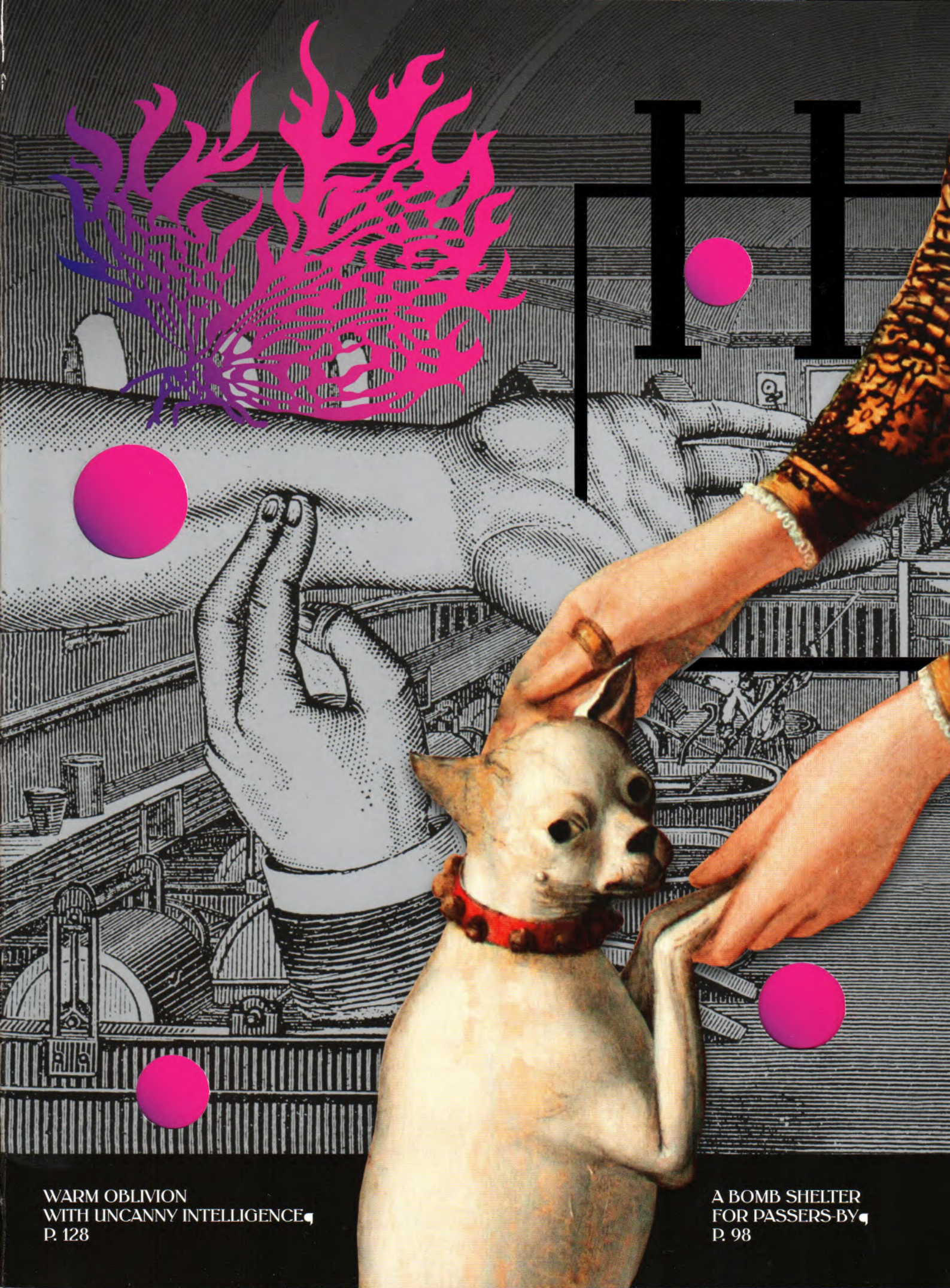

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THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

HERMITAGE MAGAZINE

ISSUE #29

THE MOROZOV BROTHERS ¶ REMBRANDT
IN THE MIRROR OF TIME ¶ PORCELAIN ¶ DEFENCE
OF THE CITIES ¶ ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ¶
THE PALACE SQUARE ¶ NABOKOV ¶

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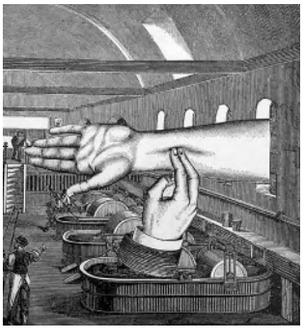

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Fragments:
Vittore Carpaccio
Two Venetian Ladies
Museo Correr, Venice

Etching **Franz Roh**
1960s

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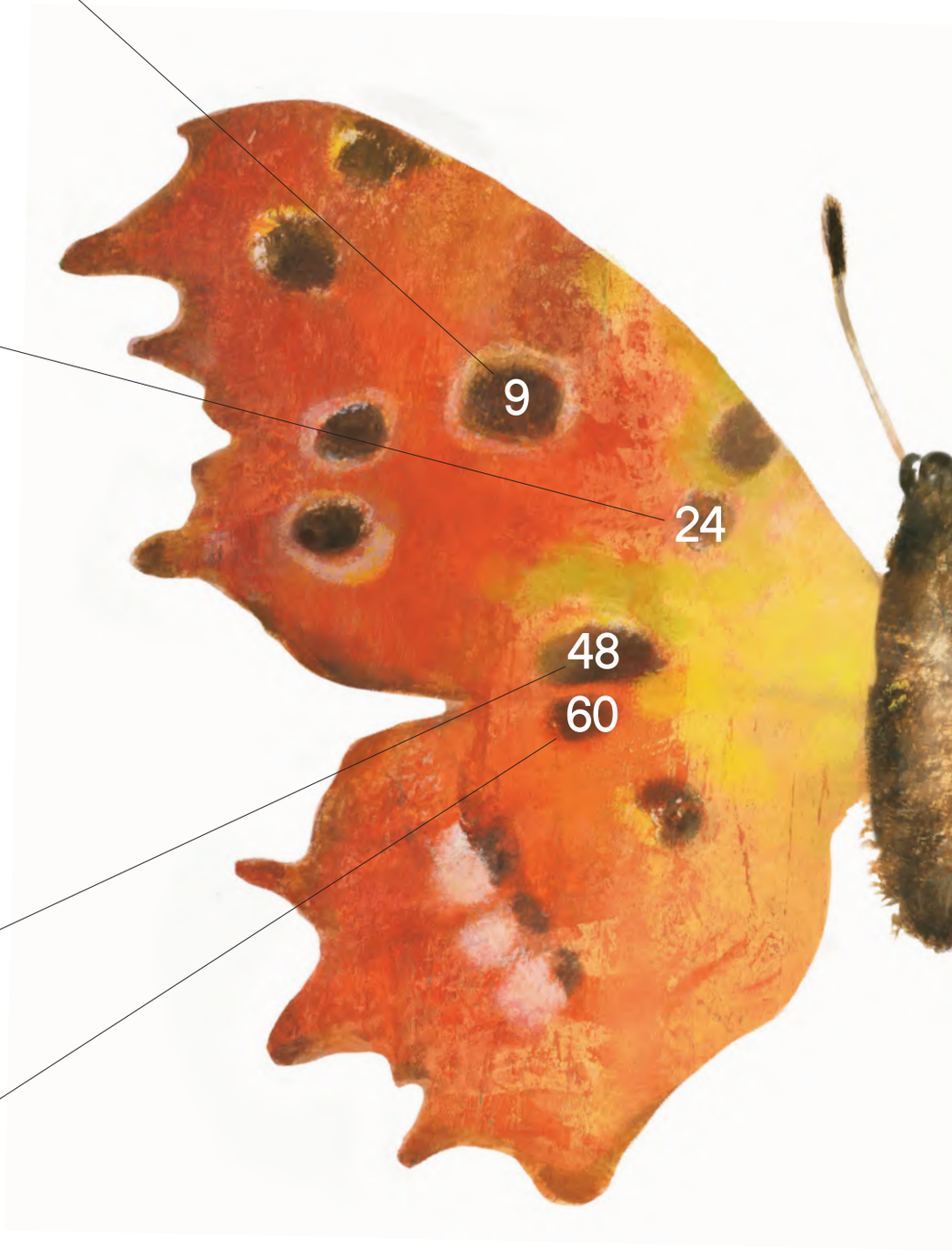

