, nonconformist avant-garde art exclusively investigating modernism outside the domain of Khrushchev-era Socialist Realism.

The evidence of Salakhov's private and informed investigations of modernism also demonstrates the acceptability of personal enquiry and experimentation and the leading of a double life, features which in many ways characterize the era elsewhere. Moshe Lewin, in describing reform politics of the era and its positioning in relationship to the official regime, describes liberal political practices of the era which granted agency to individual development, as seen in the work of official artists Popkov and Salakhov:

We may sum up many of these phenomena as manifestations of an emerging civil society in the bosom of a system that is statist par excellence. By 'civil society', we refer to the aggregate of networks and institutions that either exist and act independently of the state or are official organizations capable of developing their own, spontaneous views on local or national issues and then impressing these views on their members, on small groups

and, finally, on the authorities. These social complexes do not necessarily oppose the state, but exist in contrast to outright state organisms and enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.<sup>309</sup>

The public-private practice of Salakhov, and the accretion of a formalism formerly condemned by Stalinist Socialist Realists evident in the work of both Salakhov and Popkov, adds texture to Lewin's thesis, and nuance to any western understanding of the period.

Khrushchev's tolerance of unofficial practices was tested on December 1, 1962 at the site of the exhibition *Thirty Years of MOSKh*. This exhibition, organized in celebration of the anniversary of the Moscow Section of the Union of Artists, went on view in *Manezh* Exhibition Hall, following the Cuban Missile Crisis, October 18-29, 1962. Turning his back on nonconformist art, probably for the sake of political expediency and his own political advancement in the wake of Russia's international embarrassment, Khrushchev lambasted the unofficial, formalist and advanced art practices on view in a small, difficult-to-find room in the hall.<sup>310</sup> The *Manezh*

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<sup>309</sup> See Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 80.

<sup>310</sup> See *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-64*, Priscilla Johnson and Leopold Labedz, eds. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 2 ff, and Reid, "In the Name of the People,"- 675 ff. Both Johnson and Reid note the issue of authority and control evidenced in the *Manezh* Affair, reflecting the conflicts within the Party during the Thaw. They point, as well, to the timing of the well-publicized incident, in the immediate wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis and China's criticism of the Soviet Union's decisions regarding advanced art practices. Khrushchev had earlier evidenced circumspection in cultural matters. Indeed, like Eisenhower in the case of the Brussels World's Fair (1958) and *The American Exhibition* (1959), Khrushchev attempted to recuse himself from deliberations on the avant-garde. In the matter of the Third International Film Festival, Moscow attempt to hijack the first prize,

incident appears to have been the culmination of battles on several fronts. William Taubman, for example, describes a series of reforms prior to *Manezh*, including Khrushchev's division of the Communist Party into sections in an effort to energize the economy, a move that disturbed supporters and oppositionists alike. In the cultural sphere, publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich in November 1962 marked a gain for liberal writers and artists.<sup>311</sup>

Finally, *Manezh* appears to have been a set-up on the part of conservative Socialist Realist artists to expose and ridicule the liberal members of the Union of Artists, reflecting internal battles in the art world and echoing the art world conflicts of the Stalinist nineteen thirties.<sup>312</sup> This episode may be viewed, then, as a struggle between traditionalists and modernists across the registers of international relations, politics and culture. The resurgence of the conservative sector of the Union of Artists expressed here mirrored Khrushchev's political problems with the right-wingers of the Communist Party that led to his downfall in 1964.

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awarded to 8½ by filmmaker Frederico Fellini, and was foiled by the premier who stated: "I don't understand a thing, but the international jury has awarded it a first prize. What am I supposed to do? They understand it better than do; that's what they're there for. Why do they always palm these things off on me? I've already called Ilychev and told him not to intervene. Let the professionals decide." See Taubman, Khrushchev, 600.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 588.

<sup>312</sup> Taubman relates: "The sculptor Ernst Zeizvestny suspected a provocation since the works about to be prominently displayed had never enjoyed party approbation; and in fact, the move to *Manezh* was a setup. The Artist's Union chief Vladimir Serov and Central Committee Secretary Leonid Ilychev supplied Khrushchev with mocking descriptions that unorthodox artists had allegedly used to ridicule him: 'Ivan-the-fool on the throne,' 'corn-man,' 'loud mouth.'" Ibid., 589.

In the wake of *Manezh*, artists from the studio of Eli Beliutin, who had exhibited in the unfortunate corner of the hall, as well as others, went underground in pursuit of the practice of unofficial styles. Censorship tightened across the board, and in 1965 journalists Andrei Siniavsky and Yulii Daniel went on trial, accused of publishing pseudonymous articles in the west that were critical of the U.S.S.R.<sup>313</sup> In the aftermath, the assertion of rights to artistic freedom and self-expression resulted in the denial of academic training, jobs and commissions, as well as benefits, to many of those choosing paths outside the Socialist Realist system.

***The Détente years (1972-1979), the Carter Chill (1980-1985), and the Late Cold War (1985-1991)***

A paper prepared by John Bowlt for a détente-era conference outlined the realities of cultural exchange with the U.S.S.R., by emphasizing the roles of politics, ethics, the economy and commerce in Soviet participation: “Dealing with the vast labyrinth of the Ministry of Culture is always a difficult and dangerous venture. The reason for this is not only because it is a slow and ponderous bureaucratic machine, but also because, ultimately, its exchange programs are dominated by political considerations – something that Americans, in the age of détente, tend to forget.” Bowlt also points up the nuance that Soviet politics are intertwined with ethics in the bureaucratic regulation of society. According to his analysis, “if, in projecting an art exhibition for the US [sic] from the USSR [sic], our aims are more or less “esthetic,”

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<sup>313</sup> See Ratliff, Komar & Melamid, (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 19 ff.

the Soviets' counter proposals and responses are primarily ethical, secondarily esthetic." By extension, Bowlt emphasizes the political intention of the Soviet projects, necessitating the full force of the Soviet government bureaucracy despite the claims for détente-era ease. Bowlt describes this as "a tightrope between Soviet ideology and American idealism." He continues, "the economic, commercial motive that is often ulterior here may explain, for example, why Japan and West Germany (major trading partners) have received the best, and the most provocative, art works for exhibition (e.g., Malevich's *Black Square* and Repin's *Barge Haulers on the Volga River*) while the U.S. has not (for the Soviet Union the U.S. has lost its prior potential as a solid financial market)."<sup>314</sup> In the détente era then, the U.S. received less favorable treatment with regard to important exchange, due to its inferior status as a trading partner with the U.S.S.R.

It is probably due to the factors outlined by Bowlt that the years 1972-79 saw a notable rise in U.S. private sector exchanges with the U.S.S.R. Additionally, due to the controversies attending the art exhibitions as outlined above, and given the early onset of both ideological and funding challenges, the U.S. had long hoped to privatize exchange. The shift from public to private sponsorship inflected the subject matter and ideologies of exhibition projects, at least in the realm of fine arts. The détente projects, many in receipt of a modicum of federal financial support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State (which would

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<sup>314</sup> John E. Bowlt, University of Texas, Austin, "The Administration of Soviet Culture," conference paper, ND, 4, 5.

merge with the USIA in 1978), continued, however, to be founded on the bedrock of U.S.-U.S.S.R. government agreements, renegotiated on a regular basis. The Central Committee of the Soviet Union clearly required the backing of the U.S. government in all the dealings of its Ministry of Culture with private U.S. organizations.

Richmond comments drily,

The Soviets wanted an agreement, and they made it a condition to having exchanges. The Soviets like to put things on paper, signed by their political authorities at an appropriately high level. And in a country where the government and Communist Party control practically everything, it would be inconceivable to conduct exchanges with another country, particularly the leader of the capitalist West, without a formal agreement which spells out exactly what will be exchanged and under what conditions.<sup>315</sup>

The agreements of this era provided federal immunization from seizure and indemnification from loss; without these stipulations, the Soviet government would not consent to exhibition projects. As part of its continuing strategy from the era of the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement (1958) to redirect U.S.S.R. policies, U.S. officials were willing to support, in part, private fine arts projects, believing that these projects, as with so many others in the arena of cultural diplomacy, would not only appeal to, but also influence, Soviet thinkers who set the course for intellectual, creative, scientific or technical policies then or in the future.

In these years, as U.S. private organizations dealt directly with the Soviet Ministry under the auspices of the U.S. government, art exhibition exchange

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<sup>315</sup> Richmond, U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 3. Richmond emphasizes, too, the usefulness of these instruments in planning and budgeting within the highly centralized government. Additionally, fully stipulated agreements protect bureaucracies on both sides from changes in political mood.

programs were negotiated between the U.S.S.R. and major U.S. museums, including the Metropolitan Museum and the National Gallery of Art. *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings from the U.S.S.R.* (fig. 56), organized by Armand Hammer in 1974 for circulation in the United States, is one of the more notable examples of this public-private partnership.<sup>316</sup> Hammer and his family had made an early fortune in pencil factories, among other enterprises, in the Bolshevik era, and maintained close, personal ties with the Soviet government and its leaders. Letters of good will from General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and President Richard Nixon at the beginning of the exhibition catalogue underscore the significance of the project to both governments. Nixon's letter, for example, praises the "continuing cultural awareness" on offer from the project. On display were works once in the collections of Moscow merchants Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov, now divided between museums in Moscow and Leningrad. The narrative of the exhibition was not subtle: featuring important examples of French art, and excluding Russian work of the same period, the exhibition positioned the Soviet Union within the universe of western aesthetics and values, whose welcoming arms were open to receive it into the pantheon. Western awareness of Russian arts, for example, of indigenous nineteenth-century Russian painting would have to wait until the late Cold War. Visitors' attendance at six key U.S. cities, including the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., and major museums across the country, was record-breaking.

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<sup>316</sup> National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and M. Knoedler & Co., New York, *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings from the U.S.S.R.*, 1973.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art organized a vibrant exchange of exhibitions with the Soviet Union in this period, including *From the Land of the Scythians: Ancient Art from the Museums of the U.S.S.R. and One Hundred Masterpieces of Painting from the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1975). A protocol signed by the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture and the Metropolitan Museum of Art proposed ten additional exhibitions, including an exchange consisting of *Pre-Columbian Gold from the Metropolitan* and *Russian Costumes* (1976) and an exhibition of Russian paintings from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the present, with a show of American Realism (the latter two scheduled for 1977).<sup>317</sup> Provocation characterized this last project, as Henry Geldzahler, Metropolitan Museum of Art twentieth-century curator, was subjected to censorship in the selection of his checklist for the exhibition. Geldzahler's inclusion of a work by Philip Perlstein depicting two female nudes posed closely together in bed caused unspecified consternation in Moscow; Geldzahler retorted in the press that the models were tired. According to a news account of the period, he noted that "still the exhibition is full of works that challenge the limits set on Soviet artists." Indeed, he stated that "I tried to throw as much pepper as I could into the eyes that think they know how a picture should be painted. In our country we don't think there is a 'right' way to paint."<sup>318</sup> Geldzahler's politicization of the checklist is a rare example of curatorial aggression in an otherwise neutral cultural exchange landscape.

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<sup>317</sup> Ashton Hawkins, Secretary and Counsel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, letter to Mr. Robert Rand, Committee of Security and Cooperation in Europe, October 26, 1976, YRPFA.

<sup>318</sup> David K. Shipley, *New York Times*, December 21, 1977.

While the private sector sought projects in the cultural sphere, the USIA took the lead in the organization of non-art industrial, social, and technological projects designed for circulation primarily to the national centers of Moscow and Leningrad.<sup>319</sup> Overall, the USIA would organize twenty-three exhibitions for circulation in the U.S.S.R.<sup>320</sup> The promotion of U.S. consumer society and the expansion of world markets for U.S. consumer goods, key goals from the early Cold War era, were better served with these USIA-organized projects. Soviet desire fit U.S. ideological objectives to disseminate knowledge of the most advanced practices of a free society, as the U.S.S.R. continued to request scientific and technological exhibitions. The U.S.S.R. appears to have made no offer to organize contemporary Soviet art exhibitions, whether academic Socialist Realism or nonconformist work. In fact, international media did the work for the Soviet government in exposing its growing dissident art scene, but with an outcome clearly unintended by the Central Committee. The notorious, legally permitted 1974 *Bulldozer Exhibition* (fig. 57), an outdoor exhibition of nonconformist art in Moscow, resulted in injury to artists and damage to their work as KGB officers disguised as park workers raided the show. The international uproar fueled by press coverage of this fiasco resulted in a series of

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<sup>319</sup> USIA exhibition topics ranged from plastics, transportation, technical books, graphic arts, communications, architecture, industrial design, education, technology for the American home, to photography, agriculture, and outdoor recreation. Nearly seventeen million people saw these exhibitions. Meanwhile, official Central Committee-organized exhibitions circulating in the United States, outside of the private projects, featured Soviet youth, children's books, arts and crafts, medicine, technical books, graphic arts, public health, education, scientific Siberia, and women and sports, YRPA.

<sup>320</sup> Richmond, *Practicing Public Diplomacy*, 98.

government-sponsored exhibitions of unofficial art commencing several weeks later.<sup>321</sup>

The strategic uses of visual arts exhibitions were just barely below the surface. For example, to protest the scheduling of a vocal recital by a Soviet defector at the Renwick Gallery in Washington D.C, Soviet officials closed a 1979 exhibition of art entitled *The Art of Russia 1800-1850*, on view in the gallery seven weeks early. According to a news account of the time, “the Soviet Government thought it was impermissible and discourteous to schedule a defector to appear at their exhibit.” Strikingly, the article continues: “A State Department official said today that the show was closed because of the concert and that the museum directors were naïve to pick a singer who was anathema to the Russians.”<sup>322</sup> Diplomatic courtesy trumped human rights, in the eyes of the U.S. government.

Official détente-era cultural exchange came to a halt with the decision of U.S. President James Carter to cancel all government-supported exchanges in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Further, Carter allowed the bilateral exchange agreement to expire without renegotiation and renewal, precluding the availability of federal indemnity and immunity (waiver of judicial seizure certification issued by the International Communication Agency) for fine arts

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<sup>321</sup> Carter Ratliff, *Komar & Melamid*, 19 ff.

<sup>322</sup> “Soviet Art Show to Shut in Dispute Over Defector,” *New York Times*, September 20, 1979, YRPFA.

exhibitions issuing from either country.<sup>323</sup> The widely touted exhibition *The Doorway to World Art*, consisting of more than four hundred objects ranging across time and originating from The Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, was scheduled for a 1980 U.S. tour opening at the National Gallery of Art. Sponsored by Control Data Corporation, an organization that had already incurred huge costs in the development of the project, the tour was canceled.<sup>324</sup> This exhibition had already caused a stir in New York in advance of its intended arrival, as veterans had successfully protested the installation of the exhibition in the Seventh Regiment Armory. Their objection centered on the future use of Soviet profits from the exhibition tour: “Not only did military organizations protest the inconvenience, but they also objected that funds raised through the sale of books and reproductions would be used toward purchase of a computer for The Hermitage.”<sup>325</sup> Indeed, President Carter’s sanctions included a ban on transfer to the Soviet Union of high technology items. Therefore, in the eyes of U.S. military veterans, the exhibition had the potential to support advanced technology in the U.S.S.R.

According to Gregory Guroff, while many private projects not impacted by the lapse of the agreement continued unimpeded, large-scale fine arts projects became impossible to organize. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery, commented

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<sup>323</sup> Gregory Guroff states that the unavailability of federal funding for indemnity was the key factor in cancelling official exchange. See Gregory Guroff, author interview.

<sup>324</sup> Marjorie Hunter, “U.S. Cuts Tour of Art from Soviet Union,” *New York Times*, January 17, 1980, YRPA.

<sup>325</sup> “Hermitage Show Will Not Go Into Armory,”- *New York Times*, December 28, 1979, YRPFA.

wrily on the geopolitics of cultural conflict at the site of art exhibitions: “We plan these shows several years in advance. And we feel that we are not congratulating, or even approving everything done by a modern state that happens to occupy the same geographical terrain of a state that has produced or collected art in the past.”<sup>326</sup>

Invoking the historical fluctuations in the ideologies of geopolitics and nation-state building, Carter, thus, deftly called attention to the bureaucratic politicization of cultural exchange at the end of the *détente* era.

One crucial effect of the *détente*-era exhibitions organized on both sides was the dissemination of information to Soviet audiences. Commenting on Soviet export exhibitions in the *détente* era, a period when access to works of the Russian avant-garde was still prohibited, for the most part, in the Soviet Union, Bowlt notes that:

From an immodest point of view, with the art catalogues prepared for Russian exhibitions traveling in the U.S., Russians found out a lot more about their cultural heritage in the 1970s and 80s. Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, all were included for export Soviet shows in the 1970s, works that were not available for public display at that time in the Soviet Union. The export catalogues appeared in bookstores, offering Soviet readers a glimpse at the richness and density of their traditions.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> “Exhibition Now in Doubt,” *The Washington Star*, January 10, 1980, YRPFA.

<sup>327</sup> Meanwhile, in this period, Soviet audiences were beginning to receive some exposure to the historical avant-garde. A major bilateral cultural project, the *Paris-Moscow 1900-1930* exhibition, was organized by the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. The exhibition was accompanied by an expensive, fully illustrated catalogue, which was censored (as well as the checklist) in Moscow, an action vehemently protested by French exhibition writers and organizers. Despite this incident of intellectual tampering, “Soviets are pouring excitedly through sweltering second-floor galleries of the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum near the Kremlin to see masterworks by their own countrymen that have been banished from view here for more than fifty years.” Among the artists on view in the exhibition, Klose lists Marc Chagall, Vladimir Kandinsky, Kasimir Malevich, and F.S. Tatlin. See Kevin Klose, “Moscow’s French

The intellectual seepage from the sites of U.S.-U.S.S.R. exhibition exchange thus put a further face on the complexities and contradictions for U.S.S.R. citizens of Soviet information control.

### ***The Bulldozer Exhibition, 1974***

The possibilities afforded by improved relations between the U.S.S.R. and the west in the era of détente in the early 1970s were tested by unofficial painters Oscar Rabin and Evgeny Rukhin in the organization of an outdoor exhibition of nonconformist art on September 15, 1974 in Belyayevo Park, Moscow. Replete with legal permits, this exhibition would play out on the international media stage. The well-known destruction by KGB officers dressed as workmen driving bulldozers of work on view has earned this exhibition the moniker *Bulldozer Exhibition* (fig. 57). The work in the *Bulldozer Exhibition* defied Socialist Realist practice. Paintings by Rabin, for example, evidenced a modicum of political code in the depiction of ordinary objects from everyday life painted in a heavy, dark impasto. His painting, *Passport* (1964, fig. 58), with text referencing Rabin's identity as a Jew and a former citizen of Latvia, offers an ironic commentary on the strict limitations on travel within and without the U.S.S.R. at the time.<sup>328</sup> According to Namin, this exhibition of

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Connection and the Subtle Art of Soviet Censorship," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1981, YRPFA.

<sup>328</sup> Rabin's nonconformist collective, called the Lianozovo Group, included painters Evgenii Kropivnitsky and Vladimir Nemukhin, while another nonconformist artists'

unofficial art in a vacant lot on the outskirts of Moscow forced the issue internationally, resulting in the government's accommodation of nonconformist artists.<sup>329</sup> In fact, outrage in the international press at the police violence forced the Soviet state to permit a similar exhibition in Izmailovsky Park two weeks later on September 29, 1974. In its wake were unofficial projects, including an exhibition in the Beekeeping Pavilion of the All-Union Exhibition of Economic Achievements (1975), as well as the formation of a Moscow studio exhibition committee consisting of artists previously arrested by the KGB for private apartment work and expelled from the Moscow Union of Artists. According to Namin, "out of the blue it was progressive, avant-garde, it was a revolution, the first time Moscow [saw] a different mentality."<sup>330</sup>

The episode of the *Bulldozer Exhibition* and the exhibitions in its aftermath provide further examples of the emergence of a Culture Three. Much attention was given in the western press and in Washington D.C. to the repressive treatment of artists, their exhibitions, and the dissidents of the era, forging propaganda tools in the U.S. Cold War arsenal. As discussed by Lewin, the lessons of the *Bulldozer Exhibition* and the incrementally increasing opportunities to exhibit unofficial art paralleled other reforms taking place within the regime and in society.<sup>331</sup> Writing in

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group, the Surrealist Club counted in its number the young Ilya Kabakov and Viktor Pivovarov.

<sup>329</sup>Stas Namin, author interview.

<sup>330</sup> Namin, author interview.

<sup>331</sup> Lewin states that: "The literary and artistic scene, even without new official thaws, continued a respectful and quite variegated activity, conquering new positions-

the 1980s, Lewin traces, in effect, a pattern of post-Thaw cultural and political attitudes different from the Party stance that was unnoticed or ignored in Western circles at the time. Lewin laments what he perceived to be western indifference to an emerging non-Party culture and fails to point out that it was in the best interest of the U.S. politically in the Cold War struggle to maintain a hard line on the grip of Soviet political ideology.

### *Sots Art*

Also on view in the *Bulldozer Exhibition* and destroyed was work of Sots Art founders Alex Melamid and Vitaly Komar. Komar & Melamid, working in collaboration until 2003-04, developed an art of irony, parody, and mockery of the State, fueled by the phenomenon of western Pop Art and practices of academic Socialist Realism. Influenced by the Thaw-era publication of Bakhtin's Rabelais and

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officially, semiofficially, and unofficially-changing the cultural realm profoundly and earning at least a de facto acceptance. And in the ideological sphere new orientations appeared and began to flourish in the different publics, including in official circles. Yet Western thinking about the U.S.S.R. all too rarely acknowledges that there is more to Soviet life than just Marxism-Leninism." Lewin cites the increasing urbanization and education of the Soviet citizenry from the 1950s, leading to marked differences in political, ideological and cultural views. He comments: "Many Western analysts, however, have ignored the vast changes in the Soviet social system (urbanization, industrialization, the growth of the professional and intellectual classes) and diagnosed only stagnation and decline. This misguided orientation has led them to over-simplify a very complicated picture and to misinterpret precipitous transformations that have taken place in the U.S.S.R. in the last century. The reforms attempted by Nikita S. Khrushchev, and later by Aleksei N. Kosygin, for example were dismissed in the West as merely another fit of ineffectual reformist hankerings that inevitably left the Soviet system ever the same." See Lewin, Gorbachev Phenomenon, viii, 2.

his World (1965), Komar & Melamid created a body of work in which a Warholian stratum of impending disaster underlies a Bakhtinian parodic mimicry, piratic thievery, and transgression of the style and subject matter of Socialist Realism.<sup>332</sup>

The artists suggest that, just as Pop Art rose from a culture of consumption in which young artists produced consumer propaganda (Andy Warhol's store window and advertisement design, or James Rosenquist's billboards, for example), they, too, first made their living in the domain of the consumption of ideology, preparing slogans and posters for the Soviet youth organization, Young Pioneers. In the view of these artists, the propaganda of consumer capitalism and Soviet Communism is quite similar, as both are targeted at mass consumption.<sup>333</sup> Academically trained at the state-sponsored Stroganov Institute of Design and later arrested by the KGB for performance in a private apartment, Komar & Melamid were expelled from the

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<sup>332</sup> First published in the U.S.S.R. in 1965, decades after Bakhtin wrote it as a doctoral dissertation, the work was published in the U.S. as Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1984).

<sup>333</sup> Melvyn B. Nathanson, memory of Komar & Melamid in Moscow, 1970s, as quoted in: Ratliff, Komar & Melamid, 14. Boris Groys, art historian, critic and theorist, who circulated in the Sots Art network, comments on the symbolic commodification of Moscow Conceptual Art in a recent catalogue. In discussing the absence of a capital market for works of art (though there were exceptions, author's note), Groys commodifies the ideological objects of Soviet culture. "There were rules of social recognition and political relevance as laid down in certain texts—whether official statements or unofficial pamphlets—that determined the value of every single work of art. Thus the theoretical, philosophical, ideological, or art historical commentary on an artwork—and not its price—ultimately decided its fate. Or rather the ideological texts circulated in the Soviet symbolic economy just as money circulated in the Western market economy. It could be said that Soviet culture had always been conceptual—indeed, in its entirety." See Boris Groys, "Communist Conceptual Art," Die Totale Aufklärung Moskauer Konzeptkunst 1960-1990=Total Enlightenment Conceptual Art in Moscow 1960-1990, edited by Boris Groys and Max Hollein (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle; Madrid: Fundación Juan March), 30.

Moscow Union of Artists.<sup>334</sup> Namin underlines that, “this was political art, against the regime.”

The bold, conceptual appropriations of Soviet propaganda banners, slogans, medallions and portraits of Lenin and Stalin evident in the early work of Komar & Melamid (for example, *Our Goal-Communism*, 1972, fig. 113) were succeeded by wholesale borrowings of Socialist Realist narrative and technique. In fact, no movement in the history of Soviet art, politics or culture is immune from their gaze. *Performance in Paradise* (1973), one of the earliest, if not the first performance piece in the U.S.S.R., parodies the Communist promise of a worker’s paradise. Practicing in New York since 1978, the diaspora work of Komar & Melamid is grounded in a pitch-perfect mastery of academic Socialist Realism, betraying both nostalgia and underlying violence in, for example, *I Saw Stalin Once When I Was a Child* (1981-82, fig. 60).<sup>335</sup> Here, the joy afforded by a glimpse of the mythologized leader is mitigated by the menace of the Black Maria vehicle transporting an unknown military officer through the crowds. Beneath the mask of laughter in the work of these Bakhtinian actors is a perception of the cruelty of the Stalinist regime. On the other side of comedy lies tragedy: in *Girl in Front of a Mirror* (1982-83), a young girl sits in an empty room just about to be entered by a shadowy figure,<sup>336</sup> while in *The First Drop of Blood* (1985-86, fig. 61) A Soviet soldier stands over a young girl, the picture

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<sup>334</sup> See *Paradise*, 1973, Ratliff, *Komar & Melamid*, 18-19, plates 4-11.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 37, plate 21.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 137, plate 127.

surface inflected by a disturbing splash of Abstract Expressionist red paint.<sup>337</sup> The early Sots Art mock-serious slogans are reconvened in the mid-1980s banner *Thank you Comrade Stalin for our Happy Childhood* (1983, fig. 59).

The Brezhnev era in which Komar & Melamid first practiced is characterized as a “time when nothing happened, ” in the words of Moscow art critic and *10 + 10* curator Viktor Misiano.<sup>338</sup> One was free to live one’s life, however, as Lewin has described above, only to the extent that one did so privately, and not in the public and political arenas. 1970s Soviet dissidence was, in fact, public, and playing on the international stage of détente politics, as prominent scientists and writers engaged politically in the cause of human rights. Unofficial artists, poets and writers, including Komar & Melamid, convened on Mayakovsky Square in Moscow, leaving explicit politics to the active, “professional” dissidents, yet publicly manifesting their artistic differences with the state.

### ***The Singular Case of Ilya Kabakov***

Sots Art is one strand in the development of Moscow Conceptualism in the 1970s and early 1980s, a movement associated with many of the younger artists of *10 + 10*. In a recent essay, Boris Groys, building on his early theory of the Stalinist project as a complete work of art, defines the Moscow Conceptual movement as

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 161, plate 152.

<sup>338</sup> Misiano, author interview.

“Total Enlightenment.” Here, the “free use of one’s reason” is engaged in an analysis and critique of the Soviet administration. Groys states, “The Moscow Conceptualists understood their praxis to be enlightening Soviet culture about its own ideological mechanisms.” Groys comments on the use of the language of the “simple Soviet citizen.”<sup>339</sup> Discussing the work of the Moscow Conceptualists, Groys politicizes the work of these artists, sometimes to an extreme, for many artists, indeed, claimed that political content was absent.