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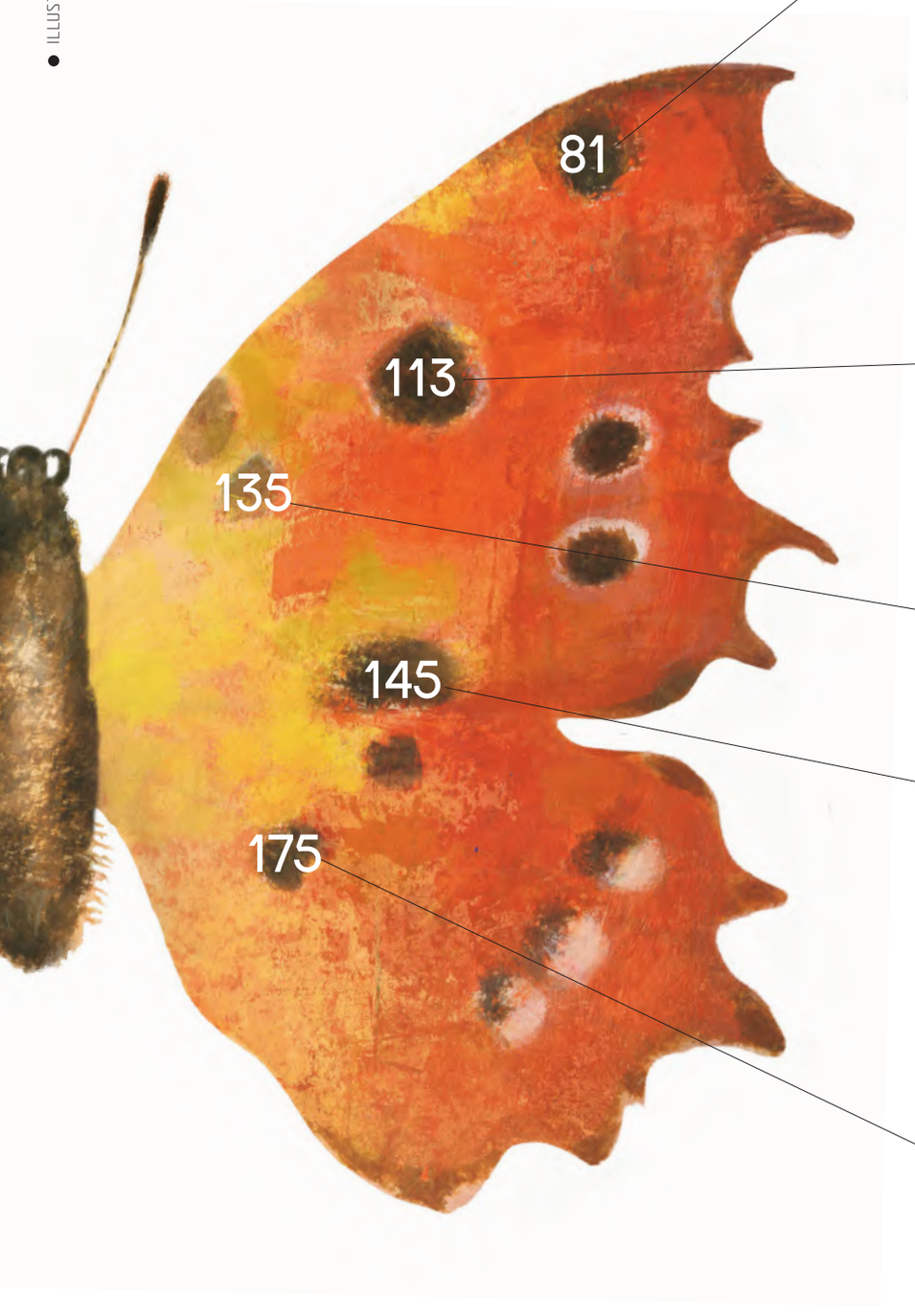

DEFENCE OF THE CITIES

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

ARCHITECTURE

THE PALACE SQUARE

NABOKOV

PHOTO: © MIKHAIL VILCHUK, 2019

Mikhail Piotrovsky and Alexander Sokurov. April 2019

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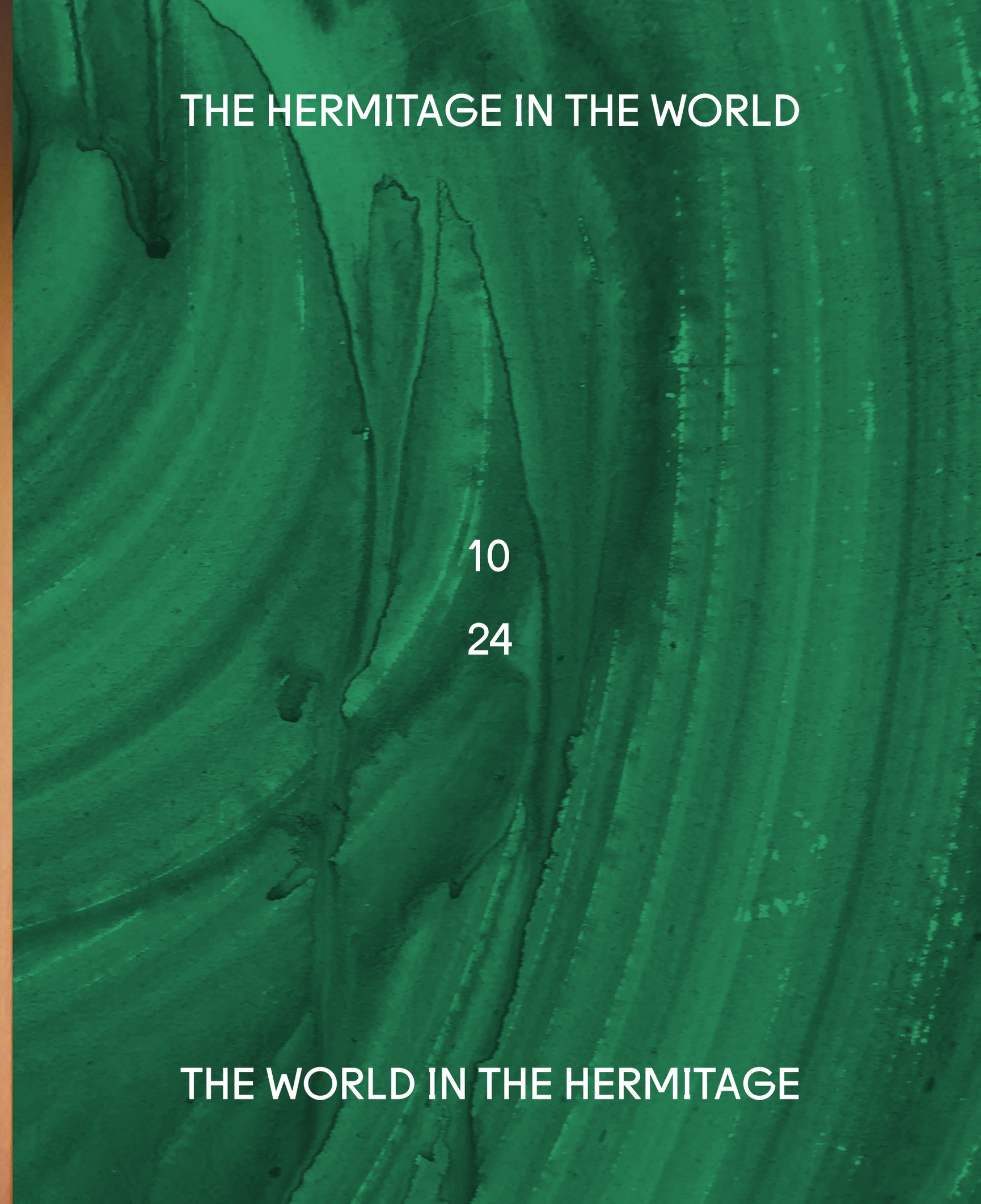

THE HERMITAGE IN THE WORLD

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THE WORLD IN THE HERMITAGE

MOSCOW

SHCHUKIN
BIOGRAPHY OF A COLLECTION

PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
19 JUNE — 15 SEPTEMBER 2019

PHOTO: © PRESS SERVICE OF THE THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, 2019

At the Pushkin museum exhibition, Dance was displayed separately, in the largest space in the museum, the White Hall, to emphasise its key role in the development of Sergei Shchukin's collection and his collecting philosophy.

Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of the State Hermitage Museum

Shchukin himself understood the enormous educational role of his work. The amazing Russian avant-garde was nurtured by his collection... In the 1930s, paintings from his collection held at the Hermitage were already entering into the dialogue between classic and modern art, which is so popular nowadays... In the Soviet Union, shut off from influences from the rest of the world, artists had the unique opportunity to see the world's finest avant-garde works. And thanks to this opportunity, several generations of wonderful, world-class artists emerged in our country.

● After acquiring Claude Monet's work The Rocks at Belle Île in 1898, over the next six years Shchukin purchased Impressionists' paintings, collecting over 50 canvases by Renoir, Degas, and Monet.

● Shchukin acquired his first paintings by Gauguin and Cézanne in 1903, long before they gained wide recognition in Europe. Several years later his Gauguin collection was the finest in the world. The art critic Yakov Tugendhold, who compiled the catalogue of Shchukin's collection, called the composition of 16 Gauguin canvases hanging closely together "Gauguin's iconostasis".

● In Shchukin, Henri Matisse found an "ideal patron", and in Matisse, Shchukin found the "artist of the future". Shchukin wrote to Matisse about his decision to purchase the paintings Dance and Music: "Sir, as I was travelling (two days and two nights) I spent a great deal of time thinking, and I became ashamed of my weakness and lack of courage: one cannot leave the battlefield without putting up a fight. For this reason I have decided to exhibit your paintings. People will scream and laugh, but as it is my conviction that your path is correct, perhaps time will be my ally, and in the end I will triumph". Alexandre Benois called this decision a "feat". "This feat cost Shchukin a great deal of suffering. Now he no longer repents his audacity, but acquaintances and experts look at him askance more than ever before, and even many of his usual supporters simply shrug and wonder what he is up to"[1]. "It took courage to paint these works, but it also took bravery to purchase them," said Matisse. Shchukin hung both paintings in his mansion, in the most prominent place – on the staircase. "Shchukin said that having Dance hanging there, with its agitated movement, made it easier for him to ascend the stairs and seemed to raise him up... to the first floor"[2]. It is largely thanks to Shchukin that Russia has such a unique collection of early Matisse – 37 works by the master.

● Sergei Shchukin was one of the few people in Russia who appreciated Pablo Picasso, and he became the world's largest collector of his work (51 works – no private owner had more at the time). Shchukin preferred the early Picasso, who pioneered a new artistic movement: cubism.

● "Shchukin discussed paintings with the same enthusiasm with which he bought them. When he saw a painting, he became thrilled and excited, and dreamt of possessing it at any cost. In short, this was 'hypnosis or magic', as he explained the 'case of Picasso'. He often even had to fight with himself: he already knew that people would say he was mad when he acquired a Derain or Rousseau".

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

←

Henri Matisse
Dance
FRANCE 1909-1910
Oil on canvas
260 × 391 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1948; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Sergei Shchukin collection
Inv. № ГЭ-9673

Claude Monet
Haystack at Giverny
FRANCE, 1886
Oil on canvas
60,5 × 81,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1931; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Sergei Shchukin collection
Inv. № ГЭ-6563

This exhibition showcased over 450 works of painting and sculpture from the collection of renowned patron of 20th-century art Sergei Ivanovich Shchukin (1854–1936) and his brothers, one of the most significant collections of European modernist art, encompassing the most important artistic movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
In 1948, Sergei Shchukin's collection was divided between the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and the State Hermitage. Its reunification at the exhibition in Moscow was an important cultural event. The exhibition was viewed by over 350,000 people, making it the most visited exhibition at the Pushkin Museum in 38 years (by number of visitors per day). Sergei Shchukin's intuition, his ability to take risks, and his willingness to acquire works by unrecognised artists allowed him to amass, in under 20 years, one of the best art collections in the world, and one that played a crucial role in the history of 20th-century art. The paintings he acquired were often ridiculed, but in building his collection, Shchukin was quite prepared to go against generally accepted tastes.

Shchukin's activity as a collector is usually divided into three stages: the first (1898–1904), in which he mainly sought works by Monet; the second (1904–1910), the period of Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin; and the last (1910–1914), linked with the names of Matisse, Derain, and Picasso.

1_____*Benois, Alexandre. Artistic Letters // Rech, 1911.*
2_____*Rudin, Neol (Nikolay Preobrazhensky) "At Shchukin's Gallery". Cited from: Nevasimaya gazeta, 1993. 1 Dec.*

MOSCOW

PETER THE GREAT
COLLECTOR, SCHOLAR, ARTIST

MOSCOW KREMLIN MUSEUMS
29 NOVEMBER 2019 — 8 MARCH 2020

PHOTO: V. S. TEREBENIN © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

A cover made of silk Chinese fabric with a colorful pattern (figures on a landscape background, birds, dragons, clouds) on a blue background
China
FIRST QUARTER OF XVIII CENTURY
Fabric; silk thread; palace technique
217 × 164,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭРТ-8541

Dutch masters
Costume of Peter I. Jacket, Dutch trousers
Russia
1650-1725
Wardrobe of Peter I. Woolen fabric, linen, cloth, cotton frieze, woolen and silk thread; embroidery. Jacket — length of the back 82.5 cm, trousers — length 87 cm
Peter I and Holland 268 —173
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭРТ-8545, ЭРТ-8436

PHOTO: V. S. TEREBENIN © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The era of Peter the Great is usually associated in the collective consciousness with colossal reforms in the administrative sphere, the beginning of the regular army and navy, victories in the Great Northern War, and transformation of the general way of life in Russian society. Peter the Great is not as well known, however, as a patron of the arts and sciences and the founder of the first national public museum. His actions gave the country both a new perception of the world and of its place in it. The collections of Peter the Great, both academic and artistic, revealed new horizons to Russian society, changed its attitude towards the world and reality, and stimulated the curiosity of explorers, inventors, political leaders, philanthropists, and aesthetes.

This exhibition aims to demonstrate the significance and the revolutionary nature of Peter the Great's reforms concerning patronage of the arts and sciences.

There will be about 200 exhibits in the exhibition, including commemorative items, unique archival documents, regalia, magnificent specimens of ceremonial arms and armour, and outstanding jewellery items, paintings, sculptures, glyptics, medals, and coins. Viewers will also have the opportunity to see scientific instruments that belonged to Peter the Great, objects from his Chinese and Siberian collections, and rare books and drawings documenting the historical, art, and science collections of Peter the Great, which laid the foundation for the first public museum in Russia – the Kunstkamera.

The project has received enthusiastic support from the State Hermitage and other Russian museums. In addition, museums in Germany (The Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden), the Netherlands (Museum of the History of Amsterdam), and Great Britain (National Maritime Museum, London) have kindly agreed to provide unique pieces from their collections.

MOSCOW

RUSSIAN JORDAENS
PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS BY JACOB JORDAENS FROM RUSSIAN COLLECTIONS

THE PUSHKIN MUSEUM
19 SEPTEMBER — 30 NOVEMBER 2019

PHOTO: © PRESS SERVICE OF THE PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, 2019

Jacob Jordaens
The Lamentation
1650s
Oil on canvas
Holy Trinity Cathedral
of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra

A large exhibition of works by Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678), one of the most influential Flemish painters of the 17th century, will display art from the collections of the State Hermitage, the Pushkin Museum, the Yekaterinburg Museum of Fine Arts, the Perm State Art Gallery, and the Nizhny Novgorod State Art Museum.

Jacob (Jacques) Jordaens worked in practically all genres. He depicted religious, mythological, and historical subjects, and painted portraits and still lifes, preferring everyday compositions with a touch of the burlesque. Jordaens' works are characterised by the baroque expressiveness of the plastic forms that celebrates the beauty and abundance of the material world, festive colour work, and the rich imagination shown in scene composition. His work balanced sublime and earthly themes, reflecting the general life-affirming quality of Flemish art.

The majority of these works travelled to Russia from the best European collections of the time in the second half of the 18th century. Empress Catherine II bought some of the paintings for the Hermitage, founded in 1764. It was Catherine who acquired Jordaens' monumental piece The Lamentation of Christ and later gave it to the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St Petersburg. Its exhibition in the Pushkin Museum is only the second time in 225 years that the work, which resides in the Lavra's Holy Trinity Cathedral, has travelled; its previous outing was to the Hermitage.

Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of the State Hermitage Museum

Jordaens' monumental Lamentation of Christ was a gift from Catherine the Great to the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St Petersburg. The Flemish style of depicting the Passion of Christ in exaltation while at the same time making it look like a still life with instruments of torture and execution was well-suited to the ritualistic space of a Russian Orthodox church, where it has decorated the walls for centuries. The painting is a typical example of European art becoming part of the tapestry of Russian life, a process exemplified by the entire city of St Petersburg. The presence of this painting in our exhibition also reflects the current, crucial dialogue between the museum and the Church

HANOI

SOUNDS OF THE PERFECT PAST
RUSSIAN PORCELAIN FROM THE HERMITAGE

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, HANOI
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY
NOVEMBER 27, 2019 — 28 FEBRUARY 2020

The exhibition Sounds of the Perfect Past will open this year, proclaimed the Year of Russia in Vietnam and the Year of Vietnam in Russia. The project highlights Russian porcelain – Imperial, Soviet, and Contemporary – from the collection of the State Hermitage Museum, which marks its 255th anniversary in 2019. More than 40 items from the St Petersburg Porcelain Factory are displayed in thematic groups corresponding to the various periods of Russian porcelain within the context of the country's history. The exhibits also represent the range of items produced by the factory: sculptures, vases, sets, household items, etc. The exhibition is an attempt to reinterpret new phenomena in Russian culture in light of the heritage formed over 275 years of the Petersburg factory's operation. The works brought together for the exhibition illustrate how the national identity formed over the period ranging from the mid-1700s to the present. The exhibition is sponsored by Gazprom EP International, which handles foreign projects for PJSC Gazprom.

Traditionally, porcelain experts focus on the qualitative characteristics of the material. Porcelain has some excellent features that are fully capable of comparison with those of other types of arts. This exhibition places a large focus on the properties of the porcelain, bypassing the usual methods of exhibiting masterpieces. For example, sculptural forms depicting movement are associated with dance, thematic decoration is paired with theatrical scenes, and rhythm-like decoration is associated with musical motifs. In addition, the curators set themselves the task of ensuring that the exhibition is interactive and involves visitor participation.