The work of Ilya Kabakov, the second key strand in the rise of Moscow Conceptualism is specifically referred to as “Moscow Romantic Conceptualism.”<sup>340</sup> Kabakov’s practice both exemplifies and contradicts Groys’s thesis.<sup>341</sup> A member of the Moscow Union of Artists, as a young artist Kabakov worked by day as an “official” children’s book illustrator, conducting his non-conformist practice in nocturnal privacy.<sup>342</sup> *Ten Characters* was first conceived as an album of image and

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<sup>339</sup> Groys, Total Enlightenment, 32.

<sup>340</sup> Boym, The Future of Nostalgia, 311.

<sup>341</sup> Kabakov’s work represents a meditative, metaphysical strand in Moscow Conceptual Art and is often called Moscow Romantic Conceptual. See Boris Groys, “Moscow Romantic Conceptualism,” Total Enlightenment, 316-231.

<sup>342</sup> Like Oskar Rabin, who describes his life as a Soviet artist as “living apart,” in their avant-garde practices the Moscow Conceptualists worked in a close-knit circle in private homes, outside the official networks. Groys makes an interesting observation on their positioning regarding official censorship: “Yet they did not protest this censorship publicly, nor did they try to loosen it, as many other Soviet artists tried to do. [Groys is not explicit on the names of these “many other Soviet artists.] This was not entirely due to their desire to avoid a direct confrontation with the Soviet authorities. They did not try to fight existing art institutions but rather to create their own, independent art institution. In a sense, nearly all the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century were structured in that way. They all created a micro-public that was programmatically separated from the larger public.” Groys, Total

text, featuring biographies of individuals living physically within the Soviet system but spiritually outside it during the 1970s. Not until the 1980s would these “blueprints” be rendered into installations, for example, with the surreal, yet entirely plausible *The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment* (fig. 61), that was installed with the other characters in the Roland Feldman Gallery, New York, in 1988, and in London at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) the following year.<sup>343</sup> During Kabakov’s evening presentations in the private confines of his apartment, he ritualistically placed the albums on view to a close circle of like-minded artists. Members of Collective Actions, notably Andrei Monastyrsky (“the monk”), formed part of the Kabakovian circle, which gained the name NOMA.

*The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment* mobilizes several themes of the Soviet experience in a brilliant evocation of presence/absence. Techniques of assemblage, construction and paint inform the reimagining of the Soviet communal apartment, where one kitchen and toilet served for all. The tiny space is filled with

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Enlightenment, 33. In the same catalogue, Ekaterina Bobrinskaya emphasizes this point: “Moscow Conceptualism was the most coherent and successful artistic project of unofficial Soviet culture. One of the main ingredients of its success had to do with a new system of relationship with Soviet society. Rather than struggle for a place in the Soviet cultural hierarchy, a struggle that inspired unofficial culture in the fifties and sixties, Conceptualists turned to the creation of a parallel “society” with its own structures, hierarchies, and institutions.” Moshe Lewin points out the importance of these micro-publics in shaping opinion and creating the conditions for change. See Lewin, Gorbachev Phenomenon, 63 ff.

<sup>343</sup> Ilya Kabakov: Ten Characters (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1989). The degree of Kabakov’s accommodation to an artistic double life, and the non-politicization of his alternative art, is exemplified in the fact that, or several years after the dissolution of the Soviet Empire in 1991, Kabakov continued to refer to himself as a Soviet artist. See Boym, Nostalgia, 313.

old messages, objects, trash—the detritus, in other words, of everyday life. The scarcity of consumer goods in the Brezhnevian era enhanced the value of commodities beyond the moment of their usefulness and social circulation, in a gesture of resignification as described by Appadurai.<sup>344</sup> Once consumed, goods were often transferred to the space of the apartment building hallway, or a designated room, as described by Kabakov in the ICA exhibition catalogue.<sup>345</sup> People and things never really go away. The context for the obsession with things lies in Culture One and Bolshevik entreaties to eliminate “domestic trash,” comprising the knickknacks and trappings of Western bourgeois culture. After Bolshevik “purification,” the NEP (“New Economic Policy”) program for modified capitalism, adopted by the Soviet government in the 1920s, signaled the reentry of bourgeois artifacts into Soviet life. In Kabakov’s installation, that which has not yet been transferred to the hallway has consumed all the space available in the absent man’s apartment. Svetlana Boym poignantly describes the juxtapositions of different orders of randomly acquired and retained objects, “repositories of memory,” in the Leningrad apartment of her aunt

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<sup>344</sup> The consumed object experiences the evacuation of previous use-and/or exchange-values, and returns as a resignified object or thing. Appadurai states: “Let us approach commodities as things in a certain situation, a situation that can characterize many different kinds of things, at different points in their social lives.” See Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 13.

<sup>345</sup> Describing the “general use room,” Kabakov states: “It was as a rule windowless and was used by the residents for unnecessary or heavy objects ... things that it would be a shame to throw away but for which there was no space in the living quarters.” See Ilya Kabakov, “What Is a Communal Apartment?” Ten Characters (New York: Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, 1988), 51.

Liuba, practices that continue to the present-day in Russia.<sup>346</sup> For Boym, the apartment, through the appropriation of bourgeois practices that the Bolsheviks intended to subvert, marks the failure of the Communist utopia.<sup>347</sup> In Kabakov's installations, nostalgia infuses the assemblage of objects on display, as the viewer engages the treasures of the occupant, the traces of his absent presence. The enduring trope of Soviet life, space and the cosmos, is performed by Kabakov's every-man who has injected himself into this powerful stream of energy to be whirled upwards beyond the apartment, leaving all three-dimensional objects behind for a space not unlike Malevich's zero dimension of Suprematism.<sup>348</sup>

In the catalogue for the ICA exhibition (1989), Kabakov wrote in a seminal essay, "Residents lived together in one room with no hope of getting out; often three or four generations were there for practically all their lives... Everyone lives in the communal apartment as if they were under a magnifying glass... But however strange that may be, it does not excuse the fact that some of the inhabitants of the communal apartment lead a mysterious, even secretive existence."<sup>349</sup> *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away*, another of Kabakov's *Ten Characters*, is a plumber who keeps

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<sup>346</sup> See Svetlana Boym, Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 157.

<sup>347</sup> Boym describes the communal apartment as "a memory of a never implemented communal design." Ibid., 123.

<sup>348</sup> Ilya Kabakov, "The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment," Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Ten Characters, New York: 1989, 13.

<sup>349</sup> Ilya Kabakov, "What is a Communal Apartment?" Ten Characters, 52. See also Amei Wallach, Ilya Kabakov, The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), 83.

everything in “a small room located in the very farthest corner of a large communal apartment.”<sup>350</sup> In his absence, he leaves two notes: one claims that “in Moscow everything looks like a ruin,” and the other describes the world as a “boundless dump with no ends or borders...the unity of oppositions, the merging of the two spaces—the place from which garbage must be taken, and the place to which it must be taken.” Kabakov’s work redeems the individual from the collective. As he comments, “Each of them invents his own special means for departure, or at least a way for ignoring his surroundings. This device becomes a maniacal obsession for each: the collecting of postcards, the return to one’s past, an examination of one’s garbage or a flight into one’s own painting, or finally, a fantastic and unbelievable means for escape into the cosmos.” Kabakov’s work is regarded as a metaphor of Soviet life in the Brezhnev era, expressing the dual nature of his official professional status and his private practice, as well as the changing character of the Soviet subject, at once an individual and a member of the state.

The Brezhnev era also witnessed the rise of underground, *samizdat* publications including *A-Ya*, a journal of art criticism founded in Paris in 1977 by artist and editor Igor Shelkovsky and funded for its first issue by businessman Jack Melkanian, a Swiss citizen working in Moscow.<sup>351</sup> The English translation by Jamey Gambrell of Paperny’s “Movement-Immobility,” from Culture One and Culture Two first appeared in *A-Ya* in 1982. *A-Ya*, published over the years 1979-1985 in seven

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<sup>350</sup> Kabakov, *Ten Characters*, 42-47.

<sup>351</sup> Igor Shelkovsky, author interview.

issues plus a literary number, promoted the work of Moscow Conceptualists and other avant-garde artists, based on information conveyed surreptitiously from the Soviet Union. In an important inversion of *samizdat*, copies of *A-Ya* were brought into the U.S.S.R. equally surreptitiously—by diplomatic pouch, and by sympathetic visitors, including journalists and museum curators. This contraband magazine circulated the unofficial practices of Moscow and Leningrad within the country itself, distributing Culture Three from center to periphery and back. For Odessa-born artist Larissa Zvedochetova, former wife of *10 + 10* artist Konstantin Zvedochetov, the impact was profound: “this new magazine completely changed my mind. I started my own work. I had to say something. I came to Moscow [where she met her husband]. I was in love with this society, our future, our thoughts, the big discourse on future. There was a lot of freedom, it was not forbidden to read this book, in this circle, for me this was some kind of fresh, new air.” In the wake of the original funder’s sudden disinterest (due, no doubt, to pressure from Moscow authorities), Chelkovsky raised funds from donors including American economist Norton Dodge, widely known American collector of nonconformist art. The *A-Ya* archives, in fact, repose in The Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers University, which also houses the Dodge collection, the world’s largest and most representative collection of Soviet nonconformist art.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> The question naturally arises as to the possibility of covert CIA funding for such an important publication produced in the West. The question intensifies as the same suspicions surround the activities of Norton Dodge, who traveled in and out of the Soviet Union with frequency and with impunity. Chelkovsky, as so many others, remains vague on that point. John McPhee raises the possibility of Dodge’s links to the CIA in a brief account based on interviews, entitled John McPhee, The Ransom of

***Exchange Restart: Glasnost and Perestroika (1985-1991)***

The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. had not engaged in cultural exchange since the early 1980 Carter sanctions and the ensuing “Carter Chill.” By 1983, under the new administration of President Ronald Reagan, the National Security Council resolved to restart official cultural exchange protocols. The Carter embargo clearly had not influenced Soviet determination to stay the course in Afghanistan, and had, instead, succeeded only in foreclosing opportunities to carry out U.S. Cold War objectives for change through cultural exchange. Matlock affirmed the determination of the U.S. government to build on earlier Cold War exchanges, as it was aware of “what the experience and results were of President Carter’s letting the exchange agreement lapse.”<sup>353</sup> *10 + 10* artist Vadim Zakharov observes that a Republican administration in Washington D.C. was “always better” for unofficial artists than Democratic regimes.<sup>354</sup> Ambassador Steven Rhinesmith comments on the impact that President Ronald Reagan’s resolve, as articulated in the so-called “evil empire” speech outlining his so-called 1983 “Star Wars” strategy,<sup>355</sup> had on Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in the construction of the programs of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.<sup>356</sup>

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Russian Art (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1994). Dodge asserted in an interview with the author that inferences like McPhee’s forced a halt to his Soviet travels. See Dodge, author interview.

<sup>353</sup> Matlock, author interview.

<sup>354</sup> Vadim Zakharov, author interview II.

<sup>355</sup> Ronald Reagan, “Address to the Nation on National Security,”- March 23, 1983.

<sup>356</sup> Ambassador Steven Rhinesmith, founding director, U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative, author interview.

Gorbachev fully believed that Soviet science and technology were no match the U.S. according to Rhinesmith, who further noted Reagan's uncharacteristic participation in cultural exchange with the Soviet Union, attending White House functions rather than sending representatives.<sup>357</sup>

The signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1985 immediately generated a proliferation of projects.<sup>358</sup> The Office of the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative was created within the USIA in January 1986, filling a vacuum created during the Carter presidency and providing a vehicle for the immediate facilitation of exchange projects. Rhinesmith, founding coordinator of the office, has commented, "America wanted to provide a different way to work with and be responsive to Gorbachev. The State Department felt he was a different kind of leader...and compared this opportunity to the Ping-Pong Diplomacy of the Nixon era."<sup>359</sup> The office immediately filled with Soviet experts, including U.S.-based Gregory Guroff, whose Muscovite family were members of the intelligentsia.

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<sup>357</sup> The Carter Chill was felt also in Great Britain, where exhibition exchange came to a halt. Apollo Magazine editor Anna Somers Cocks called for an increase in exhibition exchanges with the Soviet Union. "The Soviet authorities see such events as proof and expression of goodwill, and indeed, whenever the political climate warms up, they immediately try to increase the number and importance of them." Anna Somers Cocks, "Editorial: Art Exhibition as Instruments of Cultural Diplomacy,"- Apollo Magazine, 126, 307, 148.

<sup>358</sup> The 1985 accord between Presidents Gorbachev and Reagan to resume cultural exchange resulted in a six-year agreement forged between Secretary of State George Schulz and Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze, in 1986 termed the General Exchanges Agreement.

<sup>359</sup> Rhinesmith, author interview.

The philosophy of the exchange agreements of the late Cold War period built on the nascent concept of cooperation embedded in the 1959 Lacy-Zarubin Agreement. As Matlock observed, “we supported all organizations and almost all exchanges. These exchanges were developed by private organizations; there were scores and hundreds of organizations; sometimes U.S. government agencies supplied some help in the form of subsidies. We supported anyone who had a good idea; our job was to help people make contacts.”<sup>360</sup> Joined to now-classic U.S. objectives to “break down the Iron Curtain and the isolation of the Soviet Union” was the added perception of Gorbachev’s “desire to open up the Soviet Union to the outside world,” according to Matlock. Though the Soviet government, haunted by earlier objectives, continued to clamor for scientific and technological exhibitions, according to Rhinesmith, the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative was insistent that it was tasked only with cultural diplomatic exchange. More, President Gorbachev understood the value of cultural exchange unlike any Soviet premier before him. Well-traveled in the West, and educated in a period that had tolerated non-official intellectualism and creativity, Gorbachev approved the opening up of the Soviet avant-garde on the world stage, according to Ray Benson, then Political Officer, U.S. Embassy, Moscow.<sup>361</sup>

There were several exhibition exchange initiatives during the late Cold War period.<sup>362</sup> The National Gallery of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and

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<sup>360</sup> Matlock, author interview.

<sup>361</sup> Benson, author interview.

<sup>362</sup> Grace Glueck, “U.S.-Soviet Arts Exchange Planned,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1985, YRPA.

the Metropolitan Museum of Art negotiated an exhibition of forty Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings from the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, similar to an exhibition that had been on view at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Lugano, Switzerland during the period of cultural exchange abeyance in the United States. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, had seen the exhibition and commenced preliminary negotiations for a venue at the Gallery, but the Soviet shooting down of Korean Air Flight 007 brought a halt to any such discussions in that period.<sup>363</sup> Meanwhile, the National Gallery of Art organized an exhibition of Impressionist paintings for The Hermitage Museum in Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Art in Moscow.<sup>364</sup> The Phyllis Kind Gallery and the Chicago Art Fair mounted exhibitions of contemporary Soviet artists, official and unofficial.<sup>365</sup> Soviet poet Andrei Voznesensky worked with American artist Jasper Johns and other contemporary practitioners to organize a major exhibition for travel in the Soviet Union. The exhibition *New Horizons: American Painting 1840-1910*, organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services and financed by the Armand Hammer Foundation and Pepsico Foundation, opened in Moscow (1987) where Raisa Gorbachev presided over the ribbon-cutting ceremony.<sup>366</sup> Exhibition exchanges organized by the Metropolitan and the Art Institute of Chicago, including

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<sup>363</sup>Paul Richard, "The Russian Revelation," *The Washington Post*, May 1, 1986, YRPA.

<sup>364</sup>Celestine Bohlen, "Making An Impression in Moscow: Fanfare for the National Gallery's Exhibit of French Masterpieces," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1986, YRPA.

<sup>365</sup>Douglas C. McGill, "Art Ventures Increase Between U.S. and Soviet," *New York Times*, May 18, 1987, YRPA.

<sup>366</sup>Francis X. Clines, "Soviet Gets Glimpses of U.S. on Canvas," *New York Times*, November 11, 1987, YRPA.

an exhibition of three generations of the American artistic dynasty, the Wyeth family, and a joint exhibition of the native people of the North Atlantic, Siberia and Alaska, point up the exponential increase in projects in the *glasnost* era. Other exhibitions planned or circulating during this period included *Adaptation & Negation of Socialist Realism: Contemporary Soviet Art* (1990), a project of the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, in Connecticut, and *Erik Bulatov* (1989) an exhibition circulating internationally from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.<sup>367</sup> Richmond puts the U.S. effort in the international context: “the British, French, Germans, Italians and others also had exchanges with the Soviet Union.”<sup>368</sup>

Despite their similarities, however, the intent of the late Cold War agreements was radically different, as the ideology of a Cold War victor began to dissipate. As Matlock states, “we and Gorbachev were trying to remove the image of the enemy. Reagan and Gorbachev held the joint objective to end the Cold War cooperatively. There was no defeat of communism. There was the release of open values, similar to George Soros’s ‘open society.’”<sup>369</sup> For the Reagan team, securing the rule of law,

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<sup>367</sup> The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, *Adaptation and Negation of Socialist Realism: Contemporary Soviet Art* (Ridgefield, CT, 1990); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, *Erik Bulatov* (London: Parkett Publishers and ICA, 1989). This exhibition toured MIT List Visual Arts Center, Boston; The Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California; and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago. A similar project circulating in the United Kingdom, organized by The Showroom and Camden Arts Centre, was entitled *Transformation: The Legacy of Authority, Recent Art from the Soviet Union* (London, 1990). This exhibition toured Cleveland Art Gallery, Middlesbrough; Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth; Cooper Gallery, Barnsley; and The Minories Art Gallery, Colchester.

<sup>368</sup> Richmond, author interview.

<sup>369</sup> Matlock, author interview.

which included human rights justice, superseded any other U.S. political objectives in this era.<sup>370</sup> Not only fine arts exhibitions, but also student exchanges, including, for the first time, high school home-visits were endorsed.<sup>371</sup> While Reagan publicly targeted “the evil empire,” behind-the-scenes officials negotiated for the accommodation of individual state differences within a universalizing framework of western democratic ideology.

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<sup>370</sup> Matlock, author interview.

<sup>371</sup> Rebecca Matlock, author interview.

## Chapter Four

### Worlds on View

#### *10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters*

##### *The Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. and InterCultura, Inc.*

“Ladies and gentlemen, history has just been made in this room,” declared Soviet official Irina Mikheyeva at the February 26, 1988 signing in Moscow of the protocol agreement for a ten-exhibition exchange program between officials of the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. and InterCultura, Inc.<sup>372</sup> This private, Texas- and London-based nonprofit, nongovernmental U.S. exhibition organization, with a mission to promote mutual understanding through the production and international circulation of fine art exhibitions, came to the negotiating table with the support of U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack F. Matlock, Jr., and his wife, Rebecca.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup>The Fort Worth Art Association and InterCultura, *10 + 10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Leningrad: Aurora Publishers; Fort Worth: Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 1989), 2.

<sup>373</sup> The Matlocks served in Moscow from 1987-1991, during the critical period of Gorbachevian reforms. In their official capacity, they promoted cultural programs, including art exhibitions and people-to-people exchanges, through initiatives restarted at the Reagan-Gorbachev Geneva Summit in 1985, after a period of abeyance beginning in 1980 during the Carter Administration. The Matlocks re-imagined the public rooms of Spaso House, the residence of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, as spaces for the display of American art, including exhibitions arranged through the Art in Embassies Program, a U.S. State Department program established in 1963 which continues to operate to the present day. On view to the Soviet public were exhibitions, for example, of photography, modern art, and contemporary American painting.

the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative of the Art in America Program, an office of the United States Information Agency (USIA), a federal agency;<sup>374</sup> the private Rockefeller Brothers-funded Trust for Mutual Understanding; and numerous U.S. art museums, including the National Gallery of Art, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the Amon Carter Museum of Western Art. During the rounds of negotiations, Genrikh Popov, Chief of Fine Arts, the Ministry of Culture, playfully warned his U.S. colleagues to beware of any listening devices covertly installed under the tabletop. This anecdote, drawn from the annals of the negotiations for the Ministry of Culture U.S.S.R./InterCultura agreement, foregrounds the sometimes ironic nature of postmodernist, late Cold War engagement and the bureaucracy of superpower exchange from the onset of the Cold War in 1945.

Shortly after the Geneva Agreement (1985), InterCultura approached U.S. government agencies for support in making contacts with Soviet museums in preparation for an exhibition of Byzantine art then under construction.<sup>375</sup> InterCultura's stated mission was to increase awareness and understanding of other cultures through the vehicle of internationally circulating exhibitions. Inaugural

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<sup>374</sup> The USIA, an agency of the U.S. Department of State, was formed in 1953, incorporating the preexisting International Information Administration and Cultural Affairs (which had been created in 1946, to combine the functions of the wartime Office of War Information and the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs). In 1978 the functions of USIA were consolidated with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, and it was renamed the International Communication Agency. The original name of the department was restored in 1982, and the agency was disbanded in 1999 during the Clinton administration.

<sup>375</sup> Roderick Grierson ed., *Gates of Mystery: The Art of Holy Russia* (Fort Worth: InterCultura, and Leningrad: The State Russian Museum), 1992.

projects had included a groundbreaking project on the recently decoded glyphs found on the carvings of the Mesoamerican Maya civilization.<sup>376</sup> A series of meetings conducted at the Ministry of Culture in Moscow culminated in the formation of a long-term ten-exhibition exchange agreement between the private company InterCultura and the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. The ease and smoothness of the InterCultura-U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture negotiations, and the resulting barrier-free agreement, was attributed by Gordon Dee Smith, InterCultura's president, to the fact that, as the Soviets commented to him, "Your agenda fits our agenda to increase understanding between the two countries."<sup>377</sup> Guroff recounts that, while the Soviet government ordinarily hesitated to deal with nongovernmental organizations, InterCultura's mission and perceived commitment, as well as its status as a representative of several U.S. museums interested in Russian projects, was attractive to the Central Committee, who saw the protocol as the "kind of opportunity it was seeking to present a different face to the world." The U.S.S.R. wished to demonstrate that it "had moved on."<sup>378</sup> Most importantly, Gorbachev had signaled approval at the highest level to open cultural flows: it was clear from the onset that the InterCultura-U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture, as well as many other projects, had top-down approval from the Soviet government.<sup>379</sup> Norton Dodge has affirmed the role of Gorbachev in approving open exchanges in this period of *glasnost*.<sup>380</sup> Dr. Armand Hammer also

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<sup>376</sup> Linda Schele and Mary Miller, The Blood of Kings: Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1986).

<sup>377</sup> Gordon Dee Smith, author interview.

<sup>378</sup> Guroff, author interview.

<sup>379</sup> Smith, author interview.

<sup>380</sup> Norton T. Dodge, author interview.

pointed up the hands-on role of Gorbachev in a telephone interview to a reporter regarding the organization of an exhibition of French art from Russian museums.<sup>381</sup> Pavel Khoroshilov, head of the Soviet export agency Artcombine of the Ministry of Culture during the Gorbachevian era, comments that, “everything was allowed. There was the organization of a Russian-Israel exhibition when there were no diplomatic ties between Russia and Israel. The government allowed [our office] to export exhibitions featuring unofficial artists.”<sup>382</sup> Khoroshilov here evokes an image of a Soviet transnationalism in the sphere of cultural relations, pushing well beyond any state-imposed protocols or boundaries to expand the limits and the power of the neutral exhibition space as a definer of a new state identity.

The InterCultura-U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture protocol offered an opportunity to shape exhibitions of Russian art of both scholarly and popular interest for circulation to U.S. institutions. Proposals ranged from Russian icons to the little-known Russian nineteenth-century school of realism, *The Wanderers*, and the *Jack of Diamonds*, a group of early twentieth-century Russian avant-garde artists exhibiting together between the years 1909-11. For their part, the Soviets would consider receiving in exchange exhibitions of American photography, American design (an updating of the 1959 *The American Exhibition*) and an exhibition of the work of

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<sup>381</sup> Barbara Gamarekian, “French Art from Soviet Museums,” - *New York Times*, April 27, 1986: “The Russians, Dr. Hammer explained in a telephone conversation from his California office, had initially said the paintings could travel to only two cities. But after receiving long-distance calls from a number of New York cultural leaders, Dr. Hammer sent a message to Mikhail S. Gorbachev asking ‘if we couldn’t have it for the Met, and word came back, O.K., you can have it for three cities.” YRPA.

<sup>382</sup> Pavel Khoroshilov, author interview.

Georgia O’Keeffe.<sup>383</sup> On the U.S. side, the requests represented an interest in Russian and Soviet culture, which went beyond Fabergé eggs, or European works in Soviet museums. Proposed projects would present work previously unseen by American audiences. The InterCultura experience provides evidence of the increasing Soviet interest in fine art exhibitions under the leadership of Vasily G. Zakharov, former first deputy chief of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee and last Minister of Culture of the U.S.S.R. Nonetheless, the Soviet Union continued in many ways to privilege scientific and technological exchanges over cultural for home audiences, despite some inroads.

During the InterCultura negotiations, in fact, Genrikh Popov, Chief of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R., suggested, as an inaugural project, the organization of an exhibition of young Soviet artists for U.S. audiences. The choice was unprecedented, and represented the Central Committee’s effort to convey a new openness: only one of the artists in the resulting exhibition was a member of the official Union of Artists and two belonged to the Moscow Municipal Committee of Graphic Artists. With this move, the Ministry of Culture deployed the same technique used by the Americans in 1959, the public articulation of the contemporary

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<sup>383</sup> Elizabeth Valkenier, ed., The Wanderers: Masters of 19th-Century Painting, an Exhibition from the Soviet Union, organized by InterCultura, Fort Worth and the Dallas Museum of Art, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1990); Charles Eldredge, Georgia O’Keeffe: American and Modern (InterCultura, Fort Worth; Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation, Abiquiu NM; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 1993). The O’Keeffe exhibition traveled to London, Tokyo, and Mexico City. By the date of its inception, the Ministry of Culture had dissolved, and interested Russian museums lacked the funds necessary to mount the exhibition.

(and sometimes oppositional) avant-garde. E.A. Carmean, then director of the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth and member of the InterCultura delegation, expanded the program by proposing a joint exhibition of artists under the age of forty, from both countries. The resulting project, *10 + 10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (fig. 63), and the protocol underpinning it, were organized with the transparent support of federal and private organizations. For example, The Rockefeller Brothers Fund-supported Trust for Mutual Understanding, which in turn funded the InterCultura project in the 1980s, was fully disclosed at the time.<sup>384</sup>

The *10 + 10* project was distinctive in several ways. The first major exhibition of advanced American art practices seen in the U.S.S.R. since the 1959 *American National Exhibition*, it was doubly noteworthy: the work of Soviet unofficial artists had never been shown in major museum exhibitions in either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. It is possible to suggest that, with *10+10*, the U.S.S.R. first claimed nonconformist or unofficial work on behalf of the Soviet patrimony before U.S. audiences. Guroff registered a degree of surprise that the Soviets suggested and then actually permitted the exhibition. In his view, they saw the exhibition forum as an opportunity to “demonstrate that they were changing.”<sup>385</sup> The top-down approval for export exhibitions by young artists working outside the official establishment, and thus considered oppositional by definition at the time—the designated carnival clowns of the regime—operated as a marker of the new openness in the U.S.S.R.

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<sup>384</sup> Curiously, the Rockefeller name today is no longer listed on the website for the Trust, which cites only “an anonymous patron.”

<sup>385</sup> Guroff, author interview.

Both American and, one supposes, Soviet audiences viewed the work as emblematic of what they deemed “dissident” practices, thus ratifying the wisdom of this move.