In keeping with the chronology and main trends in artistic and technological development of Russian porcelain art, the exhibits focus on the following historical and cultural themes: Fête Galante, The Fruits of Enlightenment, Heraldic Art, The World of the Russian Nobility, The Art of Fire, New Porcelain, and Modernity. Some unique works of applied art to be exhibited include the Her Majesty's Own dinner service of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna (1756–1762); a vase for the name day of Empress Catherine II (1780–1796); "military" vases with images of Winter Palace interiors (1830); highly artistic household items from the Russian nobility (1850s); flambé glaze, finift enamel, and watercolour underglaze vases (1900–1910); and Nikolay Suetin's Suprematist tea service (1930).

The history section of the exhibition space has a panoramic projection screen showing a continuous dance of porcelain shapes and decor made into a frieze and accompanied by a combination of sounds and melodies indicative of certain eras in Russian history.

IRINA BAGDASAROVA, LISA SAVINA [1]

PHOTO: © ANDREI TEREBENIN, 2019

Working group of the exhibition at the Imperial Porcelain Factory October 2019

1 Irina Bagdasarova and Liza Savina are the originators of the concept and curators of the exhibition.

PHOTO: S. V. SUETOVA © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Caskel with Three Porcelain Flasks
RUSSIA, ST PETERSBURG, 1840–1855
Imperial Porcelain Factory
Porcelain, mahogany and velvet; overglaze polychrome painting, with gilding
6,2 × 33,0 × 19,0 cm
Flasks 13,3 × 7,5 × 9,5 cm (two of them); 12 × 11,5 × 9,7 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1941; handed over from the Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR
Inv. № ЭРФ-4639 а-ж

PHOTO: S. V. SUETOVA © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Vase and Cover, with Allegorical Paintings in Medallions
LATE 1780S-1796
Underglaze cobalt covering, overglaze polychrome painting, gilding, selective polishing
50,5 × 41,6 × 31,4 cm (vase); 27 × 21 cm (cover)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1941; handed over from the Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR
Inv. № ЭРФ-488 а, б

Vase Stylized Flowers
Author of the composition: Wilde, Rudolf. 1868-1938; Painter: Shmakov
RUSSIA, ST PETERSBURG
Imperial Porcelain Factory
1910
Porcelain, polychrome overglaze painting, enamel painting, painting with gold
31,6 × 13,3
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭРФ-8502

PHOTO: A. V. TEREBENIN © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The exhibition also includes pieces from the 17th through the 20th centuries that are part of the imperial collection of the National Museum of Vietnamese History. Certain Vietnamese-produced ceramic items were carefully selected from the museum's collection, as it was ceramic that was the progenitor of porcelain, the most "perfect" ceramic material. There are also ceremonial objects made of gold, a visual reference to the metaphorical association of pure porcelain with the "white gold of kings". The exhibition will also include installations of modern plain white vases produced by the Vietnamese firm Chu Đau.

The final section of the exhibition showcases products from today's St Petersburg Porcelain Factory: the Antique Façon trio of vases (2012, by Galina Shulyak) from the Hermitage collection and a set of bone-china cups with cobalt decoration from the latest range of Russian-made items. Several identical statuettes of ballerina Tamara Karsavina, created using a model by Serafim Sudbinin (1913), will tell the story of a porcelain article's life: from its "life" on a shop shelf to its selection and existence as part of a museum collection.

Figurine 'Triton with a Shell'
RUSSIA, ST PETERSBURG, MID-19TH CENTURY
Imperial Porcelain Factory
Overglaze monochrome coaling, overglaze polychrome painting, with gilding
19 × 9,5 × 8,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1941;
from The State Museum of Ethnography of Peoples of the USSR
Inv. № ЭРФ-3389

PHOTO: P. S. DEMIDOV, K. V. SINYAVSKY © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

An attempt at reinterpretation

The forms used in decorative and applied art and the methods of their production allow us to trace changes in modes of thought and follow the general paradigm of human existence as it, too, changes. Having gone from a unique luxury article to a common household item that is not only functional but artistic, porcelain has become an indicator of society's well-being and its imperatives. The Sounds of the Perfect Past project is an attempt to reconsider, even if in a fragmented manner, the milestones that marked porcelain production in Russia, without making use of traditional ways of presentation. The exhibition mostly includes items from the State Hermitage Museum, selected in accordance with their purpose or character rather than for the period they represent. Thus, the fête galante is represented by Elizabeth Petrovna's Her Majesty's Own dinner service, which set the fashion for luxury; the age of Enlightenment is embodied by Catherine's vase; heraldic vases from Nicholas I's time convey the general official atmosphere imposed by the Emperor; cute trinkets and the staffage of ladies' boudoirs represent the Biedermeier, which arose as a counter to the formality; vases from the early 20th century show the interest in Oriental ceramics and new techniques that accompanied the chinoiserie craze. These disparate objects are brought together in an attempt to allow new artists to rethink their heritage. In our age of speed, it is impossible to ask people to focus on just one thing. A project that thinks about time in a different way adds odd details to the cultural puzzle, stringing it on a thread of sound and decorating it with dance and moving pictures, thus reviving things that appeared to be bereft of life.

Vera Martynov, a theatrical artist who prefers to think of herself an artist in the broad sense of the word, directs our attention to details that elude the superficial glance and transforms them into a ligature of dance. This dance also changes with time, also is defined by its spirit, turning form into movement just as porcelain does.

Vera Martynov works together with the Franco-British choreographer Andrew Graham, whose artistic statement is based on the idea that there is a close bond between form, plasticity, and improvisation that can open consciousness up to a new understanding of the nature of the static, turning ornament into movement.

Dmitry Shubin, a sound artist who poeticises the profane, recomposes the sound of porcelain, turning the noises of the porcelain factory into a mysterious and fascinating symphonic picture.

Especially for this project, artist Liza Bobkova is preparing an installation at the Imperial Porcelain Factory on the visualisation of sound – a dynamic wave that produces that fragile material that seems so ordinary to us.

This story would be incomplete without the Soviet era, which eliminated art from the experience of everyday life. At that time, porcelain dishes were something inherited from grandmothers, which had miraculously survived after migrations, bombings, and repression. They were kept as something with special value, a witness to the connection between generations in a world that had been destroyed to its foundations. Porcelain statuettes stood apart as a marker of social success and intellectual ability. And porcelain was not something collected, per se, but rather was popular for having an artistic aspect unrelated to the socialist reality that defined every facet of private life. Among these porcelain figurines, ballerinas were particularly treasured, especially those whose models were created before the revolution. Graceful and fragile, they were manifestations of lost values, symbols of continuity in art, which had just recently rejected everything that previously defined the cultural paradigm. This is why the installation of porcelain Karsavinas was chosen to end the story of the sounds of the perfect past.


HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM
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10 YEARS
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From the Hermitage Treasury
Jubilee Exhibition #2
14 Sep 2019 | 15 Mar 2020
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Bouquet in a vase (detail), St Petersburg, J. Pauzié, 1740–50. © State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
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AMSTERDAM

JEWELS! THE GLITTER OF THE RUSSIAN COURT

THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE
14 SEPTEMBER 2019 – 15 MARCH 2020

PHOTO: EVERT ELZINGA © THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE, 2019

This exhibition, presenting masterpieces from the State Hermitage collection, marks the Hermitage's 255th anniversary and the Amsterdam Exhibition Centre's 10th.

The Hermitage's collection of jewelled items was formed over the centuries, always maintaining a royal standard, with only the finest works of art accepted.

The exhibition features over 300 items showcasing the dazzling life of the Russian court: masterpieces by Cartier, Lalique, Tiffany, the court jeweller Fabergé, and many other masters. Glittering diamonds and emeralds, rubies and sapphires, jewellery, magnificent costumes, ballgowns, and other personal items – accompanied by a gallery of portraits – recount two centuries of the history of high society in Russia and St Petersburg.

The indisputable masterpiece of the exhibition is Jérémie Pauzié's bouquet of flowers made of gemstones. Pauzié was the most prominent Petersburg jeweller of the mid-18th century, and had achieved the rank of court jeweller: his clients included members of the royal family, courtiers, and the Petersburg nobility. The stones imitating the flowers mainly have silver settings, while gold is used for the stems and shoots. Pauzié used diamonds in different ways: over 400 have a full cut and form the centres of flowers or petals, while small rose-cut diamonds, over 450 of them, frame brighter stones. It is these stones – blue and yellow sapphires, rubies, peridots, topazes, and emeralds – that create the main accents of the bouquet, forming flowers and branches. Pauzié also used diamonds to frame less precious stones, such as garnets of various colours: pyropes, hessonites, and almandines. Even the ornamental stones, which include agates, turquoise, cacholong, and onyx, do not seem second-rate. To make the piece lively and add a certain curiousness, the jeweller attached a small "insect" to the bouquet, who sits on a branch of emeralds.

Another incredible masterpiece is a jewellery box covered with almost 400 multi-coloured gemstones and cameos. This octagonal box, weighing around three kilograms, is made of gilded silver with nine oval, inset plates of rock crystal through which one can see its contents. The surface of the box has a silver ornamental pattern covered with black

Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of the State Hermitage

Over the centuries, women's and men's jewellery has been an important symbol of one's position in society, personal predilections, and cultural traditions. This was combined with a belief in the magical properties of gems and metals, which served as talismans protecting anyone who wore them, the properties being transferred from one owner to the next. Even today, in display cases, they hint at the mysticism of history and its human dimension.

PHOTO: EVERT ELZINGA © THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE, 2019

Exhibition in the Hermitage Amsterdam Exhibition Centre, 2019

and white enamel, and is densely decorated with gemstones of different mineralogical values and cuts.

A number of items in the exhibition are connected by the theme of secrets. These items contain secret compartments or encrypted messages. Most of them are lockets in which people liked to keep pictures of their lovers or locks of their hair. This kind of jewellery has existed since ancient times, but it became especially popular in the 19th century. Items of jewellery with "secrets" are closely linked to their owners. Every item conceals stories of human feelings and emotions: love, desire, hatred, fear, and craving for power.

Even though their owners are long gone, these exquisite treasures still preserve their secrets, exciting our imagination and bringing distant pages of history to life.

PHOTO: EVERT ELZINGA © THE HERMITAGE AMSTERDAM EXHIBITION CENTRE, 2019

NAPLES

CANOVA AND ANTIQUITY

THE NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN NAPLES
28 MARCH – 30 JUNE 2019

At the end of the 18th century, celebrated Italian sculptor Antonio Canova (1757–1822) was a leading figure in the Neoclassical movement, the theories of which were first formulated in the works of the German scholar Johann Joachim Winckelmann. In it, Classical art, which according to Winckelmann had achieved the highest aesthetic ideals, becomes the measure of beauty, to be imitated in modern works. Canova was described as "the sculptor of grace and youth" by contemporaries, who saw in his work the embodiment of their perceptions of beauty.

The sculptor's works were commissioned by monarchs and aristocratic families of Austria, France, Spain, Britain, Naples, and Russia, where thanks to enlightened patrons and collectors, the Hermitage is in possession of the world's largest collection of marble statues by Canova.

The Hermitage has co-organised the exhibition, providing the masterpieces from its collection, including six statues in marble and one in bronze.

Opening of the exhibition "Canova and Antiquity". Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy, March 2019

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG / VILLAGGIO GLOBALE INTERNATIONAL, 2019

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The jewel of the Hermitage collection is The Three Graces (between 1813 and 1816), a late work by Canova, which was produced at a time when the artist was so famous that the public eagerly awaited each new work. Faithful to Neoclassical ideals, Canova embodied his perceptions of beauty in the form of the ancient goddesses who were said to personify feminine allure and charm. Contemporaries praised the work for its new approach to the subject. Unlike compositions of or based on Classical Antiquity – where the outer figures turn outwards toward the viewer and the central figure embraces her friends with her back to us – Canova's figures stand side by side, all facing each other. The three slender female figures become one in their embrace, united not simply by their entwined arms, but also by the scarf that drops from the hand of one of the Graces. Canova's composition is compact and balanced. The women stand around an altar on which there are three wreaths of flowers and a garland, symbolising their tender bond. Contemporaries thought that Canova had captured the ideal of beauty so exceptionally that they said of the statue, "It is more beautiful than beauty itself"

FABRIANO,
PERUGIA

PINACOTECA CIVICA BRUNO MOLAIOLI (FABRIANO, ITALY)
1–30 JUNE 2019

NATIONAL GALLERY OF UMBRIA (PERUGIA, ITALY)
3 JULY — 4 AUGUST 2019

LEONARDO DA VINCI'S BENOIS MADONNA
FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

The 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death was marked by the second visit of an early masterpiece of the artist to Italy, 35 years after an exhibition held in the Uffizi gallery (Florence) in 1984.

PHOTO: © MARCO GIUGLIARELLI. THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF UMBRIA, 2019

One of the greatest geniuses of the Renaissance era, Leonardo da Vinci combined the talents of artist and scientist, inventor and thinker. Only around a dozen of his original paintings have survived to the present day. The two paintings in the Hermitage collection are a particular point of pride for the museum.

The Benois Madonna is an early work by the artist. For its time this was a truly cutting-edge piece. If it were not for the golden halos, the painting might pass for a generic scene of a young Italian woman playing with her son. Mary's clothing and hairstyle follow Florentine fashion of the late 15th century. Painted from a model, her facial features are far from ideal. She is showing the child a flower and he is curious, reaching out for the unfamiliar object, clumsily trying to grasp it while holding on to his mother's hand with his own small one to prevent her taking this new plaything away. Mary seems not to suspect that the flower – a bittercress with petals arranged in the form of a cross – is a symbol of the coming Crucifixion. The emphatically physical, corporeal nature of the personages, the naturalness of their poses and gestures, and the tangible quality of the light and air – everything here produces the illusion of life. Leonardo was first among the Italian artists to use directed illumination in a painting. One of the sources of light here is the small window in the wall; the other is located outside the space of the picture – in front and to the left. Between the two, they generate a complex play of light and shade in a scene that involves the figures as well. Leonardo's painting obtained its present name, the Benois Madonna, from that of its last owner, the wife of court architect Leon Benois. The Hermitage acquired this masterpiece in 1914.

Леонардо да Винчи
Мадонна с Младенцем (Мадонна Бенуа)
ИТАЛИЯ, 1478-1480 ГГ.
Холст (переведена с дерева), масло
49,5x33 см
Государственный Эрмитаж, Санкт-Петербург
Поступил в 1914 г.
Приобретен из собрания М.А. Бенуа
Инв. № ГЭ-2773

Mikhail Piotrovsky, Director of the State Hermitage Museum

This painting is not just an outstanding creation of the great master, who died 500 years ago. The Benois Madonna, the epitome of motherly love, is so plausible and powerful that it makes one forget about the artistic form and the divine content. It is not by chance that this work by the young Leonardo is now recognised as one of the highest achievements of his genius.

KAZAN

THE GOLDEN HORDE AND THE BLACK SEA REGION
LESSONS OF THE GENGHISID EMPIRE

THE HERMITAGE KAZAN CENTRE
APRIL 3 — OCTOBER 6, 2019

This exhibition introduced visitors to the culture of the Mongol Empire1, and more specifically to the culture of the ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde), the largest nomadic state in Western Eurasia.

This exhibition introduced visitors to the culture of the Mongol Empire[1], and more specifically to the culture of the ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde), the largest nomadic state in Western Eurasia.

On display were objects from the equestrian and urban culture of the Mongol nomads, vessels used at feasts, jewellery, and costumes. The exhibition placed particular focus on the details of the architectural decor and examples of Buddhist painting from the Turkic-Mongolian Orient. Numismatic artefacts from the Golden Horde give an idea of the state of monetary affairs and the monetary policy of one of the largest Mongolian states of the 13th to the 15th centuries.

The horseriding tradition prevailed in the Golden Horde more than anywhere else in the Mongolian states. Its core was the famous nomadic triad: the horse and its tack, weapons, and the rider's apparel. All of these elements possessed a high degree of symbolism, which is characteristic of cultures with developed rules for social behaviour. The details of the costume, such as the belt and hat, more than anything reflected social class distinctions.

One interesting topic tackled by the exhibition was connected with the visualisation of female social identity. For example, the bokka – the headdress worn by married Mongol woman – served a number of functions at various times. It initially indicated the tribal, ethnic, and social affiliations of the woman. From the 14th century it also played the role of an imperial symbol. Then, after the collapse of the empire, the bokka became a sign of the owner's belonging to the Genghisid tradition.

Visitors of the exhibition.
The Hermitage-Kazan Exhibition Centre, 2019

PHOTO: EVGENIYA KISELEVA © THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN EXHIBITION

1 The Mongol Empire (Yeke Mongyol Ulus – "The Great Mongolian State") was a structure that came about in the early 13th century as a result of the conquests of Genghis Khan (1155 or 1162 – 1227).

PHOTO: EVGENIYA KISELEVA © THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN EXHIBITION

PHOTO: EVGENIYA KISELEVA © THE HERMITAGE-KAZAN EXHIBITION CENTRE

Photo of the exhibition.
The Hermitage-Kazan Exhibition Centre, 2019

Visiting the exhibition by the participants of the Golden Horde Forum in Kazan.
The Hermitage-Kazan Exhibition Centre.
JUNE 2019

ST PETERSBURG

A DREAM OF ITALY
THE MARQUIS CAMPANA COLLECTION

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
JULY — OCTOBER 2019

Organised jointly with the Louvre, this exhibition showcases over 400 works. The unique collaboration of the two world-class museums has made it possible to exhibit, for the first time in 160 years, the most outstanding works of art that once made up the Campana Museum.

Bust of Antinous
ANCIENT ROME, MID-2ND CENTURY
Coarse-grained marble
Height: 84,0 cm (height without restoration addition: 38.0 cm)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1862; originally in the Marquis Campana collection in Rome
Inv. № ГР-4220

PHOTO © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The collection of Giovanni Pietro (Giampetro) Campana, Marchese di Cavelli (1809–1880) – one of the most significant private collections of the 19th century –boasted a large number of high-quality exhibits: antique vases, bronze weapons and other objects, sculptures and paintings from antiquity and the Renaissance – in total about 12,000 artefacts, many of which can truly be called masterpieces.