Further distinguishing the project was the fact that the exhibition remained the only Cold War fine arts project jointly organized by the two sides for circulation in both countries.<sup>386</sup> In an unprecedented move, the Ministry of Culture relinquished curatorial control to U.S. curators, working in consultation with Soviet advisors. The burden was on the U.S. curatorial team, which appeared to have carte-blanche access to artists’ studios—official and unofficial—in the U.S.S.R.<sup>387</sup> On the U.S. side, curators traveled to studios, galleries, and museums across America. As John Bowlt comments:

[In the early Cold War period] the Ministry of Culture was assertive and vociferous, promoting ‘our favorites, our own direction. [By the Gorbachev era] it was a looser, more flexible time, with the right to choose as we wish [in] the twilight of the Soviet Union. Ideology didn’t matter to the Soviets. Prestige and financial issues were important. Whatever we chose was blessed.<sup>388</sup>

Ironically, and unsurprisingly, while an exhibition of contemporary Soviet and American work represented a bold step at the restart of bilateral Cold War exchange,

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<sup>386</sup> The other joint project of note during the late Cold War was the exhibition *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (1988-89), organized by the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution and the Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., under the auspices of the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Commissions on the Humanities and Social Sciences of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

<sup>387</sup> The Curatorial team comprised: Marla Price, then Curator, now Director, of the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth; and Graham Beal, then Director of the Joslyn Art Museum, now Director, Detroit Museum of Fine Arts, working in close consultation with John E. Bowlt, then Professor of Slavic Studies, University of Texas, now Professor of Slavic Studies and Literature, University of Southern California; and Soviet advisors, including Viktor Misiano.

<sup>388</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

several of the Soviet artists selected for *10+10* had already shown in European galleries and museums in the late 1970s and early 1980s, underscoring the cultural alienation of the two Cold War nations.

An aura of cooperation and good will enveloped the project, whose objective was “to take this opportunity of new openness between our countries to do a show combining a selection of the best young painters from both countries.”<sup>389</sup> The move from the individual painter to his/her inclusion in a new, international order, underwritten by the *pax Geneva*, echos the ideological values of *The National Exhibition*. First, specific works selected were meant to disclose shared predicates of advanced art practices in the two countries; second, the exhibition publicly universalized values of openness and freedom of expression. Curatorial methodologies, outlined in the Curators Statement, included location and identification of shared formal predicates, as well as any differences arising in either style or subject matter. The statement reflected a noteworthy lack of interest attending to any cultural, spiritual, or ideological issue that might exude from the work on view. The catalogue, marked by the absence of hortatory polemic, attempted to convey a universalizing language of visuality; the recognition, acceptance and forgiveness of different perceptions and histories; and the affirmation of a triumphal, global neomodernism in the convening of the collective. At the site of *10 + 10*, both

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<sup>389</sup> “Curator’s Statement,” *10 + 10*, 7-8.

the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. promoted new ideologies of “openness,”<sup>390</sup> implying a willingness to undertake the critical reformation and renegotiation of their histories, and claim their places in the *pax Geneva* global reordering.

The title *10 + 10* derives from the 1921 exhibition  $5 \times 5 = 25$ , a project contemporaneously hailed as the last easel painting exhibition of the Soviet state before the shift to applied design.<sup>391</sup> The title, thus, suggestively—and, in some ways, misleadingly—locates the young Soviet participants as heirs to the historical avant-garde.<sup>392</sup> Importantly, the fusion of art and politics notable in Revolutionary Russia by no means characterized all, or many, of the practices on view in *10 + 10*. The title, too, ironically affirms the continuity of easel painting in the Soviet Union, a mode of practice that was considered to be without pragmatic usefulness in the Productivist era of the first exhibition. In the 1980s, with new and only limited access to video technology in the Soviet Union, painting was an accessible, portable medium practiced to some degree in both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The title, in addition, invokes the aura of *glasnost*-era access to examples of art practices of the Soviet historical avant-garde formerly prohibited to the viewing public in the Soviet

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<sup>390</sup> Gordon Dee Smith; E.A. Carmean, Jr.; Marla Price, “Foreword and Acknowledgments,”- *10 + 10*, 1.

<sup>391</sup> See Bowlt, “10 + 10,”- *10 + 10*, 9.

<sup>392</sup> Pavel Khoroshilov fine arts officer of the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. during the late Cold War, supervising Artcombine, the government bureau overseeing the sale of Soviet art overseas (and today, an officer of the Ministry of Culture of The Russian Federation), commented on the usefulness of this historical link in attracting audiences to the exhibition *10 + 10*, both in the Soviet Union and in the United States. He stated: “the history of Russian vanguard helps these artists in a way...that’s why something was taken for another thing, not exactly what they were, artistically.” See Khoroshilov, author interview.

Union. John Bowlt comments on the restricted availability of these works to international audiences prior to *glasnost*, “everyone [non-Soviet art exhibition organizers] went in to ask for pictures that weren’t on view.”<sup>393</sup> Beginning in the late 1970s, and culminating in the *perestroika* period, Soviet audiences were permitted to view work of such early avant-gardists as Malevich, Chagall, and Kandinsky for the first time since the Khrushchev Thaw (1956-1964).<sup>394</sup> In fact, *10 + 10* artist Vladimir Mironenko, reflecting on the “different reality” of Soviet civilization, drew a sharp distinction between his generation and the historical avant-garde, which had arisen from a different set of late nineteenth-century propositions: “This is not a continuation of the Russian avant-garde traditions of the turn of the century. It is already something new, purely Soviet in origin and intent.”<sup>395</sup> *10+10 artist* Roiter offers one explanation for Mironenko’s remark: “But for us Malevich appears to be a foreign artist, and this is partly because for fifty years his name had the mark “Forbidden” on it.”<sup>396</sup>

***The Art of the Quiet: Unofficial Soviet Art of the Last Wave***

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<sup>393</sup> Bowlt comments that, prior to *glasnost*, “everyone [western art exhibition organizers] went in to ask for pictures that weren’t on view, requests that received permission for exhibitions outside the U.S.S.R.” Bowlt, author interview.

<sup>394</sup> In 1988, two exhibitions on view at the Russian Museum, Leningrad, featured a retrospective of Kasimir Malevich as well as a survey entitled *Soviet Art 1920s-30s*, while a retrospective of Pavel Filonov was mounted at New Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. See Cynthia Grenier, “Once-Banned Modernists Are the Hit of Russia,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 8, 1988.

<sup>395</sup> See Vladimir Mironenko, Artist’s Statement, *10 + 10*, 48.

<sup>396</sup> Andre Roiter, interview with Philip Pocock, journal of contemporary art-online.com <http://www.jca-online.com/andreiroiter.htm> accessed 11/21/07.

It hardly bears stating that the heady atmosphere attending Gorbachevian *glasnost* opened doors for the possibility of mutual encounter with contemporary Soviet and American experience in a time of great hopes and fears for the possibility of Cold War disarmament. I have briefly touched on shifts in the Soviet world implied by the title *10+10*, and here wish to develop further the contextual background for the reciprocal representation of superpower artists. In chapter three I demonstrated the growth of unofficial art practices beginning in the Thaw era, continuing in the 1970s, and culminating in the late 1970s and early 1980s on the eve of *perestroika*. The intellectual, social, cultural and political conditions of a period marked by exhausted ideology and rising reforms—and a period that I view as a Papernyan Culture Three—culminate visibly in 1986, the year President Mikhail Gorbachev announced the plan of *perestroika* to the XXVIIth Party Congress. By this date, there was a “conformity of nonconformism,”<sup>397</sup> indicating a widening acceptance of the unofficial world. The late 1970s and early 1980s had seen the rise of the last wave of Soviet artists (several of whom were selected for *10 + 10*). The largest of the artists’ collectives, Moscow Artists of New Art, or MANI, consisted of a group of thirty to forty practitioners, including members of the previous generation of Moscow Conceptualists, most notably Ilya Kabakov.<sup>398</sup> Moscow Conceptualism,

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<sup>397</sup> Smith, author interview.

<sup>398</sup> *10+10* artist Vadim Zakharov has assembled a collection of many of the archives of this movement. His piece *The History of Russian Art—From the Avant-Garde to the Moscow School of Conceptualists* (2003) playfully traces a genealogy of movement and vision that includes the Russian Avant-Garde (Utopia) Socialist Realism (Ideology), Non-Conformism (Art), Soz-Art [sic] (Self-criticism), leading up to the Moscow Conceptual School (Archive), of which he was a member. See Guggenheim Museum, Russia, 4-4-415 (figs. 257, 258).

in its polystylistic iterations, provided a rich background for these emerging artists, both the candle-lit, private evening rituals of Ilya Kabakov and the mock-seriousness of Sots Art. These two strands set the stage for a new cast of conceptual players in an era whose slogans *glasnost* and *perestroika* replaced those Marxist-Leninist mottos of an earlier date.<sup>399</sup> Many sub-groups formed in this period: for example, Nest, *Mukhomar* (the “Toadstools”) and Kindergarten, the latter two including *10 + 10* artists in their ranks. *10+10* artist Yourii Albert, reflecting on the incremental ease in state ideological control and its evidence in late Soviet postmodernism, describes the era as one of “paradigm change,” including here the work of Kabakov, “who took a more ironical stance in his metaphysical art.”<sup>400</sup> Litichevsky also traces the shift in Moscow Conceptualism from its foundation, describing an “ideology of [the] avant-garde:

“If the state is totalitarian then the underground must be totally different from official art, it must be straight conceptual, nothing more. But in the 1980s the situation had started to become more like multi-thinking. Everyone still believed that conceptualism [was the appropriate form of] the underground opposition; it was a free art; but in reality, from my point of view, the situation started to change. The state was less totalitarian and the situation was more complicated. Not only conceptualism was relevant. How much, and in which way, art would go no one knew, but it went in different ways and different directions.”<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> These two terms, radically different at their core, were deployed by Secretary General and President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev beginning with his election 1985. The first implicitly references its archaic, Old Russian meaning, “voice,”- and conveys ideas of “openness” and “publicity” promoting free speech and social reform. *Perestroika*’s English equivalent is “restructuring,” translating, in practical terms, into economic and political reforms.

<sup>400</sup> Albert, author interview.

<sup>401</sup> Litichevsky, author interview

Litichevsky's own biography serves as an example of the pluralistic world of Soviet art that he describes, going beyond the dominant MANI.<sup>402</sup> Both Albert and Litichevsky thus trace a direct relationship between politics and the modes of art making. This suggests that changes in the practices of what Litichevsky calls "the second avant garde" —the opening up from conceptualism to polystylistics—may be taken as profound markers of sociopolitical shifts.

Continuing in the Kabakovian tradition of private exhibitions of unofficial art, Albert and others showed work in their apartments:<sup>403</sup> Nikita Alexeev produced the famed *AptArt Exhibition* (1983, fig. 64) a project ending in a notorious KGB raid.<sup>404</sup> Alexeev contends that the illegal export of unofficial art through diplomatic pouch, including that of the U.S. Embassy, brought unwanted attention to the alternative movement, resulting in increased KGB surveillance: "The KGB thought, if the Americans are interested in this, it must be important."<sup>405</sup> The contours of AptArt

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<sup>402</sup> Litichevsky, a self-trained artist and a student of Greco-Roman archeology at Moscow State University, is a well-known theorist, writer and mock-serious cartoonist. Embedded in his work is the philosophical practice of both Olga Freudenberg, a cousin of Boris Pasternak and her mentor Nikolai Mark, a famous Russian linguist of the 1920s and 30s. Repressed by Stalin, Mark sought to achieve an ideologically conformist fusion of Marxism and linguistic theory. Freudenberg, working in the 1930s through the 1950s, built on the work of Mark to create a private mythology based on archaic modes of thinking. Her myth-making informs the constructing myths of Litichevsky's comic narratives. For Litichevsky, the Soviet poet Nikolai Kabolovsky also opened up an interest in "deep unconscious and archaic levels of language [which produces] in my work, games with languages and images." Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>403</sup> Albert, author interview. (Albert mentions specifically an exhibition in 1979).

<sup>404</sup> Ratliff, *Komar & Melamid*, 19-21.

<sup>405</sup> There were two kinds of diplomatic pouches, one for unclassified ordinary mail, and one for classified, which was accompanied by courier, according to Yale

exhibitions began to expand at this time to include outdoor exhibitions such as *AptArt in Plein Air* (1985).<sup>406</sup> Permission for the first legal exhibition of unofficial art in the *glasnost* era was granted in 1987 to art critic Josef Bakstein for a display of the work of the *Club AvantGardisty*, a loose affiliation of forty artists including Kabakov. Bakstein had registered this club with the local city government as a hobby club or an amateur organization “along the lines of collectors of postage stamps, growers of exotic cacti, and so forth.” In its application, the group declared that “we have a hobby” and exhibited in the same room with Sunday painters and other art amateurs. Bakstein recounts that, “lots of people came, as life was boring.”<sup>407</sup>

Another unofficial group, *The Hermitage*, also gained legal permission to exhibit in 1987, taking its name from its venue, *Park Hermitage*. According to Litichevsky, the location was “important for the Russian second avant-garde, because the exhibition was near [the location of] the forbidden exhibition of the 1974 Bulldozer Exhibition.”<sup>408</sup> Litichevsky relates:

This is the idea of Leonid Bazhanov [now Artistic Director, National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow] who was the creator of the *Hermitage* group. Not the ideology, but also the energy and drive were important. He

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Richmond. He contests Alexeeva’s account, contending that would be difficult for works of art to travel by the higher-level pouch. Richmond, author interview.

<sup>406</sup> Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge, *NonConformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956-1986* (The Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey & Thames and Hudson: 1995), 329, fig. 15:15.

<sup>407</sup> Bakstein, author interview. The privileged status of visual art practitioners in Moscow culture in the Soviet era cannot be minimized: in 1987, according to Bakstein, there were 10,000 official artists registered in the city. Today, there are only approximately 100-150 artists working in Moscow.)

<sup>408</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

invited other artists of different generations, even some artists from, not official, exactly, but a lot of, let's say, people who could not be defined strictly by this trend. Bazhanov was more liberal and attracted to this situation. He organized the first exhibition of photography in the 1980s. Bazhanov promoted the idea of dialogue between different arts.<sup>409</sup>

Bazhanov's brother-in-law, an unofficial poet and dissident, had been put to death in the seventies. Bazhanov, thus, understood first-hand the possibilities of risk, present, to some extent, even in Gorbachevian Moscow.<sup>410</sup> According to Litichevsky, the *Hermitage* shows went further than the *Club Avantgardisty* in exhibiting a wide variety of Moscow outsider styles, media and subject matter.<sup>411</sup>

Andrei Filippov recounted in detail the small circle of artists, musicians, poets, writers and thinkers comprising the unofficial world of Moscow:

The situation was like Renaissance studies, it was a small village of people thinking of ideas to show each other, to discuss together. It was, maybe, one hundred people, not more, artists, as well as poets and literature, people ...energetic in ideas, emotions, art practices. Soviet reality [at the time] was gray, [yet] this was like atom of my soul [as it was] for everyone. This was destroyed after perestroika. [we had] no attitude regarding Soviet reality. We talked about social problems from idealistic world, the art world, the linguistic world.<sup>412</sup>

The deeply congenial collectivity that characterizes Filippov's world continues to shape the social relations of artists who came of age in the late Cold War. A thorough knowledge, penetrating understanding, and profound esteem for the work of all members of Moscow's intellectual and creative circles characterize these

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<sup>409</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>410</sup> Leonid Bazhanov, author interview.

<sup>411</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>412</sup> Filippov, author interview.

relations. *10 + 10* artist Andrei Roiter, for example, now working in New York and Amsterdam, misses the “bond, the cultural community.” This collectivity must stem, in part from the ethics of the communist state where an absence of competition directly resulted from the absence of a gallery system in Soviet Russia. For Roiter, “even today, Russian professional artists today are comfortable in competition.”<sup>413</sup>

Lewin, too, contemporaneously described small groups of people meeting together for discussion, either in agreement with, or against, the regime in this era:

Through persistent and confidential formal, semiformal and informal contacts, the formal and informal structures exchange information and opinions. ... Oral opinions, position papers, and various (many more, in fact, than those that reached the West during a time when only extreme criticisms and disclosures were preferred) participate in forming public opinion, in tandem or against the official media, on social as well as political problems of all kinds. That artistic productions—theatrical, cinematic, and, especially, literary—are both powerful shapers of public opinion as well as its spokesmen is by now well known.<sup>414</sup>

For Lewin, the inter- and intra-social strata and strategies of private opinion making were a significant indicator of the changing character of both the individual and the collective society. Lewin here emphasizes the role of the Cold War western press in resisting the dissemination of information concerning this transformational time. He accuses the press of privileging, instead, what he has shown to be increasingly outmoded perceptions of Soviet society. In fact, Lewin’s evidence suggests the complicity of the press in the Cold War.

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<sup>413</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>414</sup> Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon*, 75.

By the mid-1980s, according to Misiano, the practice of Marxist-Leninist Communism consisted essentially of hollow rituals, to which no one was intellectually or emotionally committed. He comments, “This is why the Soviet Empire was able to collapse within five minutes.”<sup>415</sup> Going into detail, Misiano relates:

What dominated was the idea to create an alternative enclosed community. It was a closed circle, isolated from society, an alternative platform inside society, and, while working inside society, to manipulate icons, images of power, express critical judgment, distance. At this time, there was a ritualistic approach to official ideology, an observation of the rites of an ideology, now exhausted of meaning and reference,” however. That is, “the party officials respect rituals formally.”<sup>416</sup>

For Lewin, too, the “state-economy-party” triad was overloaded and was already dying when Gorbachev assumed leadership: “ideology [was] in shambles.”<sup>417</sup> Martin Walker, writing in this period, also described the Brezhnev era as one of complete disillusionment with the Bolshevik ideology.<sup>418</sup> The increasingly vacuous ritualism of Soviet society described by Misiano, implying a profound disengagement from official ideology in people’s lives, permitted its inverse in the growth of private

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<sup>415</sup> Misiano, author interview.

<sup>416</sup> Misiano author interview.

<sup>417</sup> Lewin, The Gorbachev Phenomenon, 75, 114-15.

<sup>418</sup> Walker also notes that a reform spirit characterized Yuri Andropov’s brief period of leadership: “It was not simply Andropov’s leadership, nor even the commitment to reform, which welded his group together, so much as a shared cast of mind. In the last years of Brezhnev, the level of public cynicism about the Soviet system had reached such a height that it seemed as if there were no more believers, that the enthusiasm to build a new world and the idealism of the old Bolsheviks had been imprisoned and betrayed by Stalin and finally put to contented sleep under Brezhnev. But the Andropov group remained believers. . . . they had confidence that the system could be made to work.” Walker, Waking Giant, 35.

spaces for unofficial experimentation of all kinds. Misiano is clear, however, on the symbiosis of what he calls “the alternative platform” and the society it critiques. He emphasizes the work of the outsider circle to resignify the codes of that society, describing the role of the critical observer in any society, and the dual role, here, of the opposition working both within and without the social framework— a situation characterizing the earliest practitioners, too, of Culture Three.

In this light, a recent study by Alexei Yurchak investigates the party language of this liminal period, finding compelling evidence to reject a binary model of Soviet sociopolitical relations (“the state versus the people,” a construct which is based on an authoritarian, interpellating language of power and opinion) in favor of what is termed a performative shift, permitting multiple uses and interpretations of the ritualized language.<sup>419</sup> As Filippov, Misiano, Yurchak and Lewin make clear in different ways, experiments with official language-political or aesthetic- were largely conducted in private. Litichevsky put it simply: you might practice alternative art in private, but you may not display your outsider status publicly.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> In his study of what he calls the last Soviet generation, Alexei Yurchak comments that “The change in the functioning of Soviet ideology during late socialism was reflected in how Soviet citizens participated in ideological rituals and events, as described in many ethnographic accounts [including parades]. . . . In practice, however, most people in the parades paid little attention to the slogans, and many were not aware who exactly was depicted on the Politburo portraits they carried.” Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>420</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

This is a generation of art practice best understood as “the art of the quiet,” a descriptor invoked by artist Filippov.<sup>421</sup> The term “quiet,” in contradiction to “silence,” infers the presence of a modicum of sensory activity, deliberately insufficient to attract outside notice, but enough to suggest, infer, stimulate, and provoke thought within the perimeter.<sup>422</sup> For Filippov, this notion includes the absence of political content in his art: “it was absolutely quiet.”<sup>423</sup> Mironenko characterizes this period as an art of the indirect discourse and the ironic, the filtered and the screened, an art of the barricade, a defense, but not a revolt. Mironenko’s description recalls the work of French Revolutionary artist David, who chose classical narratives over contemporary history painting, with the exception of *The Oath of the Tennis Court* (see p. 53). Mironenko recalls working with things that were hidden, the fearful, the self, for “*le monde est complexe, il n’est pas toujours direct, peut-etre mieux comprendre l’indirecte, l’art de l’autre cote.*”<sup>424</sup> The term “quiet” well characterizes, in general, the late Brezhnevian era (1972- 1982), a grey period of

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<sup>421</sup> Norton Dodge commented, “I think the term is perfect for this generation.” Dodge, author interview.

<sup>422</sup> I distinguish between quiet and silence, which has been theorized by both Susan Sontag and Theodor Adorno. In her essay “The Aesthetics of Silence,” Sontag ponders an empty room, symbol of the abandonment of art. This room has been evacuated by: Arthur Rimbaud, who has left poetry for work in the slave trade; Ludwig Wittgenstein, first a schoolteacher and now a hospital orderly; and Marcel Duchamp, who has turned from art to chess. The forsaking of perceptible art on the part of all three results in a silence that, for Sontag, is a statement of perhaps greater aesthetic potency and significance than the art that was the means to reach it. See Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence,” *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 1968). Curiously, Sontag doesn’t consider in her essay the work of Theodor Adorno who considers that silence may be the only position remaining to the artist in the face of overwhelming inhumanity. See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 53.

<sup>423</sup> Filippov, author interview.

<sup>424</sup> Mironenko, author interview.

accommodation rather than growth, keeping one's head down rather than publicly engaging in political protest. Still, as we have seen above, the rejection of Socialist Realist style and subject matter in favor of other practices constituted *per se* an actionable political statement against the regime, and would continue to do so.

The last wave of Moscow Soviet artists is thus marked by a strong anti-government position in personal politics, yet a refusal to engage in public activism in the manner of contemporary dissident scientists, poets, or samizdat journalists, though they all knew each other. Operating outside the official art world, the close circle of poets, rock musicians, writers, and philosophers, sometimes including like-minded official artists, as noted at Furmanny Lane (see p. 242), provided the audience for art practice. Usually located in the kitchen, discussions fused analyses of western avant-garde art styles, theory and criticism, with the revival of Soviet and Stalinist-era texts, all circulating underground.<sup>425</sup> The majority of these artists trained, practiced and exhibited outside the government system. The one exception to this was found in the Union of Graphic Arts, which accepted unofficial practitioners, including Yourii Albert, who worked as an official book illustrator by day, as had Ilya Kabakov and Eric Bulatov. Albert studied art in the unofficial studio of Katiana Melamid, wife of Sots Art co-founder Alex Melamid. *10 + 10* artists Vladimir Mironenko and Kostya Zvezdochetov, as well as Moscow artist Andrei Filippov, trained in the Gorky Theater School. These artists practiced with an understanding that, excepting the official world of graphic arts to which they might gain membership, they would not

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<sup>425</sup> Albert, author interview.

be permitted entry to the official economies of exhibition, employment or benefits, state streams of income in a nation without a commercial gallery system. Thus, though there were several western collectors, including businessmen and diplomats, facilitated by the U.S. as well as other foreign embassies, according to Namin,<sup>426</sup> this wave of unofficial artists functioned largely without a steady income from art practice,. In this inimitable situation, art production was manifested through creative discussion as much as, and perhaps more so, than through object-making.

The relatively apolitical themes in this period of political reform echo Thomas Crow's description of the Salon critics in neoclassical Revolutionary France who lamented the lack of any political subject matter.<sup>427</sup> Nonetheless, while there were few works whose content comprised overt opposition to, or comment on, the government regime, the art of the 1980s is rich in irony and indirect discourse. While giving no specific examples, *10+10* artist Anatoly Zhuravlev, in fact, states that, "many artists who were interested in [the] political scene have disappeared. Those who were interested in art have survived."<sup>428</sup> He seems to imply that the privileging of political content over means of expression, or active engagement in politics, are practices resolutely considered to be outside the domain of art. "Disappeared" is not intended to be a menacing term, however, but suggests that these artists left their art practice for other professional arenas. In the words of Bakstein, "they were artists, not politicians, often humorously distinguishing themselves according to KGB

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<sup>426</sup> Namin, author interview.

<sup>427</sup> Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 256.

<sup>428</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

defined categories of political activism.” For example, “They did not stage political demonstrations or write polemic tracts.”<sup>429</sup> Rock music was one form of oppositional statement, as in the case of Mironenko, whose artist-band (including *10 + 10* artist Zvezdochetov and Sven Gundlak), produced the renowned *Gold Album* (an answer to the Beatles’ *White Album*), which played on the BBC.<sup>430</sup> Similarly, the band of painter Zhuravlev and music critic and art collector Artemy Troitsky was taken as a rejection of the State system.<sup>431</sup>

Styles at variance with the official culture continued to be, in fact, a radical position, going to the very root of state-sponsored visuality and freely rewriting image-making in alternative languages. Aidan Salakhova recounts, “Art was a position with unofficial artists to have freedom. We now understand it was a position they declared through the art. For them this freedom is not seen from the political view. [Freedom is] a different style and way of telling something.”<sup>432</sup> Artist Andrei Filippov ironizes the situation, “there were many ways to be political. The aim of one group was to kill Brezhnev, to kill someone from official bureaucracy, then art killed this idea. We became more artists than killers. Our heroes? Che Guevara, Marcuse, the leftist Communists, not Marx, Lenin, Trotsky. We were more the anarchists, the new wave, like Che.”<sup>433</sup> Putting Filippov’s provocative comments, which were meant to be amusing, to one side, it was the intellectual commitment to

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<sup>429</sup> Bakstein, author interview.

<sup>430</sup> Mironenko, author interview.

<sup>431</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>432</sup> Salakhova, author interview.

<sup>433</sup> Andrei Filippov, author interview.

freedom of expression, then, not political activism and, for the most part, not political content, that characterized the last wave of unofficial artists. Sergey Shutov recalls that he “wanted to be free to practice art, to think. Political art is a trend, is fashionable. The British think all life is propaganda” (recounting his experience as a panelist at a seminar on nonconformist art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, 2006).<sup>434</sup> Exploring further the relationship of the artists to party politics, Zhuravlev states, “my art was not so much about the political, but the work of others was. I don’t criticize the system, but for Soviet art, any kind of art that was different from Soviet Socialist system was political.”<sup>435</sup> For Albert, as an emerging artist, unofficial art was political by definition, standing outside the government establishment, so that subject matter did not need to convey an anti-government stance.<sup>436</sup> Rather than the geopolitical problems of the day, problems of aesthetics and content interested Albert, Zakharov, and Shutov. This was true for Albert, quite literally, as he recast contemporary art styles in alternative language structures. In the *Democratic Art Series*, for example, paintings were constructed in Braille, or in a nautical vocabulary of colorful and geometric semaphores that oddly recall Malevich (fig. 68).<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Shutov, author interview.

<sup>435</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>436</sup> Albert, author interview.

<sup>437</sup> “Follow me comrade aviators. Swim into the abyss. I have set up the semaphores of Suprematism.” See Malevich, “Non-objective Art and Suprematism,” in: Woods and Harrison, *Art in Theory*, 293.