In the tradition of aristocratic Roman families, Giovanni Pietro Campana expanded the modest collection of ancient art bequeathed to him by his father and grandfather. From the late 1820s to the 1850s he conducted a series of archaeological excavations in Rome, the Lazio region, and the Etruscan cities of Veii and Cerveteri, and succeeded in finding many objects that were later to become the masterpieces in his collection. These discoveries brought him a prominent place in the history of Italian archaeology of the 19th century. In addition to the excavation acquisitions, Campana was actively buying classical art in antique markets, both personally and through a wide network of agents operating for him from Etruria to Sicily.

The collection of the Marquis Campana, which acquired the name "museum" because of its encyclopaedic diversity and great size, had taken more than thirty years to assemble. This was during the Risorgimento – the Italian movement of liberation from foreign domination that ended with the unification of Italy. The collection therefore became a symbol of Italy's national cultural heritage.

Campana's name became widely known in academic circles; art collectors, aristocrats, connoisseurs, and art lovers dreamed of visiting the museum. However, in November 1857 Giovanni Pietro Campana, who since 1833 had served as director of the Monte di Pieta loan agency in Rome, a key financial institution of the Papal States, was accused of embezzlement. His art collection was subsequently seized and put up for sale to recover damages.

This exhibition opens with artefacts found by the Marquis during the excavations that he organised in Etruria and the environs of Rome. They show Giampietro Campana as an archaeologist, revealing the sources from which his collection of antiquities was amassed.

The main part of the exhibition gives an idea of the content of the Marquis Campana collection. The works of art are arranged into sections, according to where their descriptions were placed in the Cataloghi Campana, published in 1858. This publication divided the collection into twelve groups: eight of them were for art of antiquity, while the remaining four classes covered painting, majolica, and sculpture from the Renaissance to the modern era.

1 Yelena Dmitrieva and Anna Trofimova. A Dream of Italy. The Marquis Campana Collection. A Historical Review. (St Petersburg: State Hermitage Publishing House, 2019).

Sun God (a plate in relief for the decoration of a ceremonial chariot)
ETRURIA, 5TH CENTURY BC
Bronze
Length: 16,0 cm
Entered the Hermitage in 1862; originally in the Marquis Campana collection in Rome
Inv. № ГР-4876

"The Roman government is robbing the nation!"; «An act of vandalism in Rome. The Campana Museum is losing the masterpieces of its fourteen collections, sold to Russia for 125,000 scudo. Italy has doomed the museum to dissolution, a collection that has been a testament to the glory of Italian art..."; "The undaunted Cardinal Antonelli is persistent; he defies public indignation, and continuing his cruel ways, he sells the best examples of art from the Campana Museum to a Russian agent..."; "Having exhausted its assets, the papal government has just sold most of the magnificent collection to Russia for only 125,000 scudo. If only such a great sacrifice would have been made for the good of Italy, our country! ... In the ages to come, we shall be asked questions about our time, about the precious artistic wealth that was sent abroad..." These are just a few quotes from Italian newspapers, which were bursting with heated articles when after a stressful period of uncertainty it was confirmed that the first agreement on the sale of part of one of the most famous and most significant collections of the 19th century – the collection of the Marquis Giovanni Pietro Campana – would indeed be signed.

Tsar Alexander II purchased part of the Campana collection for the Hermitage, enriching the museum with various masterpieces of ancient art, including "565 vases, 139 bronzes, one piece of jewellery and 77 marble sculptures", in addition to some frescos from the school of Raphael. A significant part of the Campana collection was sold to Napoleon III and moved to the Louvre Museum in 1863. Works from the Marquis' collection also enlarged the collections of the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The rest was dispersed among private collectors.[1]

Roman sculptor
(copy after a Greek original)
Aphrodite and Eros
(Squatted Aphrodite)
3RD CENTURY BC
Marble
Height: 89 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1862; originally in the Marquis Campana collection in Rome
Inv. № ГР-4163

PHOTO © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Black-figured Olpe: Herakles Fighting Triton; reverse: Woman and an Old Man
520-515 BC
Clay
Height: 23,9 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1862; originally in the Marquis Campana collection in Rome
Inv. № ГР-4377

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Interior of the Gallery of Ancient Sculpture at Villa Campana in Rome

In addition to the masterpieces from the Hermitage – a renowned collection of vases and sculptures, among them the world-famous antiques the Regina Vasorum (Queen of Vases) hydria, a bust of Antinous, the bronze cover of a funerary urn in the form of a reclining youth, and a statue of Aphrodite and Eros – the Louvre has contributed such famous works as an Etruscan sarcophagus, the Campana reliefs, a fragment from the Ara Pacis, Etruscan jewellery, and paintings by Taddeo Gaddi, Paolo Veneziano, and Domenico Ghirlandaio.

The most vivid insight into what the Campana Museum might have been like is grasped through the reconstruction of one of its halls, Exedra, based on historical photographs. It exhibited five antique statues, with the bust of Antinous in the centre. The exhibition ends with a section dedicated to the sale of the Marquis Campana collection, and specifically the pieces that subsequently made their home within the walls of the Hermitage and the Louvre.

Figure Vessel in the Shape of a Dog Head
ATTICA, CIRCA 480 BC
Clay
Red-figure
Height: 17,3 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1862; originally in the Marquis Campana collection in Rome
Inv. № ГР-4752

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

ST PETERSBURG

LIFE IN MEDIEVAL KHORASAN
GENIZA FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ISRAEL

TWELVE-COLUMN HALL OF THE NEW HERMITAGE
11 SEPTEMBER 2019 — 19 JANUARY 2020

This Afghan Geniza[1] has survived to become a rare and surprisingly human chronicle of life between the 11th and 13th centuries, bearing witness to the breadth of confessional composition, education levels, knowledge, and literacy of residents of the town of Bamiyan (in today's Afghanistan), a Khorasan town which flourished under the Ghaznavids and was destroyed by Genghis Khan's troops.

Business receipts and lease documents are full of economic details and human worries. Scraps of sacred texts allow us to delve into the dramatic ideological competition of different theological traditions in Judaism. A fragment of the Arab chronicle immerses us in political and religious intrigues of the Samanid era, and Persian fragments in echoes of ancient Iranian mythology. The severity of the business language is combined with flattering hyperbolic panegyrics. Before us is spread the vibrant Khorasan culture, in which Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus lived and worked together, communicating in Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and Arab-Jewish and Judeo-Persian dialects.

The oldest part of the collection (from the first half of the 11th century) is the domestic archive of Abu Nasr Yehuda Ben Daniel and his family. Landowner Abu Nasr kept records of his transactions, receipts, and correspondence with his family and business partners in the region, as well as several religious and liturgical texts.

The exhibition aligns with the modern academic trend of studying the history of everyday life and reconstructing the details of the affairs and thoughts of ordinary people as the foundation of true history.

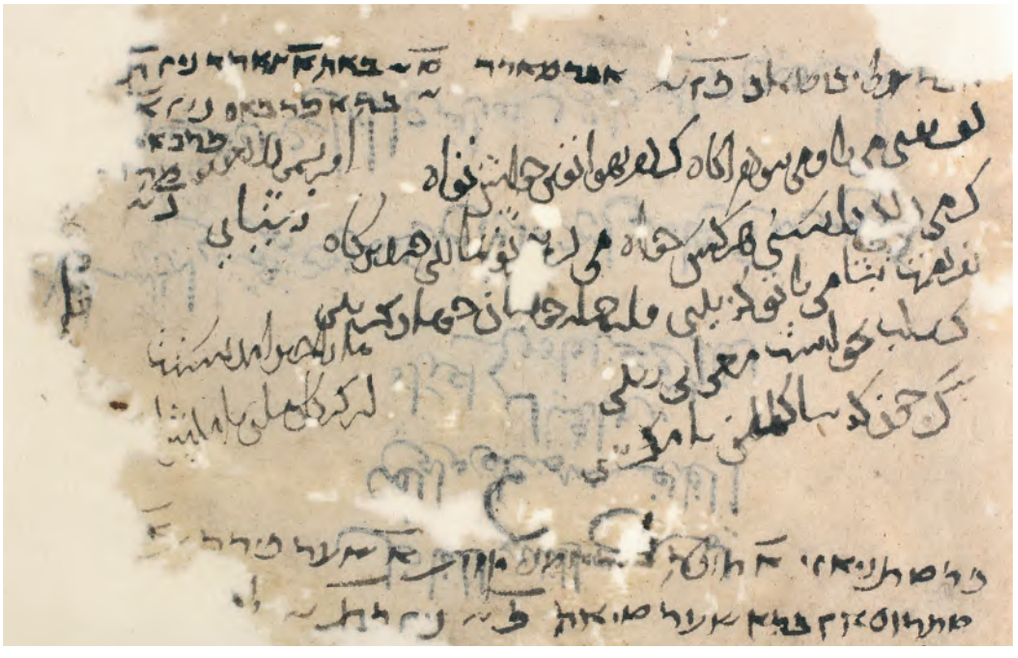
At the opening of the exhibition,
SEPTEMBER 2019

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

1 A Geniza (from the Jewish «repository») is a place of storage for worn-out scrolls, books (Tanakh, Talmud, prayer books, etc.) and their fragments, as well as ritual objects; their destruction is prohibited by Jewish religious norms. The name "Afghan Geniza" was assigned to the collection of manuscripts, echoing the more famous Cairo Geniza.