Choosing terminology to name and to understand late Cold War practice outside the official world administered by the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R., the Academy of Fine Arts of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.S.R. Union of Artists is complicated, as words carry great emotional and political weight for their user among the circle that I interviewed.<sup>438</sup> An exhibition catalogue for the State Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, for example, embraces all unofficial art made during the years 1956-1988 under the term “other art.”<sup>439</sup> For many of the individuals interviewed, the term “dissident”<sup>440</sup> applied exclusively to the “professional politicians,” in the words of Moscow art critic Josef Bakstein, and was reserved for the outspoken scientists, samizdat artists, journalists, and other liberal-minded members of the intelligentsia in the 1970s, exemplified by Andrei Sakharov and

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<sup>438</sup> A succinct account of these debates is found in a 1995 publication of interviews with Soviet artists, principally of the wave preceding the group I interviewed. “The nonconformist movement began in the late 1950s and ended with perestroika in 1987 when artists who had not adhered to the acceptable styles and ideology of socialist realism came out, as it were, from underground.” This generation objected to the use of the term “dissidence” because it was thought to imply political engagement; “nonconformist” or “unofficial” were preferred terms. See Renee Baigell and Matthew Baigell, *Soviet Dissident Artists: Interviews After Perestroika* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), xi.

<sup>439</sup> *Drughoie Isskustvo, Moskva 1956-1988* (Moscow: National Center for Contemporary Art, 2005).

<sup>440</sup> The word “dissident” appears in the English language as early as 1534, deriving from the Latin, and conveys, in general, disagreement or difference of opinion. The term is first used in connection with the religious politics of the day in Reformation England and northern Europe, and signifies opposition to state-sponsored religious structures. Horace Walpole, in the eighteenth century, redeploys the term to characterize a social group formed in opposition to the monarchy, relocating the term to the secular domain. Litichevsky nominates Rabin to the list of dissidents, recounting an ironic anecdote of an artist in the circle of Rabin whose drawing of Lenin got the hapless artist arrested, but on unexpected grounds. “He didn’t draw Lenin in a polite way, and he told the KGB ‘this man is not Lenin.’ He was accused of pornography, not political dissidence, and was sentenced to two years in jail.” Litichevsky, author interview.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.<sup>441</sup> Sots Artist Vitaly Komar commented that “we used all these terms,” including nonconformist, unofficial, other underground, or dissident. Sakharov, who visited the studio of Komar & Melamid, “preferred dissident, or what we call in Russia, a different way to think, a different way of [understanding the] perception of reality.”<sup>442</sup>

Though he is frequently referred to as a dissident artist, painter Oskar Rabin carefully distinguishes himself from this category in interview. Founder of the Thaw-era unofficial Lianazovo group, and co-organizer of the Bulldozer Exhibition of 1974, Rabin was exiled from his country and has lived to the present day in Paris, though he was reinstated as a Russian national in 2007. Rabin was emphatic that, during the 1970s, his Moscow world was outside and set apart from the official Soviet mindset, and consisted of like-minded thinkers merely wishing to paint, write or think in modes different from those permitted by Socialist Realism. Rabin asserted that he was not a dissident. It was, in fact, the Soviet Government that created the category of dissidence for its own use, as an example to its citizenry of the consequences awaiting those who differed from Party ideology.<sup>443</sup> Igor Golomshtock, chronicling the complex relationships of art practices outside Socialist Realism in the period ranging from the Thaw to 1977, uses the term “unofficial,” and emphasizes the non-political nature of the movement. He notes that, in many instances, unofficial artists embraced the politics and aesthetics of the state culture, rejecting, however, its

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<sup>441</sup> Josef Bakstein, author interview.

<sup>442</sup> Vitaly Komar, author interview.

<sup>443</sup> Oskar Rabin, author interview.

dissimulation. “It [unofficial art] immediately became an opposition movement, opposed however not to the state structure but to its official culture, not to the regime, but to the deceit which the regime disgorged along the channels of artistic information.”<sup>444</sup> As suggested by Golomshtock, his oppositional position countenances many sorts of imbrications between the official and unofficial worlds, which I have shown in the instance of the Severe Style (see p. 176). Such cultural fluidity would underlie the circulation of work by practitioners including official artist *10+10* artist Alexei Sundukov in both the official and unofficial worlds in the late Cold War.

For cultural critic Artemy Troitsky, a journalist, music historian, and rock musician in the 1980s, “dissidents were political, artists were not political, two different things, yet to write songs about alienation was enough to earn condemnation as a decadent dissident, when in the Soviet Union people must be optimistic... underground theatre, literature, music, abstract painting were considered bourgeois decadent and outlawed in the Soviet Union.”<sup>445</sup> *10 + 10* participant Anatoly Zhuravlev noted:

You could say ‘alternative,’ we were in opposition to everything at [the] official level. Me, I’m not dissident, I’m alternative. At that time art was political, it’s not just art, it’s a style of life. It doesn’t matter what you do, official art was Social Realism, that’s art. Politics represents the government, ideological things, it doesn’t matter what you do, if you do something different you’re strange, you’re out. Socialist Realism represented [the] ideal of [the] Soviet government. Art is a style of life. I [was forced to] spend a month with crazy people in [a] crazy house. I start to make art never thinking

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<sup>444</sup> Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer, *Unofficial Art*, 81, 85.

<sup>445</sup> Artemy Troitsky, author interview.

I would sell things. Idealism, it was mine. I was not happy to be like machine.<sup>446</sup>

For *10 + 10* artist Yourii Albert, “Unofficial art is political by definition, a common term describing many groups practicing outside the governmental system.” Bakstein describes the conditions of what he calls an “alternative art”: “There is strict division between official and unofficial artists. Unofficial artists were ‘working just for fun’, with no chance for exhibitions or sales, working outside institutions.”<sup>447</sup> Zakharov and Albert reject the term “nonconformist,” viewing it as a label appropriate to the artists of 1960s. For them, in this last wave of Soviet unofficial art before the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, a great number of artists and artists’ collectives were practicing, so that, in a sense “there was a conformity within the unofficial world, a sense in the air that many people were united in this new art.”<sup>448</sup>

Stas Namin, rock music disc jockey and impresario in the last wave, and grandson of Anastas Mikoyan (a key party official serving in government from the Stalinist through the Khrushchev eras), describes the art leading up to *perestroika* as “alternative.” He describes the official world of the late seventies and early eighties as “very narrow, not possible to do anything, not possible to talk to foreigners, to listen to foreign music, to speak English even, it was a very strange time. That was normal, anything that was a little different from this was alternative.” For Namin, Socialist Realism was a “concrete mentality, very clear for everybody, a socialist

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<sup>446</sup> Anatoly Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>447</sup> Bakstein, author interview.

<sup>448</sup> Zakharov, author interview; Albert, author interview.

ideology ... for subjects from nature, it was not realism because it was romantic.”<sup>449</sup>

Here, Namin invokes the root meaning of the word romance in *roman*—the story—drawing out a notion of fiction paradoxically underlying the apparent naturalism of Socialist Realism.

For *10 + 10* artist Andrei Roiter, there were “lots of terms for people like us, unofficial, underground, alternative, we didn’t think about that. Names [were] made up for journalists and visitors.” For example, the Kindergarten Group was named for the school where artists like Roiter earned a living as night watchmen. For Roiter, it was important at the time “to be invisible, to survive, to preserve one’s identity.” “Your decision to be an artist,” he continued, “came from your desire to create a personal existence apart from official society. Instead of being dissidents, we created an alternative intellectual community. I don’t know if it’s possible to call this art in the Western sense because it was more life than art. This is one of the reasons why Russian exhibitions were so unsuccessful in the West because they were often done like a fast-food souvenir from *perestroika* without understanding the life context.”<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Namin, author interview. Despite his political pedigree, Stas Namin, a highly visible public figure, did not operate with impunity. He recounted amusing stories of being followed by car by the KGB, turning the tables, and alerting his pursuers that he is being followed.

<sup>450</sup> Roiter, interview with Philip Pocock, journal of contemporary art-online.com 11/21/07 <http://www.jca-online.com/andreiroiter.html>. Bobrinskaya coins the term “the aesthetics of relationships” to describe the character of the community of Moscow Conceptualists. This small community---small in terms of the number of members---was not based on formal unity but on ‘living interaction.’ Its main connecting elements were the ongoing exchange of information, discussions, regular reviews, and talking about works.” See Ekaterina Bobrinskaya, “Moscow Conceptualism: Its Aesthetics and History,” *Die Totale Aufklärung*, 61.

Pictured by Roiter, the fusion of art and life in his description of the world of unofficial artists echoes the sentiment of the earlier generation of Rabin, and points to western misperceptions that would hobble this generation post-*perestroika*, as we will see.

In the critical realm, Bowlt contends that the *glasnost* generation of Soviet artists could not be viewed as dissident,<sup>451</sup> while for Misiano, the discourse of dissidence, clearly important to the international narratives of Soviet artists in the 1980s was largely created by the “romanticizing international press.”<sup>452</sup> Soviet critic Ekaterina Dyogot retains such terms as “art of political protest” and the “underground” in writing about artists of the 1980s, given their unofficial capacity outside the lumbering system of bureaucratic Socialist Realism.<sup>453</sup> Sergey Shutov termed the unofficial artists “underground,” while Zvezdochetov used the word “unofficial” in his parodic *10+10* confession.<sup>454</sup> For Jack Matlock, Ambassador to the Soviet Union in this era, Soviet artists were “angry young men,” full of radical ideas, just like any other cosmopolitan group, and largely non-political in their interests.<sup>455</sup>

Non-official art of the early 1980s operated with relative impunity compared to

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<sup>451</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

<sup>452</sup> Misiano, author interview.

<sup>453</sup> Dyogot, *Contemporary Painting in Russia*, 8.

<sup>454</sup> Sergey Shutov, author interview; Zvezdochetov, Artist’s statement, *10 + 10*, 88.

<sup>455</sup> Matlock, author interview.

earlier generations of alternative artists. Filippov describes an era, typical of youth as he puts it, which was characterized by “no fear, like every young person.”<sup>456</sup> However, for Troitsky, “life for cultural dissidents in the early 1980s before *perestroika* was very dangerous. Painting what they wanted to, for example, Nikita Alexeeva and his Aptart exhibition, led to unpleasant consequences, arrest and police raids.”<sup>457</sup> Zhuravlev mentions an enforced stay in “the funny house,”<sup>458</sup> and according to Shutov, though the period of Gorbachevian transition was “not so dangerous, it was a time when the law doesn’t work, people were a little bit strange, not revolutionaries, and there was harassment.” For the KGB, “fighting with the artist is a simple game, kick the artist.”<sup>459</sup> Namin recalls that “There was little political content to the art I have seen. No one was fighting, only Sakharov, but art? First of all, to fight against government is impossible, they’ll kill you, put you in prison, it is a different tradition. If you have perspective to change, it is impossible. We didn’t know how to survive in any other way.”<sup>460</sup> Working in the late 1970s and through the 1980s, even in the *glasnost* period, Litichevsky states that “there was a feeling of risk, it was a coincidence that I never met repression. Yes, I could draw or paint what I wanted, but what government didn’t like in the 1980s was a social life independent of the Union of Artists.” Indeed, in the days of *glasnost*, “The KGB did not want to

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<sup>456</sup> Filippov, author interview.

<sup>457</sup> Troitsky, author interview. Litichevsky cites, as well, the well-known KGB raid of the 1983 AptArt exhibition installed in the apartment of Nikita Alexeeva. Included in the exhibition were advertisement-style posters and books by the 1980s collective *Mukhomar*, appropriating historical avant-garde mass media products. Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>458</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>459</sup> Shutov, author interview.

<sup>460</sup> Namin, author interview.

make a scandal though they watched because, for example, Kindergarten was visited by important [art world] people including gallerist Phyllis Kind. Later, the authorities kicked them out, broke their contract, in one night. Some artists moved over to Furmanny. Authorities didn't like Kindergarten but it was Gorbachev time."<sup>461</sup> Sven Gundlak, Mironenko and another *10 + 10* artist, Kostya Zvezdochetov, all members of *Mukhomar*, were interrogated and sent to remote outposts under conditions of unusual hardship to fulfill their military requirements. George Kisewalter, unofficial Collective Actions artist, recounts that Zhakharov, inadvertently leaving an album of the MANI archives behind in a hotel in 1986, returned to fetch it, and was followed by the KGB. As late as this date, Collective Actions (1976-1989), a performance based component of the Moscow Conceptual Art movement, was exposed in a "big article in one of the journals, *Kultura*, the newspaper of the Central Committee. Ilya Kabakov's wife rang Kisewalter to say: "well you are [now] enemies of the state."<sup>462</sup> In another example, Collective Actions was invited to take part in the official Young Artists Exhibition: "it looked like everything [was] so smooth and nice, but the KGB hired an art historian who pulled quotes from you, so that you turn out to be traitor or a hypocrite."<sup>463</sup> Troitsky "ridiculed and hated the Soviet regime," as he emphasized, yet he shied away, too, from political activism. Even so, Troitsky was denied his university degree, and barred from professional employment.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>462</sup> Kisewalter, author interview.

<sup>463</sup> Kisewalter, author interview.

<sup>464</sup> Troitsky, author interview.

Kisewalter offered another point of view on the art of the quiet: “I wasn’t *much* interested in politics, I just wanted freedom, that was important. I was sent to Siberia, a mandatory job placement for university graduates, and I was asked by Collective Actions to perform there an action with the banner (*Slogan*, 1978, fig. 65).<sup>465</sup> [There were] no problems of authorities putting up a fight, because no one was around, and I was only three-hundred yards from road.” The group encountered no difficulties with the authorities in 1970s or the 1980s, but “I was informed on to the KGB in 1984. In 1986, in the time of *perestroika* in culture it was still very quiet. We didn’t know when it would be possible to do something.” Kisewalter, nevertheless, described a culture of repression: “this ideological repression is necessary for artists and intellectual people to work, it gives them something to respond in their lives, to create something different, to create something opposite to official style, not just forms, but conscience of eternal things.” Retreating from Moscow, seeking the solitude of the Russian landscape,<sup>466</sup> Collective Actions created performances inspired by American composer John Cage, as well as Moscow Conceptualists Ilya Kabakov and Eric Bulatov, both of whom attended the actions.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> See Margarita Tupitsyn, “On Some Sources of Moscow Conceptualism,”- edited by Rosenfeld and Dodge, *Nonconformist Art*, 327, figs. 15:8-15.10.

<sup>466</sup> Sabine Hänsen compares these actions, as well as the apartment exhibitions, to underground *samizdat* publications. “Performances became important meeting places for an unofficial cultural scene that realized its activities outside the practice of state culture ...forms of artistic self-organization developed parallel to the initiatives of so-called “samizdat” ...” Sabine Hänsen, “Collective Actions: Event and Documentation in the Aesthetics of Moscow Conceptualism,”- <http://conceptualism.letov.ru> January 3, 2010.

<sup>467</sup> Kisewalter, author interview. Bulatov’s text-landscape, word-ground configurations resemble the figure-ground relationships of the photographic

The secrecy inherent in the performance of the action in the countryside is an important component of the aesthetic, and represents “a sub-conscious response to the [repressive] conditions of society,” as Kisewalter admitted.<sup>468</sup>

### *Glasnost*

By 1986, the boundaries between the official and unofficial worlds began to disappear, as permissions were granted to all artists to exhibit publicly in Moscow. Indeed, the next year, 1987, witnessed the release in wide circulation of the Soviet film *Assa*, a fictive account by Soviet director Sergei Soloviev of the last wave of alternative Soviet artists.<sup>469</sup> The film title must certainly derive from an independent association of artists, musicians and filmmakers by the same name formed in 1983.<sup>470</sup> In 1986, an unoccupied apartment building on Furmanny Lane became the site of a now-legendary artists’ warren. Appropriated by *10 + 10* artists Mironenko and Zvezdochetov, as well as Andrei Filippov and Nest artist Sven Gundlak and others who had been expelled from the Kindergarten building by the KGB, Furmanny Lane provided studio space for some fifty to one hundred artists moving in and out of a labyrinth of studio spaces, divided by cardboard partitions, or even sheets. For many

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documentations of many Collective Actions pieces, an observation with which Kisewalter agrees.

<sup>468</sup> Professor Robert Edelman points out an historical link between Collective Actions and the Revolutionary period: the countryside outside Moscow where Kisewalter’s group performed was also the site for meetings and picnics of the pre-1917 revolutionaries.

<sup>469</sup> Sergei Soloviev, director, *Assa*, U.S.S.R., 1987.

<sup>470</sup> New Tretyakov Gallery, exhibition text panel, Fall, 2007.

unofficial artists who had lived with their parents in small Soviet apartments, the opportunity resulted in shifts in scale, given the slightly larger amount of available space. In the words of Albert, “you can’t paint a large painting in a bathroom.”<sup>471</sup> Friends invited friends, and official union artists moved in as well, as it was, in the words of Albert, “possible to be a friend of a traditional artist but not his work. The union people were not corrupt. The union had provided a very good education for older generation, including Sots Artists.”<sup>472</sup> Just as shown in my consideration of the work of the Severe Style artists or the dual practices of Kabakov, here too, imbrications and exchanges between the official and unofficial domains were fluid, obviating any notion of a binary art world built on either side of impenetrable ideological boundaries. Walker made the following observation on the art scene at the time:

Artistic success is well rewarded in the Soviet Union, and nowadays is not restricted to those who toe the state line. Cultural policy is still strictly controlled by the party, but it is no longer bound in a straitjacket. The group of young modern artists whose 1974 exhibition in a Moscow park was infamously broken up by bulldozers have now been given a kind of official license to hold an annual show in the basement of the trade union hall of the ministry of culture workers; in April 1986, 85,000 people bought tickets to attend it.<sup>473</sup>

The state clearly provided, then, a modicum of undisturbed exhibition space to established, unofficial Moscow artists, from the onset of *perestroika*. What Walker does not say is that many of the leading Conceptualists had left the U.S.S.R., first for

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<sup>471</sup> Albert, author interview.

<sup>472</sup> Albert, author interview.

<sup>473</sup> Walker, *The Waking Giant*, 171.

Israel, and then to the United States, and, at best, public exhibition opportunities in the U.S.S.R. for the last wave were available only to a degree.<sup>474</sup>

In general, for most Soviet artists but not all, the experience of the Gorbachevian transition was revolutionary: “like Columbus discovering the new world,” in the words of *10 + 10* artist-turned-stockbroker Mironenko.<sup>475</sup> For some it had been foreseen, as in Litichevsky’s January 1989 canvas, *Russian Children on the Ruins of Nineveh* (fig. 6), painted months before the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989.<sup>476</sup> For *10 + 10* artist Shutov, it mattered very little, and was “not a big change.”<sup>477</sup> With *glasnost*, many artists underwent a rapid shift from the private, unofficial world of presentation and reception to the increasingly public stage of exhibitions as instruments of cultural diplomacy for international export and, in case of the *10 + 10* project, for display to internal Soviet audiences.

### ***10+10: The Exhibition***

The paintings selected for *10 + 10* represented a selection of avant-garde trends of the 1980s in the U.S. and, on the Soviet side, the art of Moscow. U.S. work

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<sup>474</sup> Perceptions at the time regarding the degree of both artistic emigration and the availability of public exhibitions of unofficial art are reflected in a comment by David Remnick, editor of The New Yorker Magazine. Asked to describe the conditions of Soviet artists in Moscow the early 1990s while Remnick was living in Moscow as a reporter for The Washington Post and writing a book on *glasnost*, he simply replied that “he thought they had all left.” David Remnick, author correspondence.

<sup>475</sup> Mironenko, author interview.

<sup>476</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>477</sup> Shutov, author interview

was drawn from New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dallas, reflecting an effort toward pan-national representation.<sup>478</sup> The Soviet checklist was not intended to be fully representative of unofficial practices of the U.S.S.R; artists working in Leningrad, for example, were not included—nor were women.<sup>479</sup> Given its historic and geographic proximity to western Europe and its distance from ancient Muscovy, the art of the Petrine city was quite different from Moscow work, at least as practiced by the artists of *10+10* and their circle. Unofficial artists in Leningrad often made work that reflected both exposure and critical response to western trends. Moscow, by contrast, maintained a distinct and ancient Russian identity in its apprehension and

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<sup>478</sup> For *10+10* artist David Bates, the political intention of the curators was to draw up a checklist representative of a broad, well-rounded, and all-encompassing selection of artists across the United States. Bates was the only artist working outside a major urban center, and thus the exhibition checklist, largely limited to New York and the West Coast, parallels the exclusivity of the Moscow focus on the other side. As Bates put it, “I’m a little bit more Western, a little bit more American.” Dallas-born and educated, and a participant in the Whitney Museum of American Art independent Study Program, Bates had already shown in galleries in New York, San Francisco and Chicago. Further, as previous recipient of a one-man exhibition at the Fort Worth Art Museum, Bates signified more than regionalism: he was the discovery of the Fort Worth Art Museum, organizing institution for the exhibition and one who aspired to coequal status with the major centers of modern and contemporary studies and exhibition in the United States. David Bates author interview.

<sup>479</sup> The absence of Larissa Zvezdochetova, one of the few female Soviet artists working in the 1980s, and former wife of *10+10* artist Konstantin Zvezdochetov, is notable. In her work, she constructed a feminist iconography, embedding and encoding images of the female body from the fashion industry, Soviet-era badges, cloisonné enamels, plaques, porcelain, matchbooks, or embroidery. Part of her practice has been to preserve folk culture, its language and its tales, inspired by her early work as a curator of folk art (as she puts it, the “amateur arts”) in Odessa. Only accepted as an artist during the 1980s because of her marriage to Zvezdochetov, she received little exposure in the *glasnost* period. Zvezdochetova says: “today, it is easier for female artists, but I also think I’m lucky. This contradiction made me stronger. I’m not feminist, I’m human.” Paintings by Zvedochetova continue to contain encoded, signs from the fashion industry and any number of other feminist message-bearing objects from Soviet popular culture that she collects.

selective absorption of the west, as I will show below. Nonetheless, as Litichevsky maintains, the relative freedom of practice in Leningrad had a liberating influence on those working at the political center of the U.S.S.R., particularly the work of Leningrad artists Sergei Anufriev and Timur Novikov.<sup>480</sup> For Mironenko, the official world of Leningrad was most powerfully expressed in the sphere of music,<sup>481</sup> while Bakstein cites literature as the most important field of unofficial practice there.<sup>482</sup> Both concur that 1980s Moscow was the hub for alternative practice in the visual arts.

*10+10*'s restriction to the medium of painting imposed a curious condition for both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. While some Soviet artists had trained in traditional techniques of drawing and painting, several had pursued theater design and many were autodidacts. Working outside the official art world, most of the Soviets had extremely limited access to art materials or adequate studios. New media, and in particular video, by then in wide circulation in the west, was just becoming available to Soviet artists at the time of *10 + 10*.<sup>483</sup> Andre Roiter practiced painting, using a widely available and inexpensive industrial green paint liberally in his work,<sup>484</sup> while Vadim Zakharov, for one, was not active in this area at the time, rather working with line drawing, text, some sculpture and photography.<sup>485</sup> In the U.S. the traditional medium of painting was in a state of self-reflection and, indeed, abeyance in many

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<sup>480</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>481</sup> Mironenko, author interview.

<sup>482</sup> Bakstein, author interview.

<sup>483</sup> Anatoly Zhuravlev declined an invitation to dinner with Frank Stella, in order to shop for video equipment in New York. Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>484</sup> Andre Roiter, author interview.

<sup>485</sup> Zakharov, author interview.

quarters, as art practices departed conventional media or the commercial gallery, to enter into wider social circulations of, for example, performance, conceptual or land art. The curatorial restriction precluded the inclusion of work by key artists of the period, such as Barbara Kruger, Haim Steinbach or Mike Kelley. Nonetheless, fresh, postmodernist predicates of appropriation, pastiche, parody, and critique inform the work of the Soviet and American artists selected for the exhibition.

Work selected in both countries was interesting, somewhat provocative and relatively restrained with regard to style or politics. Annette Lemieux's social commentaries, Ross Bleckner's starry encomiums to the victims of AIDS, and the trenchant statements of Mironenko are all informed by what might be termed mild, if not quite anodyne, critique. Guroff comments that Soviet work selected for the exhibition represented practices "on the fringes of the academic," implying that while innovative and striking, it was "safe."<sup>486</sup>

On the U.S. side, meanwhile, the culture wars were fully operational in the late 1980s. The director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, a *10 + 10* venue, was forced to resign under pressure for canceling an exhibition of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe containing sexually explicit themes.<sup>487</sup> This exhibition had drawn the

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<sup>486</sup> Guroff, author interview.

<sup>487</sup> Washington Project for the Arts, Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment, June 1989. See Deborah A. Levinson, "Robert Mapplethorpe's Extraordinary Vision," *The Tech Online Edition*, <http://tech.mit.edu/V110/N31/mapple.31a.html>. 12/11/09; Barbara Gamarekian, "Corcoran Gallery's Director Resigns Under Fire," *New York Times*, 12/19/1989.

fire of the Reverend Donald Wilmon, founder of the ultra-conservative American Family Association in Mississippi, and, in turn, conservative U.S. senators on Capitol Hill, several of whom were in positions of strategic power regarding federal funding of the arts. Lemieux threatened to withdraw from the Washington D.C. venue should the photographic exhibition not be reinstated. The effect of the Mapplethorpe debate was viral. U.S. Congressional funding for the arts through the vehicles of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities was sharply reduced across the board, and has, in fact, never returned to the levels reached in the era before the debates.<sup>488</sup> Self-censorship became normative in museum practice in many quarters. The relative conservatism of the paintings on view in *10+10*, and more significantly, the novelty of Soviet contemporary art in this late Cold War era, insulated this exhibition from the culture debates.

For *10+10* participant Peter Halley, the 1980s constituted a “heady time in the art world, including artists such as Barbara Kruger and Richard Prince. The artists selected for the exhibition, however, represented a distinct Texas ideology, and the sense was of an aestheticized, softened bunch. I was willing to participate, as I was

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<sup>488</sup>In a news article reporting the confirmation of Rocco Landesman as Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts, it is stated that “Landesman takes over an N.E.A. that has been recovering from budget cuts imposed in the 1990’s in the wake of Congressional debate over whether controversial art was worthy of public funds. ‘The N.E.A. is way behind the 1992 levels of funding’, Mr. Landesman said, referring to the year the agency’s funding reached a high of \$176 million. ‘The funding level is almost invisible’.” Robin Pogrebin, “Rocco Landesman Confirmed as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts,”- *New York Times*, August 7, 2009.

excited and curious about the new freedoms in the Soviet Union.”<sup>489</sup> Steeped in the critical theory of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Guy Debord, Halley worked in the cool, cerebral, geometric language of NeoGeo. He felt his work was on “the edge of what they were wanting to exhibit, that the show was otherwise painterly.” Not at all a bureaucratic or politicized exhibition, *10 + 10* was a private Fort Worth project, according to Halley, and his reaction to the Soviet work was not overly generous: “it looked provincial.”

While influenced, as some stated, by 1970s practices of performance art and mixed-media, the American artists of *10+10* worked, at that time, principally in the traditional medium of painting. Well-schooled in the history of art and art practice at college, university or art school, the *10+10* Americans were members of a generation of artists conversant in French philosophy and critical theory as it had been received into the U.S. art world and academy in the later 1970s and 1980s.<sup>490</sup> The Soviet artists, on the other hand, operated in a radically different mode of knowledge acquisition. For the Americans, structuralism and deconstructivism had opened up a way out of the formalist hegemony of critic Greenberg and his vision of a progressive, self-reflexive, optical modernism. With a keen desire to understand their place within cultural histories of art, philosophy and social theory, their attitude can be summed up by Mark Tansey (whose parents were art historians) in his statement

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<sup>489</sup> For this and following, Peter Halley, author interview.

<sup>490</sup> Author’s interviews.

for the *10 + 10* exhibition catalogue: “A painted picture is a vehicle. One can sit in one’s driveway and take it apart or one can get in it and go somewhere.”<sup>491</sup>

On the U.S. side, only two of the exhibiting artists, Annette Lemieux and Mark Tansey, were familiar with Soviet art practice: unsurprisingly, they knew the work of Komar & Melamid, who were by then established in New York. On the Soviet side, knowledge of western advanced art practices was much more extensive, yet asynchronous and adiachronic. The usefulness of western practices to Soviet artists did not depend on contemporaneous reception or their place in any unfolding genealogy of western art.<sup>492</sup> The issue of cultural transmission and reception is one addressed by Rachel Polonsky in her comparative study of English and Russian literature. Polonsky constructs a theoretical genealogy in order to trace the influence of English texts on Russian nineteenth century literature. Her framework includes Petr Chaadaev, who compared cultural development to the development of the human personality; Yuri Lotman, who considered “why and in what conditions does a ‘foreign’ text become necessary for the creative development of one’s own?”; and George Steiner who queried “who read, who could read what and when?”<sup>493</sup> While it is useful to bear in mind these questions, there is an unbridgeable chasm between the world she examines and the Soviet experience. While culture flowed relatively freely

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<sup>491</sup> Mark Tansey, *Artist’s Statement, 10 + 10*, 130.

<sup>492</sup> An example is the work of unofficial artist Borelsky, whose assemblages of the early 1980s clearly reflect the influence of Robert Rauschenberg’s earlier combines (1954-1964).

<sup>493</sup> Rachel Polonsky, *English Literature and the Russian Aesthetic Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2-3.

between Russia and the west in the nineteenth century, despite tsarist censorship, this was simply not the case in Cold War Soviet society. The mercurial availability of any texts—for example, Soviet avant-garde art, Russian formalism, the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin or Joseph Kosuth, and illustrated western art magazines—generated an out-of-time reception of references, sources, and influences, shattering any art historical notions of teleological western modernism, as formulated most famously in the writings of Greenberg. In the words of Zhakharov, “we had a simultaneous knowledge of the historical avant-garde and western art.”<sup>494</sup> While the formative art of Tansey was predicated on a determination to move out of and beyond the Greenbergian formulation, the critic’s name is not even mentioned in Moscow circles. Written ‘out of order’ from the vantage point of westerners, the histories of both Revolutionary Soviet and western modern art collapsed and reformed in the Soviet Union as an asynchronic breeding ground for new conceptual sign-systems. Filippov noted that “it’s really schizophrenic...we heard something...and we would do art, and it would be more interesting to us than the work made in the west.”<sup>495</sup> Yourii Albert and his circle read texts by Robert Morris, Joseph Kosuth and Robert Smithson, which were made available in restricted university and other official libraries, or in contraband, typewritten manuscripts. Nadja Stolpovskaja, then wife of Albert, translated texts from Art-Language, the journal of the eponymous group of British conceptual artists, which was of great importance confirming as it did the interdependence of text and image, which was historically important in Moscow icon

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<sup>494</sup> Zakharov, author interview.

<sup>495</sup> Filippov, author interview.

painting.<sup>496</sup> All Soviet artists and critics describe the ephemeral reception of contraband art journals and magazines, including *Art in America*, *Artforum*, *Flashart*, and *Kunstforum*. Roiter, for example, responded to the work of contemporary American artist Jonathan Borofsky, author of the *Hammering Men* series (consisting of gigantic, silhouetted cutouts of laborers, somewhat reminiscent of Soviet-style subject matter), seen by him in western magazines.<sup>497</sup> Sergei Shutov recounts the impact of *Amerika*, the Russian language publication of the U.S. Department of State, founded in 1944 and republished starting in 1956, for circulation within the Soviet Union.<sup>498</sup> No distinction was made between U.S. and European artists: it was all “western.” Knowledge of the Russian historical avant-garde, not yet on wide public display, was transmitted to this generation of artists through mentors, and through the reading of typewritten, pirated copies of *The Great Experiment* by Camilla Gray, first published in the west in 1962.<sup>499</sup> *10+10* artist David Bates “expected the art to be more different. You realized that *Artforum* had tainted [sic] its way around the world, ‘maybe that’s what art should look like.’” Bates, thus, views the influence of the magazines that made their way through the Western world to the Soviet Union negatively, and perhaps assigns their circulation too much weight. He considers the idea, however, that the circulation of such a magazine as *Artforum* may signify a

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<sup>496</sup> See *Art-Language*, edited by Terry Atkinson, first published May 1969.

<sup>497</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>498</sup> Shutov, author interview.

<sup>499</sup> A work of great importance, as well, to the American Minimalists, a copy of this first history of the Russian avant-garde, notably the heroic era of the Soviet avant-garde in any language adorns Donald Judd’s library at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. See Camilla Gray, *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1962).

collective desire, indeed that “maybe there is a universality, sometimes people think the same way.”

For Soviet artists, according to Zhuravlev, these materials provided the experience of new languages and codes, a recapitulation of different voices in the artist’s “real time”<sup>500</sup>: “It is like learning French. It doesn’t matter the art issues of west, it is taking on the forms and the symbols.” Zhuravlev compares their experience to Malevich, “if you take avant-garde art of the 1920s and the history of Suprematism, how they came to this point, they looked west. Paris, Picasso, Braque, we try to do here in Russia if you read the letters of Malevich. Every three months Malevich was working in a different style, for example Cubism.” He continues, “Everything was of interest to us, what you couldn’t get in official education. We were young, inventive, interested in philosophy. At that time you got information from what you could get, like a model you put together, you don’t divide, you just develop.” As Zhuravlev, like most artists in Moscow at the time, didn’t read English, he “only saw images in magazines, [so it was] very strange traveling to the west and seeing art for first time. I like the art better in magazines.” Russian experimentation with western codes may thus be seen as entirely postmodernist, as against the steady, progressive march canonical to the rise and development of western modernism since the time of Charles Baudelaire.

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<sup>500</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

Soviet texts of importance to generation of the “Quiet” include the writings of the cultural philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (whose works were not widely unavailable until the Thaw, and whose notion of the carnival clown, “everything upside down,” in the words of Misiano,<sup>501</sup> was appropriated by 1970s Sots Art); the Revolutionary psychologist Piaget V. Vigotsky; and the novelist Mikhail Bulgakov, author of the canonical critique of Soviet society, *The Master and Margarita*, written from 1928 until his death in 1940, and published by his wife in 1966.<sup>502</sup> The availability of Stalinist era texts during the Thaw thus provides another marker for the onset of reforms in the Khrushchevian era. In another example, the work of Viktor Shklovsky, founder of OPAYAZ, Society for the Study of Poetic Language in St. Petersburg, which, with the Moscow Linguistic Circle, constituted the school of Russian Formalism in the period of the historic avant-garde, also became incrementally available.<sup>503</sup> Shklovsky’s theory of *ostranenie* or defamiliarization in literature, a point of departure not dissimilar from the work of the western Surrealists, influenced this Soviet generation, including Zhuravlev, in his search for an autonomous aesthetics.<sup>504</sup> Elsewhere, Roiter cites the work of German philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer and

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<sup>501</sup> In the exhibition catalogue for *10 + 10*, Viktor Misiano cited the influence on the artists of Jorge Luis Borges and Feodor Dostoyevsky, authors not mentioned in my interviews with him, reflecting changes in his scholarship.

<sup>502</sup> Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (London: Penguin, 2000).

<sup>503</sup> See Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, *Some Approaches to Russian Formalism* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973.)

<sup>504</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>505</sup> Strikingly, the writings of Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, or Jurgen Habermas were not available until after 1991.<sup>506</sup>

### ***Histories, Counter-Histories, and Codes***

The freewheeling and frequently parodic public circulation of unofficial aesthetic, political and social codes throughout the Soviet work signals an impunity signifying the accommodation of critical practices within the exhausted regime. Issues of governmental bureaucracy, ideological vacuity and militarization inform the work of a group of Soviet and American artists in the exhibition. Mironenko targets the specific Soviet condition of “out-of-time,” embracing Soviet history itself, in his *10 + 10* artist’s statement. He notes in the catalogue, “My creed in brief: I would like to know what really happened to our history, our language, to our time. All these complicated games with the interminable remaking of history ... the actual falling out of the general step of time, have all had an irreversible effect on the psyche.”<sup>507</sup> Indeed, the void opening from the dismantling of an historical metanarrative spanning nearly the entire century had yet to be replaced by any new formulation. Considerations of the exhaustion of Communist ideology and Cold War paranoia, eloquently described by Misiano,<sup>508</sup> inform Mironenko’s suite of paintings from the series *Completely Secret (Plan for World Transformation)* (1988, fig. 70). Here,

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<sup>505</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>506</sup> Misiano, author interview.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>508</sup> Misiano, author interview.

Mironenko ironizes Cold War fears on both sides: hard-edge, geometric shapes provoke often menacing associations (targets or needles, for example), and are overlaid by official control stamps and splashes of blood-red in the style of Soviet artists Komar & Melamid (fig. 61). *Vashi-Nashi (Yours-Ours)* (1988, fig. 71) doubles and reverses a map of the U.S.S.R. with the center marked by military chevrons in the colors of the Russian army, suggesting the potential multiplicity of meanings unleashed in the *glasnost* era.

Like Mironenko, the liquidation of any future perfect, utopian ideology and the resulting free fall into pluralities govern the complex images and statements of artist Vadim Zakharov, who renegotiates subjectivity within the illusory framework of the Soviet state (fig. 82). Zakharov comments, “Deprived of the opportunity to multiply, words and letters fell, freeing space for the evenness of planes and elements.”<sup>509</sup> Biomorphous shapes hang suspended in a shallow, abstract space, compelling a metaphoric reading of life in a dramatically destabilized era. In a different way, vacant dreams also inform the work of Aleksei Sundukov, who explores state dystopia. *Talking Heads* (fig. 79) features portraits of state leaders whose blank faces stand out against the anonymous masses forming the background. A graduate of the Moscow Higher Institute of Art and Industry (formerly the Stroganov Institute) and an official artist, Sundukov’s work boldly exposes the conditions of contemporary Soviet existence. His commitment to Soviet-style truthfulness, redolent of the period of the Severe Style, is noted in the pervasive

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<sup>509</sup> Zakharov, Artist’s statement, *10 + 10*, 80.

Soviet messages, such as we encounter infiltrating the psyche of the sleeping figure in *Radioactive Background* (1987, fig. 80), and echoed in the grisaille *The Substance of Life* (1988, fig. 81). Here, the exterior Soviet life of waiting patiently in line, here in the foreground, belies an infernal interior where words, faces, feelings roil in agony. The candor of Sundukov's imagery reflects the willingness of the *glasnost*-era Soviet state to officially support and to circulate art practices openly critical, or at least skeptical, of the conditions of contemporary life.

Heated, rich, Neo-Expressionist line, color and texture characterize work by Sergey Shutov probing the syntax of State-sponsored subjectivity. *Identity Card* (1988, fig. 77) combines a silhouetted self-portrait of the artist, dressed Stalinist gangster-style, with a barcode, while *Life* (1988, fig. 78) displays two pairs of Adam-and-Eve like nude couples in a gold-leafed forest, banded by a Russian military insignia. The dynamism of Shutov's paintings derives from the painterliness of the dense weaves of figure and pattern, rendered in high-key colors and set in an experimental picture space. These works belie a grounding in conceptualism hinted at in the artist's statement, where, with mock seriousness he states, "Studying the eighth decade of this century, I am involved in reconstructing artistic culture, the behavior and psychology of an artist of this period."<sup>510</sup> Shutov's ideational approach to art making and the role of the artist relates to the Russian tradition of icon painting, as I discuss below.

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<sup>510</sup> Sergey Shutov, Artist's Statement, *10 + 10*, 72.

Similarly, Lemieux destabilizes the self-satisfactions of the Reagan era in her investigations of the politics of military imperialism, feminism, and sexuality. The painter drains images of color and depth, drawing out the mythologizing absurdities of contemporary American life. *Baby Bunting* (1988, fig. 97) gently ironizes the false security of the military-industrial complex, layering a folk lullaby over a simulated photograph of soldiers advancing in rubber rings in the swamps of southeast Asia. *Something for the Boys* (1988, fig. 98), based on an old photograph captured at a male-dominated political convention, elaborates the corrupting equation of political and sexual power. The *Birth of Venus*-style star-spangled dancer is poised on stage in perfect *contrapposto*, a man reaching up from the crowd to touch her, in a composition featuring the deft *trompe l'oeil* illusion of a gift-box with patriotic red-white-and-blue bow. In the washed-out grey-scale test-strip, *John Wayne* (1986, fig. 96) Lemieux also explores the emptying out of the Hollywood myth of the American West. Ironically, the iconic image of John Wayne, a multi-media brand for U.S. audiences, was unfamiliar to Mironenko. Through conversations with the artist, he came to understand the hallowed symbolism of the name alone in American society and, thus, the significance of Lemieux's gesture, perfectly exemplifying the cultural Tower of Babel effect described by Ninkovich (see p. 13).

Lemieux suggested, nonetheless, that the aesthetic and political issues on view in Soviet work in *10+10* were not far from hers. Drawing on the cultural landscape of the period, "it became clear in the 1990s, after the government ceased to fund individual artists via the National Endowment for the Arts, due to past controversial

grantees, our country maybe isn't so different in some ways."<sup>511</sup> Lemieux knew the work of Komar & Melamid in this period and cites as influences Soviet poster artists from the 1920s to the 1970s, German artist Joseph Beuys, American conceptualists Bruce Nauman and John Baldessari, and feminists Faith Ringgold and Barbara Kruger. These wide-ranging and, sometimes, discordant interests are symptomatic of the complexities and pluralities of the 1980s; more importantly, in the case of Beuys and the conceptualists, they represent influences shared with Soviet artists entirely unknown to her, exemplifying the impenetrable communication barrier endemic to the Cold War era. Lemieux "vaguely remembers conversations about living and art-making conditions" with the Soviet artists she met during the exhibition. "What was interesting was that the Russian artists brought presents for the American artists, Russian traditional hats, key chains, musical tapes, tourist sorts of things. They were in less of a position to give gifts than we were, and we had nothing planned for them. I still have their gifts." Lemieux here underscores the official character of the Soviet artists delegation, clearly coached by the Ministry of Culture in diplomatic niceties. As Lemieux had already exhibited widely in New York, London and Los Angeles prior to *10 + 10*, the exhibition's chief significance lay for her in the "great opportunity it provided to exhibit and meet with artists from Russia. I was a child of the cold war."

Bleckner's work, the most deliberately political of the American artists of *10 + 10*, is moored in the AIDS pandemic and the resultant political movement to

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<sup>511</sup> Lemieux, author interview.

develop a responsible and ameliorative politico-medical policy. Bleckner reconvenes the evocative properties of Turner's handling of soft lights and shadow in the formation of a very lyrical neo-Abstract Expressionism that belies a subtext doubtlessly obscure to uninformed U.S. audiences and certainly opaque to Soviet visitors to the exhibition. The politics of AIDS was unknown, overlooked or ignored in the Soviet Union, which was and is a highly conservative and homophobic society. Roiter underlines that Bleckner's message was lost in visual translation in the case of both the Soviet artists and the viewing public.<sup>512</sup> With *Us Two* (1988, fig. 89), glowing orbs cascade from a brilliant flash of light against the night sky, while with *Architecture of the Sky* (1988, fig. 90) a shower of stars shapes an unabashedly celestial dome. Monuments to friends who have died of AIDS in this period of struggle for health rights, Bleckner invokes the luminous purity of its martyrs.

Meanwhile, Roiter's monochromatic series *Unseen Voices* (1988, fig. 76), evoking 1930s household radio speakers, is built up of heavily impastoed layers of industrial green paint, a color powerfully connected for him with the domains of nature and emotion. Overlays of wallpaper-style patterns of fruits or letters construct an expressive picture surface suggesting the atmosphere of a Soviet apartment. Incisions in the canvases reference listening devices as well as household speakers, while the abrupt physicality of these piercings is intended to suggest voices from behind the canvas. Roiter calls his voices simple, visual signs with multiple

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<sup>512</sup> Roiter, author interview.

meanings, the pierced speakers signaling—in addition to the allusions above—an ironic reaction to a Soviet “fad for paintings with text.”<sup>513</sup>

Enigmatic codes and histories also underlie the close-up, Neo-Expressionist physicality of David Salle’s paintings, with their appropriations from nineteenth and twentieth-century painting, photography and poetry. In his statement, Salle hails the proto-Pop artists Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns for their encryptions: “The genius of painters like Johns and Rauschenberg was that they developed a covert language for feeling that developed into one of the dominant styles of the patrilinear line of painting.”<sup>514</sup> Salle’s encomium to these artists of a previous generation can be compared to the penetrating influence of Sots Artists Komar & Melamid on Moscow Conceptualism. Neo-Cubism, photography and nineteenth-century marine painting fuse in the portrait of street poet *Demonic Roland* (1987, fig. 101), joined by portrait busts, including William Shakespeare. Salle references the picture plane with parallel, horizontal bands of red and blue running through Roland’s forehead and across the field. *Symphony Concertante I* (1987, fig. 102) consists of discrete sectors, including photographic-like fragments of musicians, a self-portrait by German Expressionist Max Beckman, and a detail from a traditional marine painting in the upper register. The picture surface, again referenced by a gestural patch of white paint thrown on the canvas, resonates with work by Komar & Melamid (fig. 61). In *Tennyson* (1984, fig. 100), a foreshortened, academic reclining male nude, modeled in

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<sup>513</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>514</sup> David Salle, Artist’s Statement, *10 + 10*, 122.

contrasts of light and shadow, is posed against a manila-colored background, which reads like a sheet of drawing paper, and invokes traditions of art-making not unlike the work of Mark Tansey. Cryptic markings overlay the figure, including a Jasper Johns-style stenciling of the name of the English nineteenth-century Romantic poet Tennyson, a Johnsian ear fragment, Suprematist geometric forms, and patches of gestural paint. Salle's economy of secret and allusive codes superficially parallels the work of Soviet artists Mironenko, Shutov and Roiter, though the Soviet work, in the end, yields to the possibility of interpretation that is foreclosed, or at least highly resistant, in the work of the American artist.

Tansey shifts the debate from the cryptic to the explicit in his remakes of totems, both sociopolitical and art historical. Like other work in the exhibition, his images are underwritten by interrogations of both medium and meaning. He equally disturbs and resubmits myths of history—diplomatic, military or art—through sanguine, monochromatic simulacra of photographs that were never taken, of events that did not really take place. *Judgment of Paris II* (1987, fig. 105) features a French army officer standing before a reflectionless mirror in an evacuated apartment in the style of the Ancien Regime. A sardonic comment on war treaties, perhaps here an invocation of the ineffectual Treaty of Versailles, the work invokes the ancient myth of discord and suggests the human impossibility of self-reflection. From hindsight, the work stands as an ironic comment on the effectuality of diplomacy, here, within the perimeter of *10+10*.

*Forward Retreat* (1986, fig. 106), like Benjamin's "Angel of History,"<sup>515</sup> charges backwards into battle, across cultural shards of culture, including broken frames and pottery fragments.<sup>516</sup> Meanwhile *Arrest* (1988, fig. 107) sets the scene of a car crash, juxtaposing an abandoned police car and body parts at the base of a colossal Egyptian New Kingdom sculpture (a trope recalling Petruk's pyramids, see figs. 72-73). The truncated feet of the Egyptian monolith rhyme with the Gericault-style human body parts, already surrendering to the sands of time.

A mock-dramatization of the trope of the surrender of European painting to New York in the wake of the Second World War, *The Triumph of the New School* (1984, fig. 104) points up the fact that Tansey's work is a conversation with art history. The work plays on the tradition of panoramic history painting, the highest category of academic subject matter, memorializing the ideology of the rise of New York as the capital of world art after World War II. The French artists, representing the older tradition, with several of them mounted anachronistically on horseback and one in World War I-era military regalia, reluctantly surrender the leadership in a suit for peace overseen by New York painters who have arrived in motorized military tanks. At this time Tansey was in the process of reframing the issues of painting practice, by refusing Greenbergian autonomy and opticality in favor of a return to

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<sup>515</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Theses on History," *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 1987.

<sup>516</sup> The motif of soldiers looking backwards derives from paintings by American Realist Frederic Remington.

representation.<sup>517</sup> Donald Sultan, in fact, shared the same ambition, stating in *the 10 + 10* catalogue that “the march of abstraction through the history of painting leads up to the harmony of pure color or pure geometry, or pure mathematics. Why not take that back into figuration?”<sup>518</sup>

Tansey, whose ambition as a student was to “unmask historicism,” confessed that “I suppose my work is art historical and political... I developed a critique of representation, working with text as texture, like Tinguely, a struggled dance with deconstruction.” Following early training at the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California, Tansey completed studies at Harvard University and Hunter College. He adapted the constructions of French philosophy in his objective to “reverse the prescriptive and prohibitive terms of Greenberg, and assume a structuralist approach to orthodoxy.”<sup>519</sup> It is the centrality of this will to undo Greenberg that puts Tansey squarely at the site of the reconsideration of traditional painting and drawing practices, and explains, at least in part, his affinity for the work of Komar & Melamid, revivalist practitioners of a style that Greenberg lambasted as kitsch in his famous 1939 essay.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> Mark Tansey, author interview.

<sup>518</sup> Donald Sultan, Artist’s Statement, *10 + 10*, 126; text first published in: Barbara Rose, “An interview with Donald Sultan,”- *Sultan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 94-95. Neo-Expressionist works by Sultan in *10+10* include: *Early Morning May 20, 1986*, and the still-life, *Pears on a Branch February 3, 1988* (Fig. 103).

<sup>519</sup> Tansey, author interview.

<sup>520</sup> Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch.”

Tansey commented on the project of Komar & Melamid to parody, as well as to tragedize, the Socialist Realist style (see for example fig. 6). He compared their work to the magazine *Popular Mechanics*, presumably in its deconstruction of the elements, “the parts,” of the official academic style. Tansey noted that, in a parallel move, “I had used the voice of Social Realism [the comparable style of realism in the United States in the 1930s, practiced by artists including Edward Hopper, Norman Rockwell, Jacob Lawrence, Thomas Hart Benton and others, and a style with comparable official connections, including, for example, the Works Progress Administration commissions of the Franklin Roosevelt government], and like Komar & Melamid, who were breaking out of a regime, I was breaking out of another.” Tansey is equally steadfast and ironizing, similarly deploying traditional academic techniques, here sanguine monotones appropriated from the field of Old Masters drawing and academic under-painting.

Bay Area artist Christopher Brown problematizes the indexical nature of the documentary photograph in his painting *November 19, 1863* (1989, fig. 92), an appropriation of a photograph of the audience present at the Gettysburg Address, made by nineteenth-century photographer Matthew Brady. Brown disturbs the physical and conceptual values of Brady’s documentary photography by rendering the figures in blurred, gestural patches of tonal masses. If painterly brushwork was held to infuse emotion in the period of Abstract Expressionism, here it operates paradoxically, to flatten and depersonalize a defining moment of the American experience. In a gesture resembling the marks of Shutov, Brown alternates the

flatness of the linear silhouette with depth-creating tone in *Wood, Water, Rock* (1985, fig. 91), joining three-dimensional perspective with the flatness of the picture plane,

Revisionist appropriations of selected languages and avant-garde painting styles, Soviet and western also inform Albert's work. His large-scale *Form and Content No. 4* from *The Democratic Art Series* (fig. 68) consists of four unequal strips of nautical semaphores and conceptually rehearses the Russian Formalist avant-garde, specifically Tatlin the sailor, and Malevich, who invoked the language of "semaphores."<sup>521</sup> Albert's notion of democratic art as a practice addressing specific constituencies, in and of itself, defies the notion of an art for the masses. Only select audiences will have the capacity, for example, to understand Albert's semaphores, or other works in the series, including a canvas inscribed with Braille. *I'm Not Baselitz* (1986, fig. 67) is on the surface replete with humor in the characterization of the favorite Soviet cartoon star Pencil. Albert here has mobilized the enigmatic figural inversions of the German Neo-Expressionist George Baselitz, transforming Baselitz's language of inversion into an evocation of the status of the Soviet unofficial artist, operating outside both the Socialist Realist bureaucracy and European and American trends. Albert's *I'm Not Jasper Johns* (1981, fig. 69), in a comment on identity, conceptually appropriates and recasts the American master's symbolic language of Roman letters and Arabic numbers as the Cyrillic alphabet. While conjuring a

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<sup>521</sup> "Follow me comrade aviators. Swim into the abyss. I have set up the semaphores of Suprematism." See Kasimir Malevich, "Non-Objective Art and Suprematism," Woods and Harrison, *Art in Theory*, 293.

convincing imitation of Johns' style in the depiction of Russian letters, he once again stakes his position as an outsider: the letters spell the title of the painting.

Peter Halley also revises selected avant-gardes in theory and in practice, as in *Yellow Circuit* (1985, fig. 95). His abstract, geometric canvases pay critical homage to the transcendental, spiritual and humanistic geometries of the Dutch *De Stijl* artist Piet Mondrian, American Abstract Expressionist Barnett Newman and New York Post-Painterly Abstractionist Kenneth Noland. Reacting to the exhaustion by the mid-1980s of the American inflections of abstract painting, Halley reclaims a symbolic role for geometricizing art. A disciplinary, underlying cell structure inhabits his forms, representing the networks ordering reality. In his statement, Halley remarks that “the deployment of the geometric dominates the landscape. Space is divided into discrete, isolated cells, explicitly determined as to extent and function. Cells are reached through complex networks of corridors and roadways that must be traveled at prescribed speeds and prescribed times.”<sup>522</sup> Using a strictly limited palette of colors and geometric forms appropriated from the earlier artists, Halley's mural-size works make reference to Newman's vivid red as well as his zip; Ad Reinhardt's *mise en abime* black; Mondrian's airtight grid and absence of ground-line; and Albers' formal *trompe l'oeils*. Halley's titles, *Yellow Prison with Underground Conduit*; *Two Cells with a Circuit*; and *Alphaville*, a reference to the

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<sup>522</sup> Peter Halley, *10 + 10*, 108; text originally published in: “The Deployment of the Geometric,” *Peter Halley: Collected Essays 1981-87* (Zurich: Bruno Bischofberger Gallery, 1988), 128-30.

1965 sci-fi thriller by French filmmaker by Jean-Luc Godard, fuse intimations of the technocratic state with a disciplinary critique of contemporary society.

### *Nostalgia*

Mechanisms of nostalgia and romanticism underwrite the work of both Soviet and American artists. Landscapes of a timeless, rural America made over by American painters April Gornick and David Bates take on a dialogue with the expansionist creed of manifest destiny (see p. 74), in images of absence and longing. Gornick's fascination with the scientific conditions of light and weather fuses with a knowledge of the construction of traditional view painting, to yield frankly lyrical landscapes. She stated that "I looked at the American Luminists and I read a lot of science. As a student, I had studied structuralism and Marxism, but had taken an intuitive break with conceptual text and theorists, which I haven't resumed." Her work is a nostalgic recuperation of the panorama of the romantic American landscape tradition, its terrain, light, heat and humidity, a practice not unlike the work of the Russian nineteenth-century landscape painters and, certainly, American Luminists such as Fitzhugh Lane and John Frederick Kensett, as noted in *Tropical Wilderness* (1987, fig. 117). Gornick's work extends, too, the sixteenth-century panoramas of Albrecht Altdorfer in *Mojacar* (1988, fig. 93) and is reconvened in the neo-German Renaissance expressionist landscape perspectives of contemporary Anselm Kiefer and the Surrealist paradoxes of light posited by Belgian artist Rene Magritte, in *Light Before Rain* (1987, fig. 94).

In contrast to the studied meditations of Gornik, and despite the whorls of paint that resemble Turner-esque imaginaries, Rebecca Purdum apparently refuses the romantic with technocratic titles such as *April First* (1988) and *Statistic* (1988, fig. 99). Meanwhile, Bates' landscapes of the Texas and Louisiana swamps, *The Dock Builder* (1987, fig. 88) and *Pennywort Pool* (1988), evidence a nostalgia for what he terms "an ancient swamp and its inhabitants."<sup>523</sup> Like Tansey, Bates was well-versed in art history, committing a thorough knowledge of European art to a figural practice that, differently from the Tanseyian ironies, sentimentally records the Texas countryside of Black Water Lake, its people, its wildlife, its swamps, its seasons and cycles, in a neo-mythology of American rural life.