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA

At the opening of the exhibition, SEPTEMBER 2019



Front side - the opening of a panegyric poem dedicated to Siman-Tov, the son of Abu Nasraben Danie
© The National Library of Israel, 2019

ST PETERSBURG

SANDRO BOTTICELLI'S MADONNA DELLA LOGGIA
FROM THE UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
16 NOVEMBER 2019 – 16 FEBRUARY 2020

The painting Madonna della Loggia (circa 1467) by Sandro Botticelli[1], an outstanding Italian Renaissance artist, will be shown in Russia for the first time.

It is to be exhibited in the Hall of Leonardo da Vinci while his Litta Madonna is away on loan: in the "Year of Leonardo", the Hermitage has granted Italian museums the right to show both of its masterpieces by Leonardo – the Benois Madonna and the Litta Madonna – at temporary exhibitions.

Madonna della Loggia is one of Sandro Botticelli's early works. Standing in front of the arches of a loggia (hence the name), Madonna hugs the Infant tightly against her cheek. Here the artist follows the Byzantine iconographic style known as Theotokos Glykophilousa (Mother of God of the Sweet Kiss)[2]. And the name fits, as this is the most emotional and intimate type of image of the Mother of God of all.

In his early paintings, as in Madonna della Loggia, the influence of his Botticelli's teacher Fra Filippo Lippi is tangible. Around 1465, Lippi painted Madonna and Child with Two Angels, where Mary appears as a young, fashionably dressed Florentine woman with hands folded in prayer before her child, Jesus, a fat-cheeked Infant similar to the cheerful angels holding Jesus up before His Mother. Botticelli's artistic connection to his teacher in this case is not so much formal as spiritual. He is mainly preoccupied with the loving unity of the two figures: the Infant Christ is nestled against his Mother's cheek, while her arms hold him gently.

Already we can see in this picture which features distinguish Sandro from his teacher; it is these features that will subsequently become essential to his art. First is the mood: Fra Filippo's Madonna is outside any emotion. Botticelli shows her with a slightly bowed head and a lowered look, dreamy and thoughtful. Second, the contours are more flexible, and there is more flatness in the interpretation of Mary's body. From the very beginning of his career, Botticelli was inclined towards a special decorative effect, which in this case can be seen in the depiction of the folds and halos. Sandro's rhythmic gallery arches replace the mountainous landscape background of the painting by Fra Filippo.

The harmony of rhythm is another distinctive quality of the master's art. For him, as for other representatives of the Florentine school, colour does not play a decisive role and is inferior to draughtsmanship. The artist uses the traditional combination of blue and red to paint the clothes, applying them in localised patches.

For the rest of his life, Sandro will remain a minstrel of female beauty, a paladin of the blonde, melancholic Madonna with big, sad eyes. From his small Madonna of the Loggia, Botticelli's path to such masterpieces as the magnificent tondo Madonna del Magnificat, Primavera, and The Birth of Venus (all in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence) would be a long one.

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Press conference dedicated to the exhibitions of Sandro Botticelli's painting Madonna della Loggia in Vladivostok and St Petersburg
Embassy of Italy in Moscow, AUGUST 2019

1 Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi (1445–1510), who entered the history of art as Sandro Botticelli, is an Italian artist, a member of the Florentine school of painting.

2 Glykophilousa (Greek) – "sweetly loving" or "sweetly kissing". In the Russian tradition, this type is more often called Eleusa (or Eleousa) ("tenderness" or "affection") – the Mother of God of Tenderness.

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ST PETERSBURG

TREASURES OF THE RED RIVER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FROM THE MUSEUMS OF VIETNAM

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
MAY 18 — SEPTEMBER 22, 2019

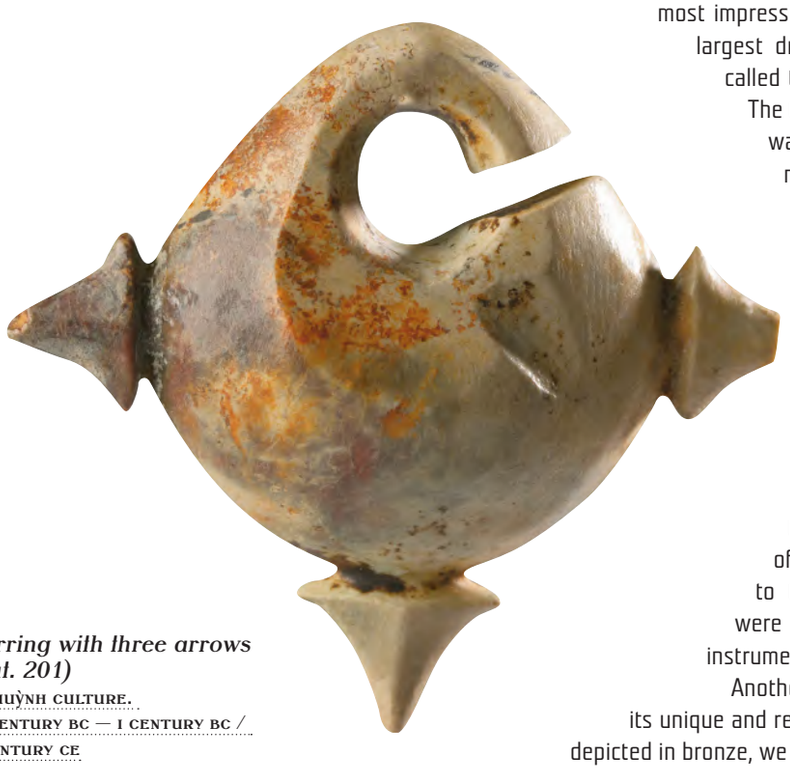
For the first time ever, the State Hermitage has hosted an exhibition from Vietnam, which may seem odd given the support and help that the USSR supplied to this Southeast Asian country. Entitled Treasures of the Red River: Archaeological Collections from the Museums of Vietnam, it gave St Petersburg audiences the opportunity to see objects from ancient Vietnam that had been carefully collected and preserved for more than 100 years by several generations of experts.

NATALIA SUTYAGINA, EVGENY KIY [1]

The Vietnamese sometimes compare their country to two baskets of rice hanging on a carrying yoke. The "baskets" are the wider Northern (Bac Bo) and Southern (Nam Bo) parts of the country, and the "yoke" is Central Vietnam (Trung Bo), which connects them. The objects shown at the exhibition come from various archaeological cultures dating from the first half of the 1st millennium BCE to the beginning of the 1st millennium AD: the Đông Son culture in the north of the country, the Sa Huỳnh in the centre, and the Đong Nai and Óc Eo in the south. According to Vietnamese researchers, these cultures would later give birth to the first states in the history of Vietnam.

The Red River Valley in the north of Vietnam was one of the centres of development of these ancient civilisations. The emergence of the Đông Son culture in the valleys of the Red (Hong), Ma, and Ca rivers was a significant event for the evolution of the region. It owes its name to the village of Đông Son, located near an archaeological site discovered in 1924. The Red River Delta was also the birthplace of several myths; in it dwelled heroes of myths and legends.

The ancient bronze drums are without a doubt among the most impressive objects featured in the exhibition. One is the largest drum ever to be found on Vietnamese territory, called the "Gold Star" drum by Vietnamese researchers. The technology used in the production of these drums was incredibly complicated and laborious: they were made from tin bronze in complex, decorated casting moulds. Their surfaces often depicted scenes from everyday life or rituals connected with an ancestor worship cult. Typically, in the centre of the upper disc there was a star with rays extending outwards. Decorations featuring images of birds, animals, warriors in unusual headdresses, and geometrical patterns were applied in circles. Sometimes, figures of small frogs were found on the top as well, likely indicating the use of the drum in rituals intended to invoke rain. On the sides one can find depictions of warriors in boats, perhaps the same boats used to transport the drums themselves. Such objects were not only made for rituals, but were also musical instruments and symbols of power.



Earring with three arrows (cat. 201)
SA HUỲNH CULTURE.
VI CENTURY BC — I CENTURY BC / I CENTURY CE

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Another aspect of the Đông Son culture shows itself in its unique and realistic art. Thanks to the objects and scenes they depicted in bronze, we now have some ethnographic details of the life of

1 Natalia Sulyagina and Evgeny Kiy are the curators of the exhibition, researchers at the State Hermitage's Oriental Department.

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Necklace (cal. 240)

ÓC EO CULTURE. III – VII CENTURIES CE

the ancient Viets: what clothes, hairstyles, and jewellery they wore, what kind of houses they lived in, what they occupied themselves with...