***Nostalgia II: The Clown and the Holy Martyr Saint***

In the work and the character of Konstantin Zvezdochetov—AptArtist, *Mukhomar* and Bakhtinian "holy fool"—the figure of the carnival clown is reappropriated and redeployed as a tool of *glasnost* propaganda, an instrument conveying the message of a fresh, new, open Party identity. Here, Soviet romances, histories, political tropes and popular mythologies are recirculated, ironized, and, finally, cherished. The watermelon kingdom of *Perdo* invented by Zvezdochetov constitutes a parodic transformation of a well-known Stalinist trope (1988 figs. 86,

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<sup>523</sup> David Bates, Artist's Statement, 10 + 10, 92.

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Children’s book illustration-style color and drawing make over the absurd narrative of the totalitarian state in a series of amusing and wrenching images of a parodic, utopian quest for the grail of the watermelon. In the end, the sacred fruit is safely secured within the walls of a *kremlin* teeming with gigantic fruits and vegetables. Manipulating themes of secret spies, government bureaucracy, or the Russian Orthodox church, Zvezdochetov inverts the system, comically billing himself as a member of a secret organization, the “Black Faculty,” which has infiltrated the world of official art.<sup>526</sup> Operating without impunity in the period of the Art of the Quiet, however—unlike the Rabelaisian fools—Zvezdochetov and Mironenko were sent to hardship posts for military duty as punishment for their unofficial practices in the early 1980s.<sup>527</sup>

The relationship of the Moscow Conceptualists and the artists of the “quiet” to the body is complex and derives in part from the abstraction and would-be

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<sup>524</sup> Taubman recounts that in 1946, Stalinist agricultural quotas were particularly extortionist to Ukrainian farmers, partly on account of Ukrainian party leader Nikita Khrushchev’s unrealistic targets. According to Stalin’s housekeeper, party cronies brought him enormous watermelons and other fruits from the region to demonstrate Ukrainian abundance; meanwhile Ukrainian peasants were starving. See Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era, 199-200.

<sup>525</sup> For discussion of cycle, see Aleksandr Yakimovich, “Independent Culture: a Soviet Phenomenon,” Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, ed., Art of the Soviets, 210.

<sup>526</sup> Zvezdochetov, Artist’s Statement, 10 + 10, 58.

<sup>527</sup> Zvezdochetov, Mironenko, author interviews.

transcendence of Russian icons.<sup>528</sup> In this light, Filippov, an ardent Byzantinist, remarks on the silence of the icons.<sup>529</sup> The icon is formulaic, based on received Byzantine prototypes: the silhouetting of flat, linear religious subjects against indeterminate gold-leaf or yellow-painted backgrounds produces images serving both as a sign of, and gateway to the world of truth. Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century CE, delivering the Easter Saturday sermon in St. Sophia, commented on the, then, recent post-iconoclast inauguration of the Byzantine mosaic *Theotokos* (“Mother of God”): “This [the representation of the Virgin] welcomes us, not with an offering of wine, but with a beautiful sight through which the thinking part of our soul, nourished through our eyes and helped in its growth towards the divine love of orthodoxy, achieves the most exact vision of truth.”<sup>530</sup> The Russian icon is deeply connected to the cultural construct of Moscow. Debates current even today argue the nature of Russia, a vast country stretching from a western border on the European Baltic Sea to Asia, as “east versus west.” Attendant is the notion of the

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<sup>528</sup> Ekaterina Bobrinskaya evidences an emerging interest by Moscow circles in this issue with regard to artists of the 1980s. In a recent catalogue: “The particular predisposition of Russian culture to the Conceptualist version of art is a topic quite often raised in discussions about Moscow Conceptualism. The ‘conceptualness’ of Russian culture is attributed to various factors: to the abstraction already present in Old Russian Die Totale Aufklärung: Moskauer Konzeptkunst 1960-1990=Total Enlightenment: Conceptual Art in Moscow 1960-1990. Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle and Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2008 religious art, to Russian artists’ interest in the resolution of extra-aesthetic (social, moral) problems, and, accordingly to a disparagement of the significance of linguistic plasticity, and finally to a special reverence for text.” Ekaterina Brobinskaya, “Moscow Conceptualism, Its Aesthetics and History,”- Die Totale Aufklärung: Moskauer Konzeptkunst 1960-1990=Total Enlightenment: Conceptual Art in Moscow 1960-1990. Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle and Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2008, 54-55.

<sup>529</sup> Filippov, author interview.

<sup>530</sup> Robin Cormack, Writing in Gold: Byzantine Society and Its Icons (London: George Philip, 1985), 149.

‘Third Rome’, a concept rising from the seventeenth-century prophecy of the monk Theletus, who, reflecting on the fall of both Rome in the fifth century BCE and the fall of Constantinople in 1453, proclaimed Moscow as “the last Rome, and there shall be no fourth.” Svetlana Boym writes that this potent legend was reconvened in the mid-nineteenth century in a sweep of Russian nationalism and became a trope of Stalinist Russia.<sup>531</sup> Paperny, in fact, views the participation of the Union of Soviet Architects in the congress of the National Fascist Union of Architects of Italy as evidence of Stalinist appropriation of the Third Rome theme.<sup>532</sup> Phillipov and Zvezdochetov view Russia today as “Byzantine,” neither east nor west, which demonstrates the fundamental importance, or at least the endurance of, the Theletus prophecy in contemporary cultural ideology.<sup>533</sup>

Both in all seriousness, and with some sense of irony, the icon should be considered a key source for alternative Moscow artists: Zhuravlev, in fact, was trained in icon conservation techniques.<sup>534</sup> There are several points of convergence between the icon tradition and unofficial Moscow art in the 1980s. The purely naturalistic depiction of the human body is found in neither the figural work of the Moscow unofficial artists nor in the Orthodox icon tradition. An ardent proponent of the view that Russia is the continuation of the Byzantine Empire and Moscow the

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<sup>531</sup> See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 98.

<sup>532</sup> Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, 31.

<sup>533</sup> Phillipov, Zvezdochetov, author interviews.

<sup>534</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

Third Rome,<sup>535</sup> Zvezdochetov's parodic paintings and drawings construct the body cartoon-style. His combination of outline and flat plane is a formula that, while rising from the popular culture of cartoons and Sots Art, finds a grounding, to some degree, in Orthodox icon painting. Antecedent to the structure of the icon is the appropriation of Christian imagery, as in his *Holy Image*, New Tretyakov Gallery (n.d.), Moscow,<sup>536</sup> and the *Madonna of Raphael* (n.d.) in the Norton Dodge Collection.<sup>537</sup> The recreation of revered Russian and High Renaissance devotional panels by the acknowledged clown of the group is underpinned by the Bakhtinian model. In his artist's statement for the exhibition catalogue *10 + 10*, Zvezdochetov, in fact, comically inverts art and religion, "Above everything else I love church architecture and icons, whereas art I consider a sin and a crime. May God, in his mercy, forgive me!"<sup>538</sup> Like the Bakhtin clown, this artist moves easily between the sincere and the ironic, securing his position, both during the Cold War and in the contemporary context, as a credible, if sometimes beguiling, commentator on Russian culture life.

Other *10+10* works admit the same foundation in the icon tradition, including paintings by Anatoly Zhuravlev, Vadim Zakharov, Yuri Petruk and Leonid Purygin. Petruk appropriates the iconic format of the flat image against gold-toned background in his series, *The Legend of Laika* (1988), romancing the Soviet mythology of the canine hero of popular culture. In *Pharoah Laika I* (fig. 72), the profile head of the

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<sup>535</sup> Zvezdochetov, author interview.

<sup>536</sup> Zvezdochetov, *Icon*, New Tretyakov Gallery.

<sup>537</sup> Zvezdochetov, *Madonna of Raphael*, unpublished, Norton Dodge Collection.

<sup>538</sup> See *10 + 10*, 88.

renowned cosmodog, the first animal launched into space in 1957, is inscribed in sunken-relief style on the face of one of two great pyramids depicted, above which the *sputnik* that carries her floats weightless in a starry, moonlit sky. Another in the series, *Laika the Dog* (fig. 73), features the same profile close-up, occupying the full field of the canvas, with the eye of Laika itself a *sputnik*. Rocketed to certain death, *Laika* became a martyr in the space race, a key Cold War metaphor and a theme of Soviet power continuing from the aviator and explorer heroes of the Stalinist era.

The *Laika* paintings may, thus, be viewed as devotional meditations in the tradition of Russian icons. Leonid Purygin's figurative paintings, too, mobilize the structures of Russian icons, fusing them with naïve folk art. The shape of the Crucifix, for example, dominates the composition of *Self-Immolation of the Lion* (1985, fig. 74); *Pipa Purginskaia* (1985, 75) even boasts a Crucifix at the top. The artist whimsically interweaves biblical narratives with images from children's stories and Boschian fantasy fiction. Shaped to resemble portable devotional objects, the highly crafted works reveal an engaging, sincere and whimsical personal mythology, rooted in a deeply personal, engaging vision of God, as he articulates in his artist's statement.<sup>539</sup>

Russian Orthodox icons have long dominated visibility in Russia—for example, the politically potent *Vladimir Virgin* (fig. 115)—persisting through the period of importation of Enlightenment practices with the attendant establishment of

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<sup>539</sup> "I am deeply convinced that nature is in fact God, that he exists simultaneously in each and every of her elements. ... Therefore —I am God. Therefore—you are God." Leonid Purygin, Artist's Statement, *10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., and Leningrad: Aurora Publishers, 1989), 60.

an academic hegemony modeled on European schools. Malevich's abstraction, formulated in the service of a new spirituality, found a root in the tradition of the icon paintings of Russian Orthodoxy (figs. 108, 121), a tradition that also informs the artists of the "Quiet." The geometric forms of Malevich float weightlessly and transcendently in a two-dimensional envelope of space, features which derive in part from the holy figures and gold backgrounds of icons. The role of the icon in Malevich's work has, however, been debated. Alison Hilton claims for Malevich a new spirituality based on his languages of form and intuitions, and read through his comments to his colleague Mikhail Matiushin.<sup>540</sup> In a review of the exhibition *Black Square: Hommage à Malevich* at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Margarita Tupitsyn, however, contests this claim. She quotes curator Hubertus Gassner's description of Malevich's *Black Square* as a "passage to another, spiritual world," equating it with "the traditional conception of the icon as a visual representation of the next world in this world."<sup>541</sup> Tupitsyn herself is, however, opposed to "keeping *Black Square* in the prison house of "mystical faith," though she can point to little evidence for this position.

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<sup>540</sup> "In quite different ways, the Russian pioneers of abstraction, Vasilii Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935), equated art with expressions of spirituality. . . . Malevich used the square, rectangle, cross and other geometrical forms as 'the basis of a new language' that could express 'an entire system of world-building.'" See Alison Hilton, "Icons of the Inner World: The Spiritual Tradition in the New Russian Art," *Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956-1986*, ed. Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge (Rutgers: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum and Thames & Hudson, 1995), 261.

<sup>541</sup> Margarita Tupitsyn, review of *Black Square: Hommage à Malevich*, *Artforum International*, September 1, 2007.

As Litichevsky, commented, official Socialist Realism deployed the three-dimensional, fully physical body as a metaphor, a “figure,” of Communist ideology.<sup>542</sup> It would be only natural to presume that artists practicing outside the official system would engage opposite strategies, and often this is true, as in the case of official, Severe Style artist Tair Salakhov working in abstraction in private. Ilya Kabakov, though, developed a naïve figural style consisting of linear contours bounding translucent pools of color within a shallow three-dimensionality, a technique of children’s book illustration (fig. 118). Kabakov insists that his art has always been tied to the body, deployed through artistic strategies different from the academic, except in cases where he mock-seriously practiced a faux-naïf Social Realism in the creation of Stalinist-era paintings in his installations.<sup>543</sup> The intense physicality of the *Ten Characters* series, for example, *The Man Who Flew to Space from His Apartment*, is anchored doubly in the absence and the presence of the human that has so recently and fully occupied the space, opting now for transcendence. Kabakov arranges the signs of his humanity in exultant disarray, conveying the sense of a palpable, living presence. Filippov, commenting on the influence of fifteenth century western art on icon painting, states that, “while there was a brief influx of naturalism, more interesting is the structure, an idea. To show the body but to forget the soul of a human being, no. Demons are sensible; senses like this are lower and the idea is higher.”<sup>544</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> Litichevsky, author interview.

<sup>543</sup> Ilya Kabakov, author interview.

<sup>544</sup> Filippov, author interview.

Shutov concurs on the importance of the Orthodox tradition, and, as Zhuravlev discusses: “icons are about the soul, not things. We took the structure of icons, their perspective, technical things, many artists did this.” The Sots Art production of official book illustrator Erick Bulatov is of great importance for Zhuravlev in that “Bulatov’s art is problematic of the surface of the painting, he uses the symbolic-political.”<sup>545</sup> Like an icon, the work of Bulatov engages different orders of space. *Red Horizon* (1971-72, fig. 111), for example, features a seascape in which the horizon line is, in fact, the decoration of the Order of Lenin. A group of figures dressed in city clothes strolls on a sandy beach occupying the same plane as the striped ribbon hovering above a placid low tide. The space of the ordinary world transmutes and becomes one with the ideological space of exalted Leninism. Underpinning these practices is an abstracting realism indifferent to the ideological realism of the official art world. Bulatov’s word texts originate on the surface of the picture plane, sometimes anchoring there, in the iconic tradition of works like *Christ in Glory, Deesis Tier* (1497, fig. 121), as in *Greetings (Dobro Pozhalovat)*, 1973, fig. 112). Sometimes the texts form dramatic raking angles to that ineffable plane, surgically penetrating limitless cloud-strewn skies, as in *Danger* (1975, fig. 110.) The foreshortened and surface-stamped texts characterize Zhuravlev’s paintings, as well, where letters sit upon, or sharply penetrate, compositional space (figs. 112, 85). Both are pictorial operations characteristic of the inscriptions, imagery and picture space of icon paintings.

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<sup>545</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

The signs of the icon, both image and sacred inscription, constitute a code of transcendence, as in Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew to Space From His Apartment*.<sup>546</sup> In a reversal, Komar & Melamid had earlier drained Soviet slogans of their codes, leaving blank boxes in place of words, as in *Quotation* (1972, fig. 122). Indeed, for those remaining after the diaspora of Soviet artists to the west in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a code and a quiet began to descend.<sup>547</sup> The Collective Actions Group operated in secret, delivering invitations to participants and audience with a minimum of information, such as disclosing only the countryside venue where the performance would take place. Statements painted on banners and hoisted into the air mark the landscape of such interventions. The only trace remains are the photographs taken and kept in private by participants, usually Kisewalter. Kisewalter described *Slogan* (1978, fig. 65): "It was more about landscape itself, strange figures, strange events in a field of snow, neat and clear without objects that could interfere with your perception...we tried to practice some religion together but it was separate. We created religious practices to cause weather to react." *Slogan's* indeterminate plane of snow fields, against which the figures of the performances are silhouetted, with words suspended above in banners appropriated, surely, from Soviet propaganda,

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<sup>546</sup>This quality of didacticism, a hallmark of the icons, is critical in Russian orthodoxy, which is regarded by many to be without a systematic theology, according to Arch Getty. Indeed, for Kisewalter, orthodoxy is characterized by an Asian mysticism that defies logical construct.

<sup>547</sup>"Those artists who remained in Moscow, such as Boris Orlov, Rostislav Lebedev, and Grisha Bruskin, developed complex systems of representation that embodied social, moral, and mythological codes of meaning. Lebedev's cards, for example, represented various nations and the symbols of their political power as part of a card game. Grisha Bruskin, always mindful of his Jewish heritage, included religious symbols and metaphysical ideas in his systems for classifying Soviet officialdom." See Regina Khikedel, "It's the Real Thing," 51.

bear all the markings of the paintings of Bulatov (fig. 112) and the icon tradition. In considering the remote, silent practice of Collective Actions, it is further interesting to recall the words of Filippov, the artist who inspired the phrase “an art of the quiet” and an ardent Byzantinist, who remarks on the silence of the icons.

A recent installation piece by Zakharov, on view at GMG Gallery Moscow, Fall 2008, is entitled *The San Sebastian Suite* (fig. 83). There is no figure, only the confessional-like wooden element of the work with red arrows attached to it, confirming the abstract presence of the martyred body. A video of a seascape completes the piece, referencing the hermetic geographies of Christendom. Zakharov fuses the historical avant-garde, specifically Lissitzky’s *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* (1920, fig. 20), with traditional Russian icon art. The triangles of the arrows, reaching into viewers’ space, are a meditation on perspective, mimicking the power of the icon, “God’s eye,” to engage the worshipper. The sharp foreshortening of the triangle creates a time warp, like the icons themselves, which were intended to provide a space of transcendence from worldly concerns for the devout.

In this chapter, I have explored the predicates of an exhibition of some significance in the history of Cold War cultural diplomacy in the visual arts. As with the other Cold War exhibitions discussed in chapter three, the subtle narratives embedded in the selection of artists and their works went largely unexamined, set as they were in the shadows of a larger narrative of national affirmation and

international collaboration. The evidence of the works of art and interviews points up the freedoms and continuing dangers of practicing in an alternative style in the early days of *glasnost*, and the fragility of Gorbachevian reforms. While codes and appropriations characterize the works on view on both sides, the necessity for indirect discourse on the part of Soviet artists continued to be experienced up to 1991 and the dissolution of the Soviet Empire.

## Conclusion

The context for the U.S. reception of the exhibition *10 + 10* and the public appearances of the Soviet artists was colored by film star Ronald Reagan's infamous romanticization of "star wars" combat and demonization of "the evil empire." This spilled over to the Hollywood screen-style status accorded Soviet artistic presence in the U.S. The Soviet artists were received with "as much enthusiasm as the concerts performed by Michael Jackson at the time," *10+10* artist David Bates recalls.<sup>548</sup> Clearly, Bates is suggesting here, with some hyperbole, that the exoticism of the Cold War nonconformists was intoxicating to U.S. audiences. The reception of the exhibition in the U.S.S.R., however, was mixed: in the absence of a gallery system, unofficial art magazines, or other mechanisms of information dissemination, Soviet audiences were not informed of, or knowledgeable about, contemporary art practices produced even within their own country. John Bowlt comments that "people weren't trained or educated, as in [the United States]; no books, videos, slides ... people were not prepared."<sup>549</sup> Further, and more significantly, the very generic and thematic emphases of art practice militated against the reception of avant-garde work: "[For general audiences] the entirety of Russian art is narrative. Art should say something moral, political, social; contemporary art is very alien to Soviet people, then and now. Art should be therapeutic, ideologically loaded."<sup>550</sup> The Soviet response was, therefore, conditioned by delimited aesthetic and narrative expectations, rather than

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<sup>548</sup> Bates, author interview.

<sup>549</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

<sup>550</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

an informed appreciation of avant-garde gesture. As Sergey Shutov put it, rather dryly, the Moscow opening in the Central Hall of Artists, the exhibition venue for the official Moscow Union of Artists, was “fashionable” and “interesting.”<sup>551</sup> The choice of the venue in Moscow points up the thorough intermingling of the official and unofficial worlds near the end of the Soviet empire. In this respect, it is not without irony that in the 1990s, at the height of their fame in the west, both Yourii Albert and Gyorgy Litichevsky joined the Union of Artists so that they might have access to good studios in the venerable art quarter of *Chistye Prudy*. At the same time, official artists of the last Soviet generation were barely able to make a living, just as with their forebears in the era of the historical avant-garde.<sup>552</sup>

Bowlit believes that the interplay between Soviet and American negotiators, curators, and audiences as *10 + 10* was prepared may be viewed as a simulacrum of previous Cold War exchanges.<sup>553</sup> This view reflects the easing of political and military tensions, the loosening of Soviet state hegemony, and the employment of a “postmodernist” irony on both sides. As *10 + 10* was circulated in 1989 and 1990, the weakening Soviet government could likewise be viewed as a simulacrum of a totalitarian state. Party control was increasingly moribund, and its rhetoric matched the social and political realities of the USSR even less than it had a decade earlier. Soviet *realpolitik* had shifted to consideration of ways to participate in the global economy; today, in fact, some cynically consider that the main outcome of

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<sup>551</sup> Shutov, author interview.

<sup>552</sup> Albert, Salakhova, author interviews.

<sup>553</sup> Bowlit, author interview.

*perestroika* was little more than the legalization of Soviet corruption. In contrast to the stops and starts of previous cultural exchange agreements, it was not political disagreement that abruptly closed down the Intercultura-U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture protocol and fulfillment of the proposed exhibitions. It was the expiration of the Central Committee and its ministries in 1991 that ended the InterCultura project.

The organization and reception of *10 + 10* nevertheless offers important insights into the practice of cultural diplomacy in the late Cold War and reaffirms a number of key continuities reaching back to the early nineteenth-century. The Gorbachevian investment in the presentation of a new image of the nation state to the west through export exhibitions such as *10 + 10*, mixing unofficial work with official, appears not only to have been a canny move but one that received top-level priority, at least to some degree, by the accounts of Gordon Dee Smith, Norton T. Dodge, and Armand Hammer.<sup>554</sup> Communicating through his assistant Pavel Palazhenko, I asked Gorbachev the same question that I posed at the beginning of this study regarding the purpose of the *Tsar*, or his government, in exhibiting Repin's *Barge Haulers on the Volga* in Europe. The response from Palazhenko was neutral: "After all these years Gorbachev himself does not remember whether his detailed orders were needed for the exhibitions to be organized. What we both remember is that he was very supportive of cultural exchanges generally and of visual arts exhibitions in particular."<sup>555</sup> As veteran diplomat Benson put it, Gorbachev clearly had far greater

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<sup>554</sup> Smith, Dodge, author interviews; Hammer, *The Washington Star*.

<sup>555</sup> Pavel Palazhenko, correspondence on behalf of Gorbachev.

issues to contend with than the visual arts. In fact, as for many Soviet leaders, art had limited consequences for Gorbachev—unlike literature with its potential for mass distribution.<sup>556</sup> Whether Gorbachev himself, or his chief ministers, was in control is of little consequence: the project was approved and implemented at the highest ministerial and, specifically, diplomatic level. Zhuravlev, in fact, recounts the travel arrangements for *10 + 10* artists, who came in small groups of two and three for the U.S. openings: “It was diplomatic, our passport was the highest you could have for travel, the blue Soviet passport. We were like diplomatic representatives.”<sup>557</sup>

Many of the Soviet and U.S. artists were oblivious to any propaganda value they might have for their respective governments as symbols of new freedoms.<sup>558</sup> Filippov, who participated in other export exhibitions, explicitly disavowed any enmeshment in political mechanisms: “We are professional artists, we do what we want without bending to the pressure of power. *Perestroika* opened doors to the west, and it was interesting for artists to see the art abroad and to participate in a mutual process of world art. This was important for us, but you didn’t have a sense of being a symbol of freedom. America was the kingdom of freedom in this time.”<sup>559</sup> Nonetheless, Zhuravlev believes that *10+10* “was very political. I was like a monkey being shown to people, in schools.” In considering the question of why the Ministry of Culture seemingly overnight began to work with unofficial artist,

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<sup>556</sup> Benson, author interview.

<sup>557</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>558</sup> Richard Lanier, former President of the Trust for Mutual Understanding, considers this a condition of the most effective cultural diplomacy. Lanier, author interview.

<sup>559</sup> Filippov, author interview.

Zhuravlev remarked that “From the American side, there was pressure on the Ministry of Culture. Also, we had just come out from [the] dark side, and Russia wanted [to show] that we’re now open.”<sup>560</sup> For Andrei Roiter, participation in *10 + 10* was, indeed, political. He affirms, “yes, we were being used for a political event; yes, there were many exhibitions, museums, collections at this time, but with *10 + 10*, it was a little grotesque. Stretch limos, this can’t be real. We were totally unknown coming from Russia. [But] in Moscow it was a prestigious project.”<sup>561</sup> For the cool-headed Shutov, “it was smart that the Ministry went outside Union,”<sup>562</sup> Troitsky was more incisive: “the idea is that Ministry [was] using young people precisely because they were apolitical and could be trusted. Showing these artists would show openness, but the artists would not discuss politics, as they were interested only in art problems. They wouldn’t cause trouble for the Ministry.”<sup>563</sup>

Recognition of the significance of the project as a cooperative political gesture of openness at a critical historical moment was, if anything, even more, complex and varied among the U.S. artists. Most, if not all, participants were unaware of previous efforts on the part of the U.S. or U.S.S.R. governments either to promote communication through artistic exchange or to engage outright in propaganda wars. The “soft power” cultural activities of the Eisenhower 1950s were by now a generation distant, the few fine art exhibitions from Russia a mere historical echo,

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<sup>560</sup> Zhuravlev, author interview.

<sup>561</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>562</sup> Shutov, author interview.

<sup>563</sup> Troitsky, author interview.

and the cessation of culture exchange by President Jimmy Carter an even dimmer recollection. For several of the American artists, the exhibition represented a political gesture, while for others it constituted a juxtaposition of contemporary trends, typical of almost any international show.

From the point of view of the regional outsider, Dallas artist David Bates, the curatorial organization of the exhibition was both aesthetic and political within a framework that he terms a “biennale mentality.”<sup>564</sup> Bates’s observation opens up consideration of the contemporary potential of the *biennale* as inheritor of the World’s Fair-official cultural exchange mantle. Not art fairs, therefore not judged by the market, today’s *biennales* serve as temporary placeholders of national identity on the international stage. As such, these events are characterized by the same odd mixture of political and artistic adjudication that attended the national exhibitions addressed in chapter two. In Bates’s view, the exhibition *10+10* was *per se* apolitical, both in terms of the content of works from both sides on view and in relation to the social circulations and dialogues attending the openings. If there was a political intention, it was “very hidden, very understated.”

April Gornik, one of three female painters in the exhibition, was “flattered to be a representative of American art.”<sup>565</sup> She recalls being curious to know whether the Soviet artists with whom she was exhibiting “were really representative of

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<sup>564</sup> David Bates, author interview.

<sup>565</sup> For this and following, April Gornik, author interview.

*glasnost* and *perestroika* and the unofficial art scene, or were controlled by the state. I was suspicious.” She recalls that the exhibition was not politically charged, and candidly remarked that “we were eyeing each other with interest, as well as suspicion and competition.” Speaking for the American artists, she commented that “we weren’t that curious about artists of other countries. We were the ones [in the spotlight] at that time. I was surprised at how derivative the [Soviet] art in *10 + 10* was—not particularly original, or compelling. There was not a sense of a necessary scale, possibly due to their working from art reproductions. It was a little too conceptualized, ideational. That may have been partly my prejudice.” While New York-centric in her assessment of late-1980s artistic culture, Gornik manifests a rather shrewd understanding of the nature of the experience and background of the Soviet artists in her awareness of the unavailability of materials, the reliance on art reproductions, and the conceptualism that marked Moscow art. Gornik admits that her initial impulse was to compare the work to American practices, comparing her effort to the world of competitive sports and U.S. domination “like the Davis Cup.” “Their art,” she continued, “isn’t as good as ours. We don’t have anything to worry about.” For Gornik, clearly, art market competitiveness in terms of quality was the signal factor in her perception of the art on display. In assessing the market for the Soviet “other artists” relative to the market for Chinese contemporary art, Gornik considers that the Soviet artists were “burdened by the cohesion of their history. Russia has straddled two cultures.” Gornik has intuited, here, a key issue for late 1980s Soviet outsider art and its perception in the west: its relation to the historical avant-garde. As she noted, “China has started from scratch, but it doesn’t feel like that with Russia.

The art market is having such fun with the look and feel of China. Russia artists got an unlucky historical feel.” Drawing from Gornik’s comments, had the artists of *10+10* received any art critical response in the U.S., as opposed to their political celebrity or the romance of their ties to the early Soviet state, they might possibly have developed artistically in ways that would have strengthened them in western markets.

Several artists engaged the exchange dynamic of the “official” exhibition space. Peter Halley clearly understood the intellectual position of the outsider artist: “The Soviet art is expressionist and counter-cultural, a reaction to what Soviet art was supposed to be.” For him, the Soviet work had an East village slant—an unsurprising comment given the origination of much work in the show from the Furmanny Lane studios. The pieces were funky but not intellectual, except for the work of Andrew Roiter. Halley summed up the experience as an “exciting cultural opportunity to meet Soviet artists and to have cultural exchange.” Halley went on to show in an exhibition in Esslingen, Germany, again alongside Russian artists (fittingly titled, *Fort Da*).<sup>566</sup> When asked whether he had had any sense that the *10 + 10* exhibition was framed around political considerations, Mark Tansey commented that he believed at the time that it was not politically motivated, but “was just another show,” albeit a “major show.”<sup>567</sup> Tansey admitted to being “quite partisan; aesthetics and

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<sup>566</sup> *Fort! Da!*, Villa Merkel Galerie der Stadt Esslingen, Esslingen, Germany, 1997.

<sup>567</sup> For this, and following, Tansey, author interview.

politics are rewarding,” while conceding that the exhibition had the feel of just another international exhibition.

Admitting to a fascination in the 1980s with *perestroika* and a curiosity to discuss the Soviet scene with Russian colleagues in an era still characterized by a remarkable lack of communication between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., Tansey recognized that the exhibition offered the opportunity for dialogue: “*10 + 10* was a crossroads for meeting artists of another culture, [a culture perceived to be, by Cold War standards] ‘the enemy.’”<sup>568</sup> Tansey perceived the value of keeping the conversation going because, “you’re not at war then.” The artist, in fact, expressed apprehension at the current lack of international dialogue at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In an ironic comment on the lack of communication attendant the exhibition, Vadim Zakharov’s short film *10+10*, shot at the opening of the exhibition at the Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York, evidences all the symptoms of Babel. In a car drive to the museum, a Soviet artist is heard to remark in beginner’s English: “I will meet Moscow friends,” to which the museum official replies: “Yes, that is true.” Zakharov searches for connection at the opening party, finds it in a Constructivist poster decorating the staff lounge or the approach of Yurii Albert towards and away from the camera. Finally, repeated interleaved shots of Niagara Falls build toward a strange reminiscence of hydropower projects in Russia, including Bratsk Station. Zakharov’s film points up the search for self in alien situations and the non-dialogic, oppositional character of the joint cultural experience.

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<sup>568</sup> Tansey, author interview.

Since *10 + 10*, Tansey has formed relationships with artists practicing in opposition to Chinese Socialist Realism. Tansey's perception of a role for himself in late and post-Cold War theater somewhat undermines his earlier claim that this was just another show. His reaction to the Soviet work on display in *10 + 10* was culturally informed—based on his own understanding of other Soviet work, both historic and contemporary. He drew a contrast between himself and other American artists in the exhibition who he felt were “oblivious of the Russian scene” at that time. About the Soviet work on display in *10 + 10*, he commented, “there were elements that were distinctly Soviet, the pictures they had, their Modernist work, aspects of that were reconnected [in their work]. There was also a feeling of oppression.”

Gornik is uncertain about the importance of *10 + 10* for her career. As she commented, “I don't know. I was honored to be a part of it. But I'm not sure. The New York world is so much more driven by museums, collectors, and dealers. I'm struggling to imagine being on the outside.” Awed as he was by the opportunity to show with major American artists, Zhuravlev indicated that the experience of *10 + 10* represented a mix of career and politics, “Such a [high] museum level like this, never before for me, [the possibility] to exhibit with superstars like Salle. I was twenty-four, and the youngest American in show was thirty-seven: in Russia you're young at a younger age.” Zhuravlev, like others, commented that, “In Moscow *10+10* was a

prestigious project,<sup>569</sup> and has remained so in the exhibition histories of participating Soviet/Russian artists. The importance of the exhibition relates, then, to the significance of the U.S. checklist, and to the U.S. multi-city tour and not to any notion of *glasnost* gesture.

As an emerging artist, the opportunity to exhibit with established New York artists David Salle and Donald Sultan in *10 + 10* was highly significant for Bates as well; the exhibition therefore had career importance, just as it did for the Soviets. He terms the checklist of the U.S. *10 + 10* artists a “kaleidoscope, the group that didn’t fit in.” Further, *10 + 10* offered his first exposure to Soviet art of any kind. He recalls discussions with visiting artists Zvezdochetov, Zhuravlev, and Petruk during the 1989-90 tour. In his view, both the “Russian artists and the Americans felt art is much bigger than politics. Art transcends Cold War hate. It’s not a competition: artists have something in common.” He was clearly struck by the difference in the quality of their available materials, including “the type of stretchers they used [police blockade, striped wooden bars].” The social determinants of the paucity of art materials had clearly never occurred to him and, as a consequence, “you took your deal more seriously.”

On the other hand, Ross Bleckner did not actually remember participating in the exhibition, musing that it must have been arranged by his gallery as was the case

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<sup>569</sup> Roiter, author interview.

for most of the exhibitions in which he participated.<sup>570</sup> David Salle reacted similarly.<sup>571</sup> Bleckner wished that he had engaged more with the social circulation of the exhibition and its artists, both in the United States and in the U.S.S.R. From a Russian-Polish-Jewish background, Bleckner mentions a post-*10 + 10* trip to St. Petersburg and a significant, later involvement with Cuban artists, who have been subject in several ways to conditions similar to the Soviet artists of *10 + 10*, notably in the lack of access to materials and the “political sublimation.” Bleckner’s subsequent experiences parallel those of Mark Tansey and tantalizingly suggest a connection to their shared experience of authoritarian governments in *10 + 10* and, for Bleckner, other venues.

For Pavel Khoroshilov, chief of the government’s art export exhibitions and sales bureau, the chief consideration was economic. These exhibitions were a “coming forward to [the] capitalist world, to find a mutual artistic context for Russian and western art. Some artists found themselves on international level of contemporary art, others not.”<sup>572</sup> In fact, Fort Worth Modern Art Museum director Marla Price recounts that the Soviet artists were most interested in establishing international markets for their works in the wake of the Sotheby’s auction, experiencing for the first time the economic effect of the free market system. In sharp contrast to the 1970s model of Soviet artistic travel in the west, they were not

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<sup>570</sup> Ross Bleckner, author interview.

<sup>571</sup> David Salle, author correspondence.

<sup>572</sup> Khoroshilov, author interview.

interested in emigration.<sup>573</sup> Viktor Misiano comments, in fact, that the instant encroachment of the gallery system in the wake of the auction precipitated the bureaucratic break with official culture.<sup>574</sup> The post-Sotheby's market provided a new source of revenue for the government, which received 90% of hard currency receipts for art sales.

But the situation is more complex than Khoroshilov suggests. Zakharov locates the relative failure—from the point of view of participating Soviet artists—of export exhibitions such as *10 + 10* in fundamental mutual misperceptions. For American audiences, the Soviet artists were viewed principally—and incorrectly as I have attempted to demonstrate—as outspoken dissidents and their practices categorized as highly political in nature. The archivist of the Moscow Conceptual movement, Zakharov emphasized that while art was ideological in the 1960s, it was not in the 1980s, in discussing the miscomprehension of the American viewing public. As a consequence, for the Soviet artists, even though they were eager for contacts with U.S. gallerists on a new, international stage, entry into the American market was, for most, impossible. They were judged on political merits, not aesthetic. In a film made by Barbara Herbich documenting the Sotheby's Art Auction in Moscow 1988, Zakharov presciently comments, “I think that in a couple of years

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<sup>573</sup> Marla Price, interview; see, for example, defections of Mikhail Baryshnikov to Canada, 1974; Natalia Makarova to London, 1970.

<sup>574</sup> Misiano, quoted in: Barbara Herbich director, *USSR Art*, Direct Cinema Limited, release: 1990.

interest in Russia will dry up, and we will be left with this dry wall.”<sup>575</sup> Zhuravlev concurred with Zakharov that, “The west couldn’t disconnect art from politics; couldn’t accept artists as artists.”<sup>576</sup> In addition, he felt that U.S. critical reception centered on the notion that “they can make images like us.”

Russian curator and art historian Oleysa Turkina underscores the geopolitical novelty of Russian 1980s art:

Understandably, in 1988 Russian art was utopian by impulse as it strived to win the world. In the eyes of the West, Russian art was seen as the successor of Russian avant-garde. In the immediate post-*perestroika* years we took the center place in the interest shown by the relevant Western institutions. Russia was first discovered at the time as in the epoch of the great geographical discoveries. The great demand for Russian art was politically motivated.<sup>577</sup>

Khoroshilov understood that, “They were not underground artists anymore. It was good for them, at this point, to create this impression that they were underground for as long as possible. And we understand this now: it was a kind of honor from Brezhnev’s time which they used, there was nothing bad.”<sup>578</sup> Roiter, one of the few to build a successful career in the west—New York and Amsterdam—comments on the difficulties of many Soviet artists in launching an international career, despite the early flurry of exhibitions. Commenting on the fundamental misunderstanding of the

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<sup>575</sup> Zakharov, in: Herbich, *USSR Art*.

<sup>576</sup> Zakharov, author interview.

<sup>577</sup> Oleysa Turkina, interview, “Here and now,” *Contemporary Art in Russia* (Moscow: Institute for Contemporary Art, 2004), 45.

<sup>578</sup> Khoroshilov, author interview.

Soviet art, he said that “there is no one to blame, we suffered on both sides from lack of communication.”<sup>579</sup>

At the same time, for official artists of the last Soviet generation, the effect of *glasnost* promotion of an alternative form of art for export to western countries proved deeply destabilizing. Despite having engaged in an international exchange program of modern art with Robert Rauschenberg, Tair Salakhov was “very aggressive against contemporary art,” according to his daughter Aidan Salakhova. As she notes, “The problems started 1992-93.”<sup>580</sup> For western collectors and investors, *perestroika* was in fashion, and killed the local market. However, we Russians don’t understand what is [sic] contemporary art.” Salakhova sold traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century art in the years 1993-97 “to feed my contemporary artists.” For her, “Europe and the U.S. lost interest in Russian art because the beginning of this interest was not because everyone loves Russian art, but the political question. People went to Russian art because of political situation.”<sup>581</sup>

In the early Soviet state, Malevich and Tatlin passionately believed in the agency of art practice and exhibition in the prosecution of the Revolution. In their spirit, this study has considered several related questions. First, how did art exhibitions arise on the national and international stages as metonyms of the state and

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<sup>579</sup> Roiter, author interview.

<sup>580</sup> Salakhova’s comment implies that the official artists continued to enjoy some measure of success in the *perestroika* era. Salakhova, author interview.

<sup>581</sup> Salakhova, author interview.

instruments of cultural diplomacy? Secondly, what, was the nature of the space of presentation of art exhibitions? Thirdly, what, if any, were the consequences or changes brought about by the presentation of national exhibitions? Fourthly, what was the role of the oppositional artist at particular moments in the enunciation of national identity through the vehicle of the national exhibition. I have tried to answer the first question by pointing to the various factors—economic, political and social—that informed national exhibitions from their origins in the trade fairs and spectacles of Revolutionary France, through the rise of the world's fairs and the proliferation of international group art exhibitions in the twentieth century, and culminating in the application of the exhibition as a soft-power weapon in the Cold War. While a theme of international peace suffused the world's fairs from their beginning in the *Crystal Palace* exhibition in London, 1851 to the Brussels exhibition in 1958 (its powerful logo of the *Atomium* intended to remind visitors of the perils and possibilities of the nuclear age), in fact, the fairs were always underpinned by geopolitical, commercial and diplomatic considerations. By extension, as national exhibitions of fine arts became permanent features of world's fairs, they, too, came to be considered useful tools in the arsenal of cultural diplomacy. At the 1958 fair, as we have seen, the attempt of some on the U.S. steering committee to eliminate an exhibition of elite arts in favor of a display of popular artifacts, failed: the U.S. had claimed elite cultural leadership at the New York 1939 World's Fair, and was not willing to enter into relations not premised on equality with the older nations of the world.

In relation to the second question, I have argued that the space comprised by the world's fair or the international exhibition was a heterotopic, diplomatic free-zone. An arena for the enunciation of national identity through the vehicle of the art exhibition, it was both envisaged and constructed as oppositional and neutral. A space for the articulation of administrative stasis or of change, the temporality of the exhibition ensured an end-point to the confrontation with other cultures and a release from the need for insistent, ideological claims. The conditions underwriting the zone of neutrality lie in the nature of the organization of exhibitions that, from the time of the world's fairs, were negotiated through diplomatic channels with the attendant attributes of immunity from seizure or prosecution. Thus, the site of the exhibition provided governments a rare opportunity for an unfettered exercise in the construction of self-identity on a world stage. Yale Richmond noted the role of sovereign immunity: "during the twenty years that I worked on US-Soviet exchange of exhibitions, the question of confiscation or censorship never came up. Those were government exhibitions, and the property of each government. Besides, each side knew that if it tried to censor or confiscate, there would be reciprocal action by the other side." Legislative immunity from seizure in the U.S. was, he recalled, matched by a letter from the Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R. The consular-like neutrality of the heterotopic zone served as a proviso, however, for oppositional political or social response, even under the most threatening conditions, as in the clash of symbols at the 1939 Paris *Exposition Universelle*.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>582</sup> Yale Richmond, author correspondence.

In answer to the third question, the effect of national art exhibitions— worlds on view—is subtle and often imperceptible: at times thought-provoking, perhaps disturbing, or ennobling, the trace of the exhibition has changed as the expressions of national identity have shifted over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The various implications of militarism, imperialism, colonialism, monarchism, and republicanism have been exposed at various times throughout this genealogy. In this light, Ambassador Steven Rhinesmith, founding director of the late Cold War U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative, commented: “Overall, most would say that cultural exchanges were a helpful addition to the US-Soviet dialogue of the late 1980s. I remember Secretary Shultz said to me one day during a particularly difficult period in negotiations that the citizen diplomacy effort seemed to be the only bright spot in the dialogue. So it seems that this was a useful effort alongside the difficult discussions around human rights, disarmament and other areas of tension during this time.”<sup>583</sup> As it had done historically, cultural exchange once more afforded the metonymic presence of the opponent on foreign soil, creating a special space of apposition as opposed to confrontation.

John Bowlt argues that, while it is impossible to gauge the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy during the Cold War, exhibitions “softened the Ministry of Culture over time.”<sup>584</sup> Bowlt further observes, “you can’t value personal initiatives, people meeting people, artists, lecturers, all are drops in the ocean, which increased

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<sup>583</sup> Rhinesmith, author interview.

<sup>584</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

the level of the ocean; the new information became part of the currency. In some strange ways, these external pressures caused the Soviet Union to change itself.” By the mid-to-late 1980s, Bowlt believes that “no one thought the Soviet Union could go back. The fax machine saved us from going to war. The Soviet Union by now was part of an international community with tight links, part of a net, and it could not isolate itself again.” Although it was a “time of great transformation,” Bowlt remarks that “no one thought the Soviet Union would collapse. This was one of the most powerful and potential nations, with rich raw materials, the future was there.”<sup>585</sup>

Behind the scenes, the conditions of the art and culture industries, on occasion, generated forms of aggression, noted in Geldzahler’s insistence on the inclusion of avant-garde practices in a 1970s exhibition of American Realism destined for Soviet audiences, or in the reactions of conservative artists, empowered by right-wing U.S. political leaders, to export exhibitions of advanced American art. I have shown that intervention at key moments by political leaders including Presidents Eisenhower, Reagan and Gorbachev bore witness to a common understanding of the power of the neutral stage as a venue for ideological enunciation. Carter Brown, Director of the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., commented wryly on the geopolitics of cultural conflict, seeing beyond the existing political contours, and affirming the neutrality of the art exhibition. As he notes, “We plan these shows several years in advance. And we feel that we are not congratulating, or even approving everything done by a modern state that happens to

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<sup>585</sup> Bowlt, author interview.

occupy the same geographical terrain of a state that has produced or collected art in the past.”<sup>586</sup>

The question that naturally arises once more concerns the impact and effectiveness of cultural propaganda projects in transmitting or repudiating the ideologies of the late Cold War period. Richmond argues for the efficacy and cost efficiency of contacts and exchanges as tools of diplomacy and as agents in the collapse of communism, quoting Soviet writer Michael Mandelbaum, “The intelligentsia of today are certainly better attuned to Western values than were their predecessors a generation ago.”<sup>587</sup> With regard to the impact of exhibitions within the U.S.S.R and their role in the concluding days of the Cold War, Bowlt comments that, while it is impossible to gauge effectiveness, exhibitions “softened the Ministry of Culture over time.” Bowlt further remarks, “you can’t value personal initiatives, people meeting people, artists, lecturers, all are drops in the ocean, which increased the level of the ocean; the new information became part of the currency. In some strange ways, these external pressures caused the Soviet Union to change itself.”<sup>588</sup> In fact, in 1989, the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall (as well as the launch of *10 + 10*), Gorbachev and Bush were continuing to hold discussions on military build-ups and still engaging with the neutral voice of cultural diplomacy. The Malta Agreement reached in that year placed limits on holdings of chemical arsenals; it also included a joint call to hold the 2004 Olympics in both sectors of the city of Berlin.

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<sup>586</sup> “Exhibition Now in Doubt,”- *The Washington Star*, January 10, 1980, YRPFA.

<sup>587</sup> Richmond, *Cultural Exchange*, xiv.

<sup>588</sup> For this and following, Bowlt, author interview.

The U.S. desire to universalize values rooted in individual freedoms under the safeguard of the democratic American government continued to express itself during the late Cold War with exhibitions across the spectrum, ranging from consumer technology to the fine arts. While earlier exchanges had the goal to reshape the U.S.S.R. along western lines, Matlock finds a different syntax for the language of late Cold War exchange. “We are all striving for openness, democracy. There has been too much emphasis on the West versus others, and what we should be after is a law-based opening up. We must make every effort to drop West versus East. Reagan and Gorbachev had the shared goal to end the Cold War cooperatively. There was no defeat of Communism.”<sup>589</sup> In preparation for the 1989 Malta Agreement between Gorbachev and Bush, Gorbachev forbade any discussion of imposing Western values because “it makes it look like we’re defeated.” Matlock notes in addition that, as a condition of participation, Gorbachev insisted that the language of winners and losers be kept out of the discussions in the construction of the termination of the Cold War. Both sides dropped their rhetoric, especially Gorbachev, who “desired to keep ideology out.” For Matlock, then, the purpose of the *10 + 10* project, and other exchange agreements of the time, was a “co-shared cultural transformation.” This would imply a co-mingling of two nations, a cultural imbrication at the site of the exhibitions. Matlock notes that the InterCultura protocol lacked propagandistic rhetoric from either side, constructing, instead, a shared vision of enhancing mutual understanding. Soviet and U.S. officials were “in this together, with the goal to fulfill

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<sup>589</sup> For this and following, Matlock, author interview.

the Soviet mandate to promote values of free speech and freedom. We were testing how far you could go, and art was a part of it.” Matlock’s comment, once again, affirms the ineffable role of cultural diplomacy in state negotiations.

As for the fourth question, I have traced the manipulation of the oppositional artist, avant-garde or academic, as a projection of the liberalism of the ruling authority, absolutist or democratic, through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, culminating in the late Cold War in *10 + 10*. The tradition of painting, under attack in that era on both sides, was jointly recuperated as a postmodernist gesture. This bold act paralleled other Cold War developments including the revival of the joint space program. Whereas the détente-era mission featured the joint docking of two manned space vehicles—the Apollo and the *Soyuz* crafts in 1975—in the postmodernist *glasnost* era, the tasks were broken down, the Soviets delivering the *Mir* station and the Americans delivering parts, in the effort to complete construction of the International Space Station. The race was over, “no winners, no losers” as Gorbachev had demanded, a postmodernist draw.

Arthur Hartman, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1981-87, affirmed the political significance of engaging the opposition in the practice of cultural diplomacy. He invited distinguished American artists who were “not sympathetic to Reagan policy” (including singer-songwriter John Denver and Muppets puppeteer Jim Hensen), to the American Embassy in Moscow “so that the Soviets wouldn’t get them

and use these folks for their own purposes.”<sup>590</sup> The guest audience comprised the creative intelligentsia of Moscow, including the political dissidents. Hartman was emphatic on the importance of a cultural diplomacy rooted in openness and freedom of expression, without government censorship. As he states, “My view is that government money is useful if no strings are attached and it is mainly for exchanges. It is important that the exchanges be picked by an impartial body, like the Fulbright Commission. Otherwise you get governments trying to impose political conditions and this destroys the very purpose of exchanges, which are to give people an unbiased look at our society and to give academics a feeling of what it is like to pursue studies in a free atmosphere.”<sup>591</sup> Richard Lanier, former executive director of the Trust for Mutual Understanding, concurs. In Lanier’s view, the most effective exchanges are those which showcase advanced artists and art practices, and which are free from political agendas.<sup>592</sup>

Khoroshilov describes a similar air of openness in the *glasnost* era, and reaffirms the para-official diplomacy of the art exhibition. As he comments, “the government allowed everything: for an exhibition Russia-Israel, there were no diplomatic ties between Russia and Israel at the time. This is the second year of *perestroika*, everybody was starting to live like first day of summer, this will never finish. [the] sun was shining forever.” Many exhibitions were organized by the Ministry of Culture for export to the United States, Germany, and Italy. Khoroshilov

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<sup>590</sup> Arthur Hartman, author interview.

<sup>591</sup> Hartman, author interview.

<sup>592</sup> Lanier, author interview.

describes the art that appeared, what he called “the art of *perestroika*,” as a visual response to the era by individuals who never continued to practice after 1991.<sup>593</sup>

While the spreading mantle of global practice—political or artistic—has dominated the geopolitical landscape, the doctrinaire action of rulers of Russia and the Republican leadership of the U.S. early in the twenty-first century guaranteed a role for oppositional figures, whether carnivalesque or deadpan, that might border on the dangerous. In either case, opposition would imply a dialectic and the possibility of the resurrection of a neomodernism. The Moscow *Voina Group*, whose name means “war,” is a collective of very young artists who perform actions working with photography, video, posters, and strategies of political protest. *Voina* ensured the enmity of the Russian government by performing actions in protest of the controlled presidential election in March 2008 and the trial of Moscow curator Andrei Erofeev. Erofeev, known to be opposed to Vladimir Putin, was arrested and charged for pornographic and anti-religious curatorial selections in conjunction with the exhibition *Forbidden Art*, Sakharov Museum, Moscow, 2007.<sup>594</sup> The *Voina Group* actually sets out to have its members arrested; in fact, a recent installation in Moscow June 2009, at the exhibition *Lettrisme*, curated by Erofeev and on view at the House of Artists (formerly the site of the official Union of Artists), was closed down.<sup>595</sup> Among other artifacts, the installation featured blown-up photographs of explicit

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<sup>593</sup> Khoroshilov, author interview.

<sup>594</sup> The right-wing group People’s Synod, including Russian Orthodox priests, pressed charges against Erofeev.

<sup>595</sup> Youtube, June 10, 2009 (taken down by midnight June 10, 2009).

group sex, as well as a banner containing obscene epithets against Putin. The assembled objects sat comfortably within the contours of the curatorial brief: the importance of language in now historical unofficial art practices of Moscow Conceptual Art. The real reason *Voina* was expelled, according to Viktor Misiano, was the emotionally explosive history of the leading member of the collective.<sup>596</sup> The landlord for the House of Artists did not care about the sensationalism of the work; in sophisticated Moscow, according to Misiano, no one does. Instead, it was the possibility of misbehavior that caused the artists to be expelled—only to land safely, for a few hours, on YouTube before being taken down. While the YouTube video of the installation and its aftermath appears to show the artists being removed bodily from the exhibition by police and taken into protective custody, it is, in fact, a fiction. *Voina* constructs a carnivalesque play of issues of the greatest seriousness. Erofeev's trial is real and he faces a sentence of five to seven years. Or, perhaps, it is the curator's trial that is the carnivalesque, and the judicial threat is empty. Either way, there appears to be a threat of punishment and the possibility of the absence of punishment. Entertainment or serious exhibition, the *Voina Group* project invokes many of the themes under discussion in this study and points a fresh direction in national and/or international exhibitions.

With this in mind, The *Farsites* project, part of Insite at the San Diego Museum of Art in 2005, exhibited political manifestos posted to the walls of the museum that were produced in the streets by the *Taller Popular de Serigrafia*, the

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<sup>596</sup> Misiano, author interview.

urban protest art movement that emerged in Buenos Aires after the 2001 Argentinian economic collapse and erupting violence.<sup>597</sup> The San Diego Museum of Art lies at a great distance from the streets of Buenos Aires; yet the voices of protest against the closing of the factories that are encoded in the handbills and t-shirts were, and continue to be, distributed as social interventions in the *biennale*-equivalent consciousness-raising of cultural festivals. The smooth glide of their transition into the spaces of the fine arts—the white cube(s) of the museum, *biennale*, or festival — reaffirms the political value of the neutral site of cultural diplomacy, known to both Courbet and Picasso. The contemporary global network of *biennales* and international art festivals is in a constant process of remarking the geopolitical map as new geocultural capitals rise, promoting national and international exhibitions, sanitizing and neutralizing oppositional practices within the framework of cultural capitalism, and joining a genealogy that this study has traced.

### *Coda*

In the tense moments of August 1991—a time by which the works of many unofficial artists had been circulated in the west in exhibitions organized by the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Culture as it promoted the openness and freedoms of *perestroika*—unofficial art would play a key role in the iconography of the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. Here, the grand narratives of the revolutionary state of France, Napoleon’s imperial ambition, the holy fool, and heterotopia intertwined in the defense of the reemerging state of Russia. During that summer, unofficial painter

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<sup>597</sup> InSite: Farsight, San Diego: InSite, 2005.

Andrei Filippov presented a birthday gift to fellow artist Konstantin Zvezdochetov, member of the *Avantgardisty*, author of pseudo-mythological parodies, King of the imaginary kingdom of *Perdo*, and widely regarded as a contemporary “holy fool.” The gift, a large, artisanal Russian flag featuring the imperial eagle, became a prop in an impromptu, private performance in Zvezdochetov’s Moscow apartment, during which the pair made humorous reference to Napoleon’s failed invasion of Russia.<sup>598</sup> Within days, Filippov’s work, the only Russian flag on hand, soared at full mast above the Russian White House, appropriated and repurposed as the emblem of Russian resistance and freedom against the attempted Soviet military coup, and signifying a new “world on view.” Below on the street, now transformed into a battleground, Russian citizens—among them many official and unofficial artists joined together—answered President Boris Yeltsin’s call and took to the barricades in defense of fragile freedoms.

In a 1990 journal interview, U.S.S.R. Minister of Culture Nikolai Gubenko, a playwright and director appointed to his position on the eve of the dissolution of the empire, deftly quoted nineteenth-century playwright Anton Chekhov, saying that, “an artist should be engaged in politics in so far as he has to defend himself from it.”<sup>599</sup> Gubenko’s implications are unclear as to whether he affirmed the exhaustion of Socialist Realism by this date or he was commenting on the political indifference of the generation of the Art of the Quiet. What is known is that such provocative

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<sup>598</sup> Andrei Filippov, author interview.

<sup>599</sup> Nikolai Gubenko, *The Literary Gazette*, March 1990, no. 1.

commentary kept geocultural conversation alive while superpower conservatives on both sides remained skeptical of rapprochement between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. or the future of Soviet *perestroika*. In a Bakhtinian reversal of the role of Jacques-Louis David in Revolutionary France, Gubenko deployed the refusal of Chekhov in the construction of a new Soviet artistic/political order.

The full significance of *10+10* as a joint project of the Cold War powers may never be known. Written archives of the state departments of both countries have probably been disposed of in the United States or lost in a corner somewhere in the Russian Federation. The transformative moment of the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, erupting from the conditions of change that characterized Culture Three from its inception in the Khrushchev Thaw, marked a radical break with an order governing geopolitics throughout the twentieth century. With the small example of the missing documents, it may be seen that the historical rupture erased the traces of an exhibition of some importance, as I have hoped to demonstrate, in the closing years of the late Cold War. The historical break of 1991, and the attendant insignificance of documents on either side, demonstrates that here, history, itself was the neutralizer, erasing records in the conviction that, like the *Undiscovered Country*, global politics had changed irreversibly, casting genealogical traces to the dustheap of an indifference that was not to last.

## **Appendix**

### **List of Interviews** (in person, unless otherwise noted)

Yourii Albert, Artist, Moscow, 9/8/2007; 9/20/2007

Nikita Alexeeva, Artist, Moscow, 9/19/2007

Josef Bakstein, Art Critic, Moscow, 9/12/2007

David Bates, Artist, 2/4/2008 (by telephone)

Leonid Bazhanov, Curator and Museum Art Director, Moscow, 9/25/2007

Ray Benson, Burlington VT, former Cultural Affairs Officer, 4/28/2008

Ross Bleckner, Artist, 2/5/2008 (by telephone)

John E. Bowlt, Professor of Slavic Studies, University of Southern California  
5/25/2004 (by telephone)

John Brown, former Political Affairs Officer; Professor, Georgetown University  
2/27/2008 (by telephone)

Igor Chelkovsky, Artist, Moscow, 9/28/2007

Norton E. Dodge, Mechanicsville MD, Collector, 5/2/2008

Andrei Filippov, Artist, Moscow, 9/19/2007

Professor Arch Getty, various conversations, Moscow, 9/2007

April Gornik, Artist, 1/28/2008 (by telephone)

Gregory Guroff, former director, U.S.-Soviet Exchange Initiative; President,  
Foundation for International Arts and Education 1/25/2006 (by telephone)

Ambassador Arthur Hartman, telephone, 8/25/2007 (by telephone)

Peter Halley, Artist, 2/6/2008 (by telephone)

Ilya Kabakov, Artist, 1/29/2008 (by telephone)

Pavel Khoroshilov, officer, Ministry of Culture of the U.S.S.R.; Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 9/18/2007

Gyorgy Kisewalter, Artist, Moscow, 9/20/2007

Vitaly Komar, Artist, New York, 4/29/2008

Richard Lanier, former President, Trust for Mutual Understanding, New York, 4/27/2008

Gyorgy Litichevsky, Artist, Moscow, 9/10/2007; 9/13/2007

Annette Lemieux, Artist, 2/5/2008 (by telephone)

Ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr., 4/30/2004; 12/18/2005 (by telephone)

Rebecca Matlock, 4/30/2004; 12/18/2005 (by telephone)  
Artist, New York, 5/2/2005

Viktor Misiano, Moscow, 9/2/2007

Vladimir Mironenko, Artist, Moscow, 9/23/2007

Stas Nahmin, Rock Musician and Artist, Moscow, 9/26/2007

Alexandra Obukhova, Art Historian, Moscow, 9/27/2009

Pavel Palazhenko, Assistant to Mikhail Gorbachev, Moscow, 9/14/2007; also correspondence

Marla Price, former Curator, Director, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth 8/ 2005  
(by telephone)

Oscar Rabin, Artist, Paris, 6/6/2009

Anne-Imelda Radice, former Director, Art In America, United States Information Agency; Director, Institute for Museum and Library Services, 3/8/2007; 3/11/ 2007  
(by telephone)

Ambassador Stephen H. Rhinesmith, 2/28/2007 (by telephone)

Yale Richmond, Washington D.C. Former Political Affairs Officer, 7/ 2004;  
2/26/2008 (by telephone); also correspondence

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Aidan Salakhova, Gallerist, Artist, Teacher, Moscow, 9/25/2007

Gordon Dee Smith, former Executive Director, InterCultura, Inc. 4/15/2004; 4/20/2004 (by telephone)

Sergey Shutov, Artist, Moscow, 9/6/2007; 9/8/2007; 9/26/2007

Mark Tansey, Artist, 2/18/2008 (by telephone)

Artemy Troitsky, Moscow, Rock Musician and Critic, 9/11/2007

Vadim Zakharov, Artist, Moscow, 9/4/2007; 9/18/2007; 6/13/2009

Anatoly Zhuravlev, Artist, Moscow, 9/11/2007; 9/18/2007

Konstantin Zvezdochetov, Artist, Moscow, 9/19/2007

Larissa Zvezdochetova, Artist, Moscow, 9/22/2007

### **Correspondence**

William Fitzhugh 3/12/2007

David Remnick 12/21/2006

David Salle 5/21/2009

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48. *The American Exhibition*, Moscow, 1959, Charles Eames, detail of: Charles and Ray Eames, *Glimpses of the U.S.A.* (source: <http://vpaperny.blogspot.com/2009/07>, December 19, 2009.)
49. *Family of Man*, catalogue cover, 1955 (source: The Museum of Modern Art [MoMA], The Family of Man: The Greatest Photographic Exhibition of all Time – 503 Pictures from 68 Countries - created by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art, New York: Simon & Shuster, 1955.)
50. Jack Levine, *Welcome Home*, c. 1959 *The American Painting and Sculpture Exhibition* (source: [www.post-gazette.com](http://www.post-gazette.com).)
51. *The American Exhibition*, Moscow, 1959, detail of: Charles and Ray Eames, *Glimpses of the U.S.A.* (source: <http://vpaperny.blogspot.com/2009/07>, December 19, 2009.)
52. *Tractor Family*, *The Family of Man*, 1955 (source: MoMA, 54.)
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54. Tair Salakhov, *Portrait of the Composer Kara Karaev*, 1960 (source: Guggenheim Museum, Russia, New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2005, 388, fig. 231.)

55. Viktor Popkov, *Builders of the Bratsk Hydroelectric Power Station*, 1960-61 (source: Guggenheim Museum, Russia, 389, fig. 232).
56. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and M. Knoedler & Co., New York. Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Paintings from the U.S.S.R., Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1973.
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58. Oscar Rabin, *Passport*, 1964 (source: Guggenheim Museum, Russia, 393, fig. 236.)
59. Komar & Melamid, *Thank you Comrade Stalin for Our Happy Childhood*, 1983 (source: Ratliff, Komar & Melamid, 17, 3.)
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64. *First AptArt Exhibition*, apartment of Nikita Alekseev, 1982 (source: Alla Rosenfeld and Norton T. Dodge, Nonconformist Art, Rutgers Museum, The State University of New Jersey: Thames & Hudson, 1995, 328, fig. 15:11.)
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67. Yurii Albert, *I'm Not Baselitz*, 1986 (source: The Fort Worth Art Association, 10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters, New York: Harry S. Abrams and Leningrad: Aurora Publishers, 1989, 47.)
68. Yurii Albert, *Form and Content No. 4: From the Series Democratic Art: Painting for Sailors*, 1988 (source: *Ibid.*, 46.)

69. Yurii Albert, *I'm Not Jasper Johns*, 1981 (source: Ibid., 45.)
70. Vladimir Mironenko, *Completely Secret (Plan for World Transformation)*, 1988 (source: Ibid., 49.)
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72. Yurii Petruk, *Pharoah Laika I*, from *The Legend of Laika*, 1988 (source: Ibid., 58.)
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111. Eric Bulatov, *Red Horizon*, 1971-72 (source: Ibid., 234.)
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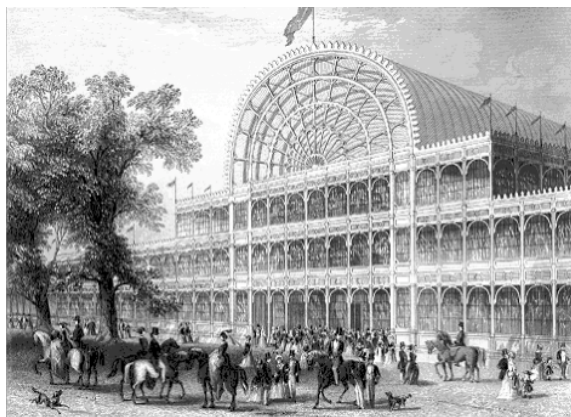


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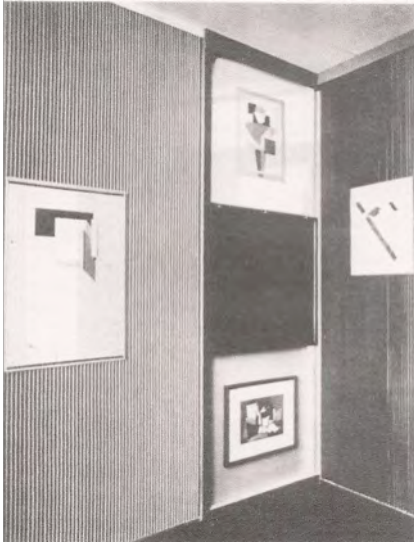


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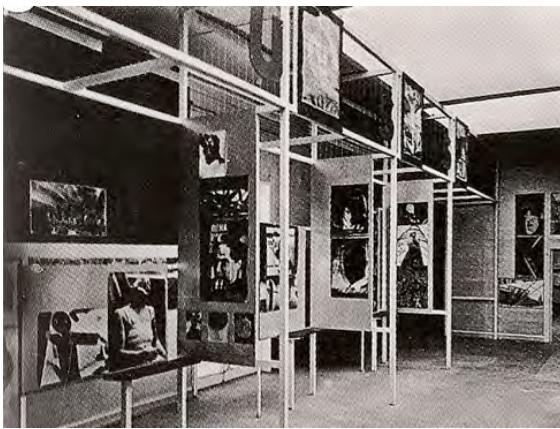


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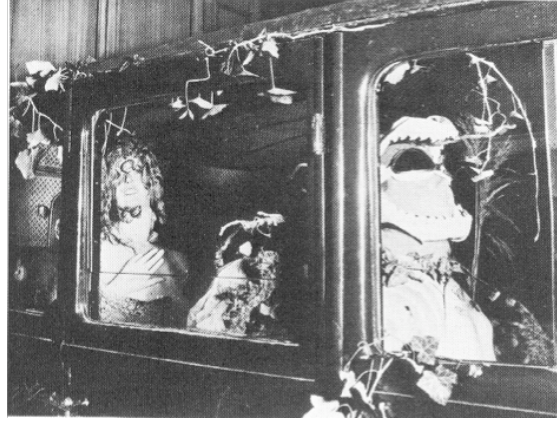


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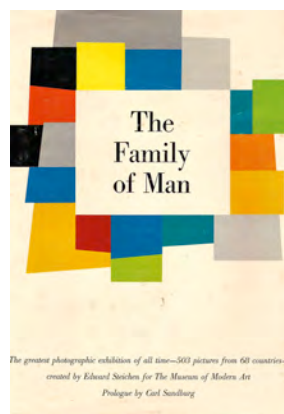


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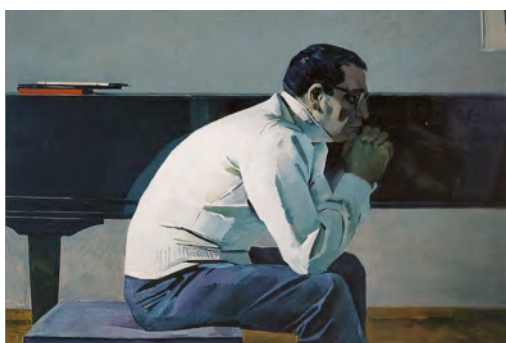


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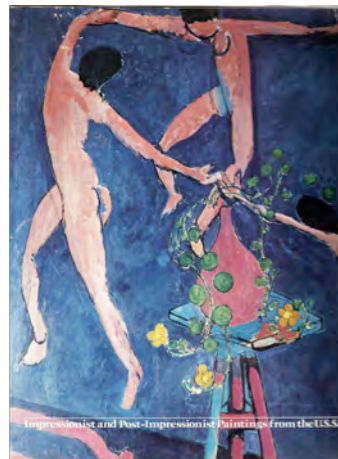


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Figure 57. Komar & Melamid, *Bulldozer Exhibition*, 1974.



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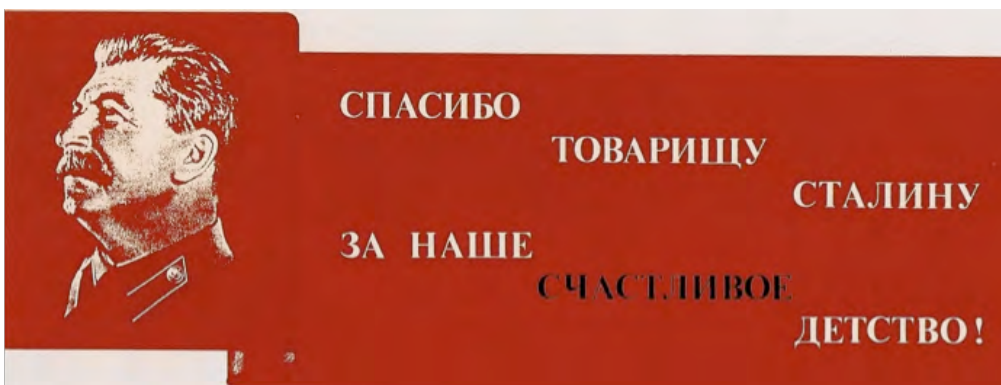


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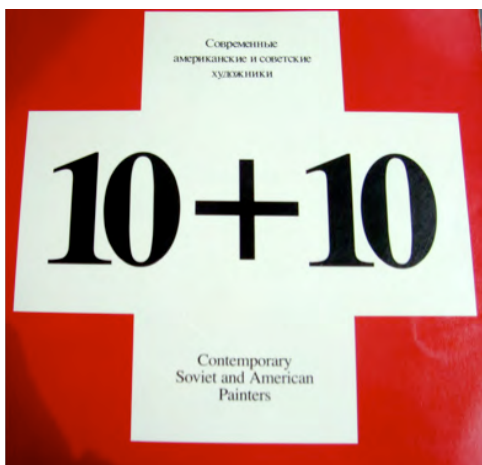


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Figure 64. *First AptArt Exhibition*, apartment of Nikita Alekseev, 1982.

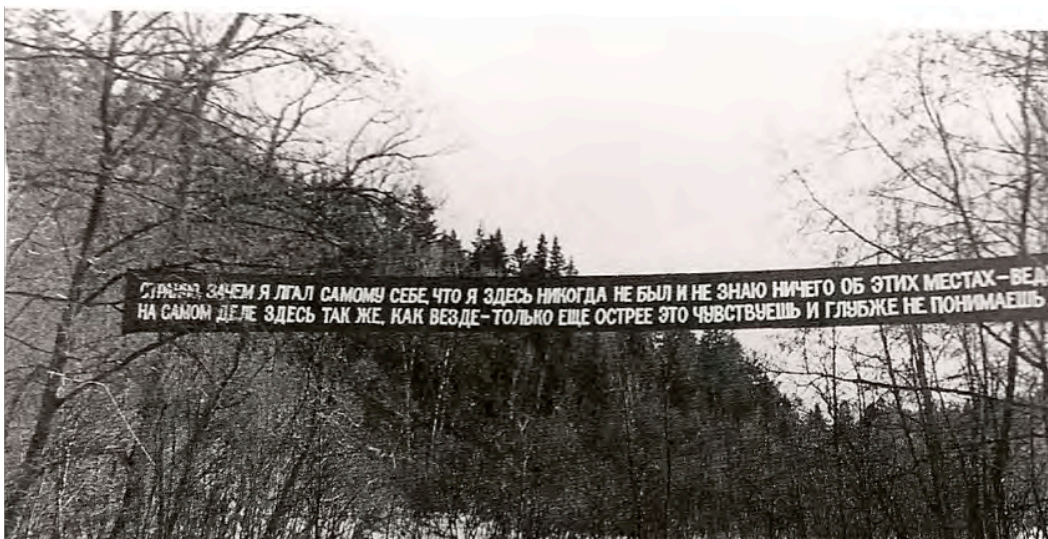


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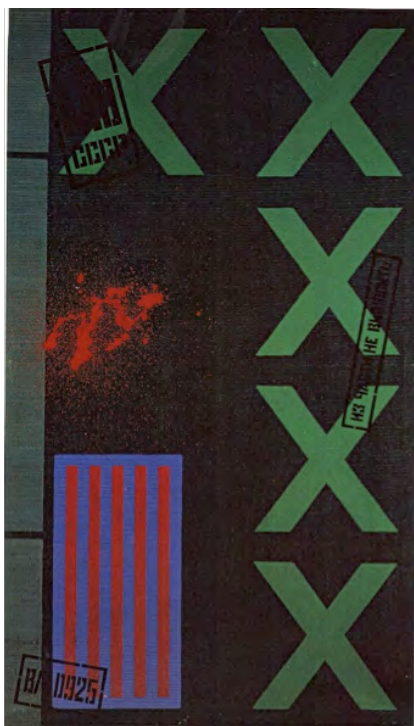


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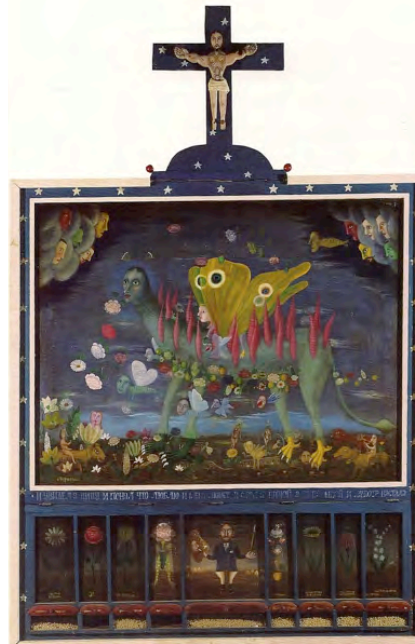


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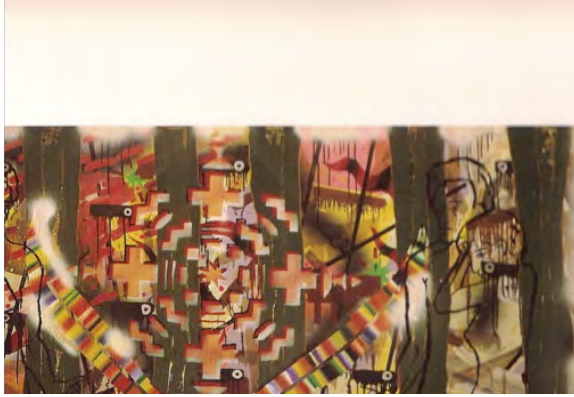


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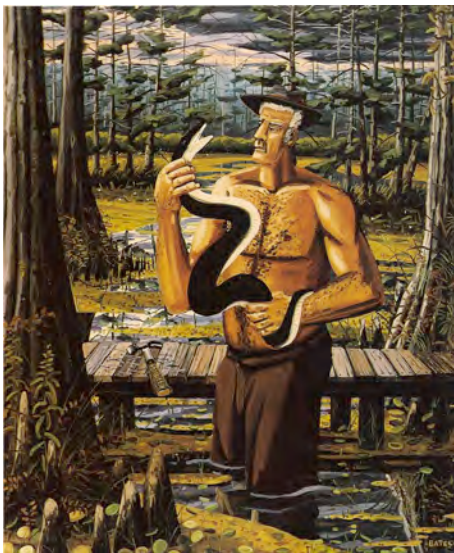


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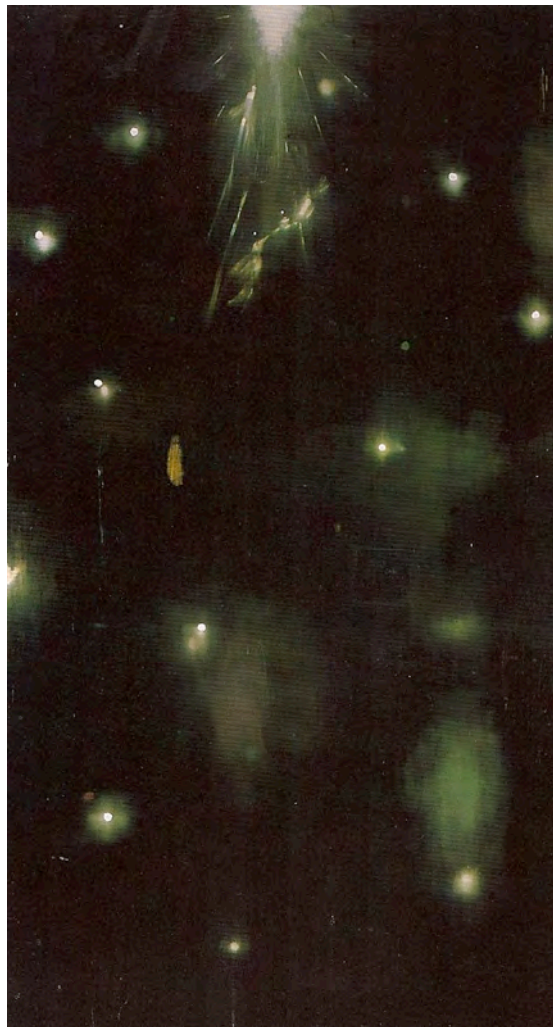


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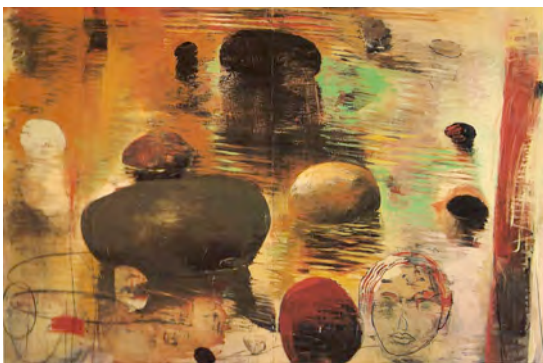


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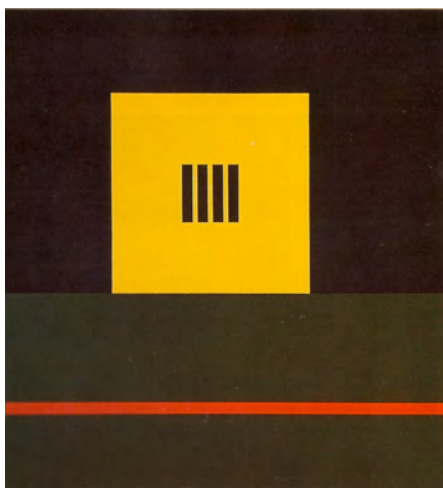


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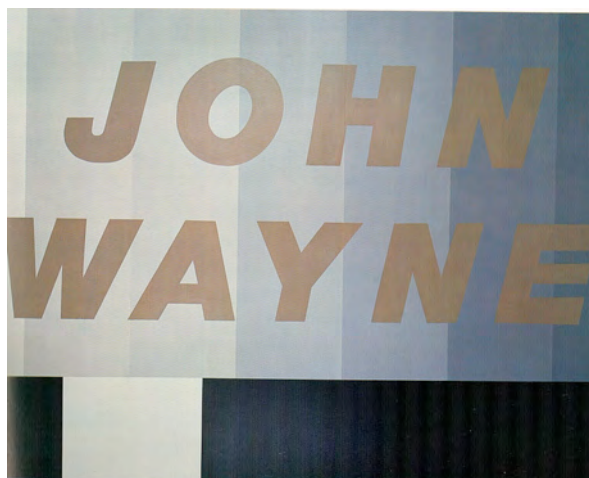


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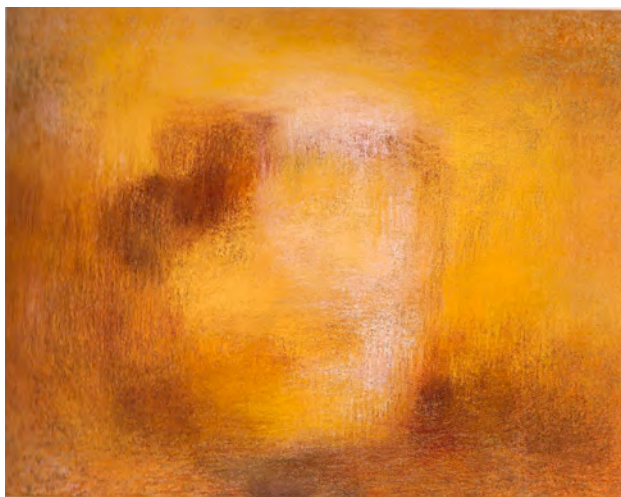


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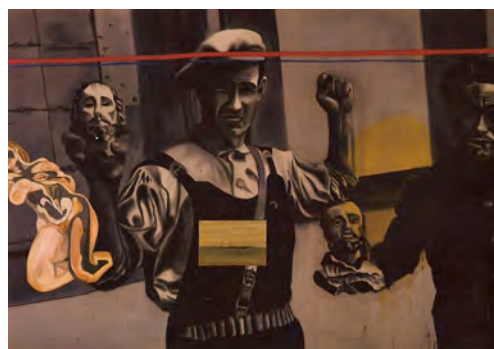


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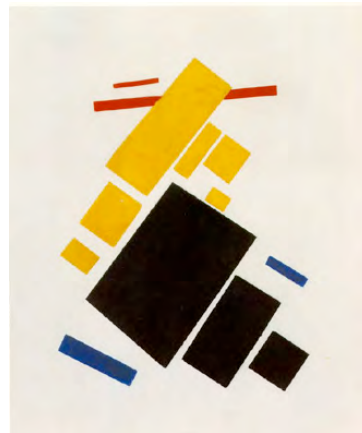


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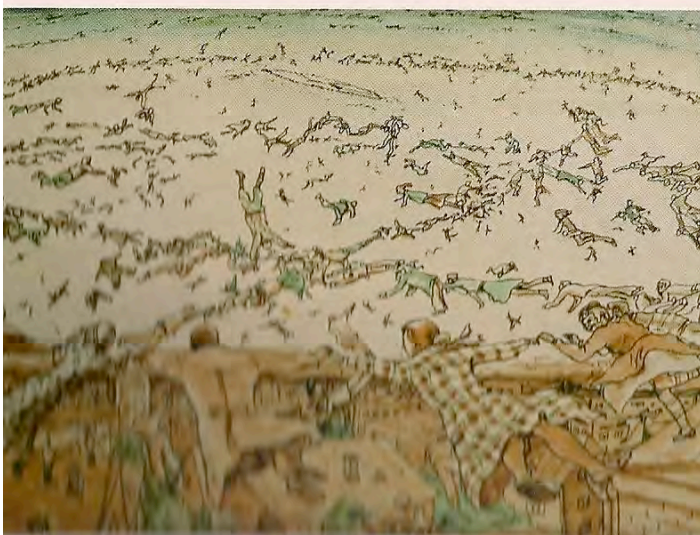


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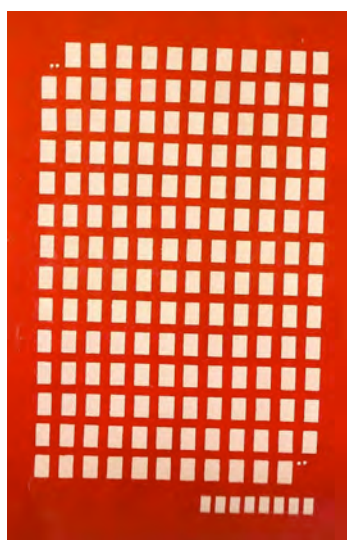


Figure 122. Komar & Melamid, *Quotation*, 1972.



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