The development of Central and Southern Vietnam took a different path. In the mangrove forests of the Mekong Delta, in the southern part of modern Vietnam, elements of primitive culture persisted for quite a long time. But the local people rapidly established contacts with their neighbours – the people of what is now Thailand and Indonesia. Trade in raw materials (stone) and jewellery was quite lively. The exquisite accessories (bracelets, earrings, etc.) from those times might easily be the envy of modern fashion lovers.

In the second half of the 1st millennium BCE, however, the area underwent changes due to the powerful cultural influences of India and China. Port cities with unique architecture emerged in the delta and began engaging in river and sea trade. The population of these cities was very diverse, with people from many different regions.

Still today archaeologists continue to find, in deep excavations, traces of the life that flourished here many centuries ago: a lost ring with a Sanskrit inscription, Roman medallions, small Buddha sculptures...

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Bronze dagger with anthropomorphic figure (cal. 58)

DONG SON CULTURE. VI CENTURY BC— I CENTURY BC / I CENTURY CE

Animal protom earring (cal. 229)

DONG NAI CULTURE. VI – III CENTURIES BC

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

ST PETERSBURG

"I FOUNDED THEREIN MY ROYAL PALACE"
ASSYRIAN ART FROM THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
DECEMBER 10, 2019 – MARCH 31, 2020

Over the course of the 9th to the 7th centuries BCE, the rulers of Assyria, a state on territory that now largely belongs to modern Iraq (the northern part of Ancient Mesopotamia), created a vast and mighty empire, taking control of lands from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. Symbolising the majesty and wealth of the Assyrian kings were their magnificent palaces, the walls of which were adorned with reliefs showing the kings and their courtiers, battle scenes, sieges, and hunts.

The exhibition will include remarkable reliefs from Ashurbanipal's palace at Nineveh, justly considered the height of Assyrian artistic achievement.

King Ashurbanipal (reigned 669/668 – 629/627 BCE) called himself the "king of the world", and his rule marked the highest point of the Assyrian Empire. Ashurbanipal was a cruel ruler who did not shrink from using political intrigue and even assassination to achieve his political goals. He was particularly brutal with his enemies, attempting not only to defeat them but to expose them to the utmost humiliation as well.

Ashurbanipal is known to history as a military leader and politician, but also as a collector of ancient written artefacts. On his instructions, tens of thousands of historical, magical, and scientific texts were brought to Nineveh in copies and originals. A separate section will present the celebrated library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, explaining cuneiform texts, the extant types, and how they were stored in repositories for cuneiform tablets.

Ashurbanipal was quite proud that he was the only Assyrian ruler who could write in cuneiform. One of the tablets contains his words:

"I... have mastered all the secret art of writing on tablets, I have come to read the predictions in heaven and on earth, I participate in the debates of pundits, I predict the future together with the most experienced foretellers on the liver of sacrificial animals... I constantly read the masterfully written tablets in such a difficult language as Sumerian, and in Akkadian, which is so difficult to interpret."

Fragment of a wall panel showing the head of a eunuch. Khorsabad
IRAQ 710–705 BC

Striding sphinx. 'Fort Shalmaneser'
NIMRUD, IRAQ 900–700 BC

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
ЭРМИТАЖ
The State Hermitage Museum

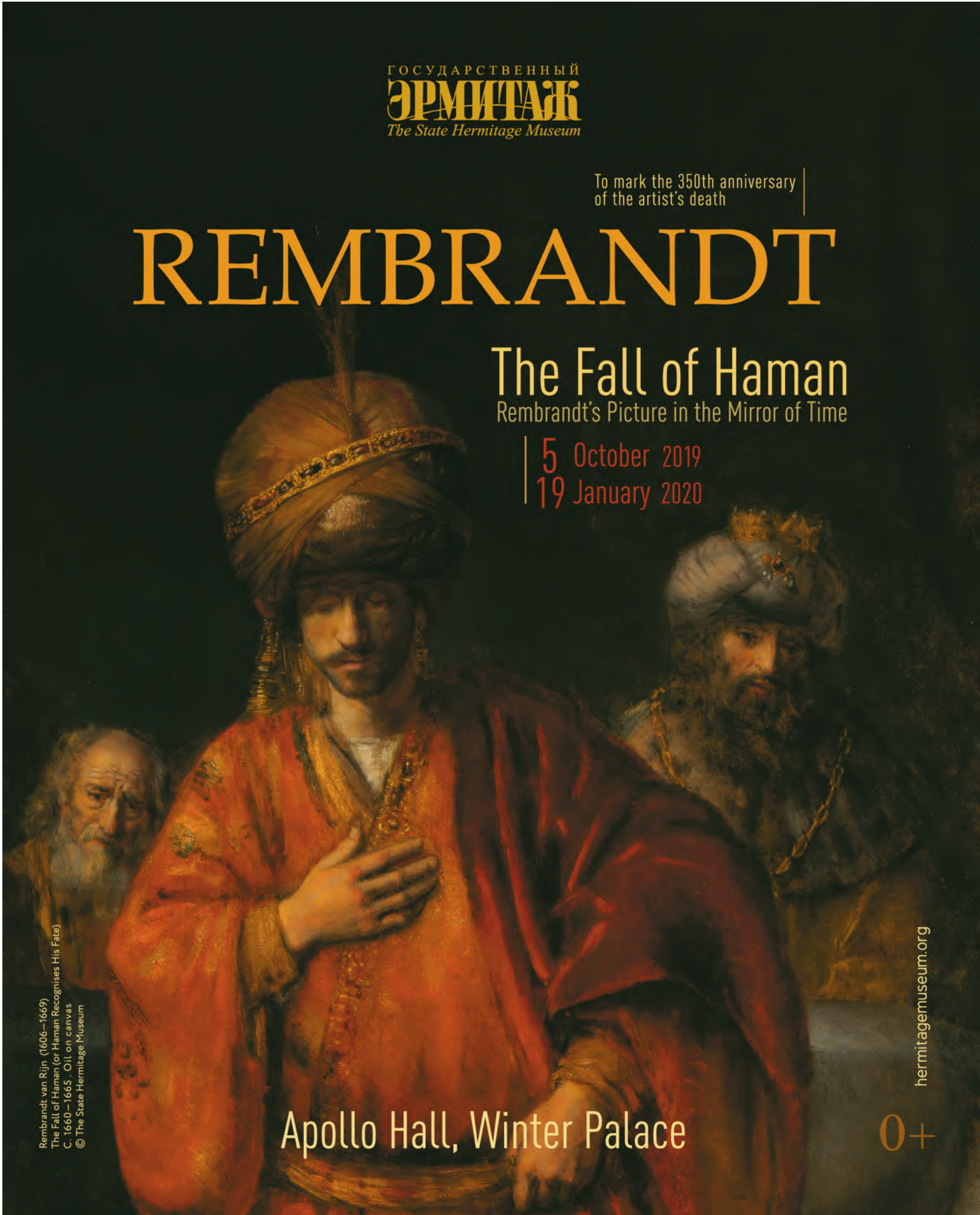
To mark the 350th anniversary of the artist's death

REMBRANDT

The Fall of Haman

Rembrandt's Picture in the Mirror of Time

5 October 2019
19 January 2020



Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669)
The Fall of Haman (or Haman Recognises His Fate)
C. 1660–1665. Oil on canvas
© The State Hermitage Museum

Apollo Hall, Winter Palace

hermitagemuseum.org

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ST PETERSBURG

'TIS POTEMKIN HIMSELF!
ON THE 280TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF PRINCE GRIGORY POTEMKIN-TAVRICHESKI

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
8 DECEMBER 2019 – 29 MARCH 2020

PHOTO: V. S. TEREBENIN, © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Pierre-Etienne Falconet
Portrait of Catherine II
France
1773
Oil on canvas
163 × 238,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Formerly in the English Palace at Peterhof
Inv. № ГЭ-4480

The year 2019 marks the 280th anniversary of the birth of His Grace Prince Grigory Potemkin-Tavricheski. Potemkin was of one of the leading historical figures in 18th-century Russia and one of the most powerful grandees of Catherine's reign – the favourite and secret spouse of the Empress, as well as her friend and ally.

Many important transformations are associated with the name of Potemkin: the launch of the Black Sea Fleet, the annexation of Crimea, the founding of Sevastopol, Simferopol, Kherson, Nikolaev, and Yekaterinoslav and other towns, army reforms, and brilliant victories in the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1791. He also owned an art collection, a significant part of which is now kept in the Hermitage. It was Potemkin who acquired the famous Peacock Clock, which has become today one of the symbols of the Hermitage.

The exhibits on display in the extensive exhibition 'Tis Potemkin Himself!, dedicated to the 280th anniversary of the birth of Prince Grigory Potemkin, will demonstrate the many sides of the Prince. More than a thousand museum exhibits will cover Potemkin's private life and his activity as a political leader. A large part of the exhibition is from Potemkin's personal collection and the collection of Catherine the Great.

PHOTO: A. M. KOKSHAROV © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The Peacock Clock
Great Britain
Master: Cox, James
1766-1772
Material: bronze, gilding, wood, enamel, silver (base), glass (base), foil (base)
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № Э-3425

‘TIS POTEMKIN HIMSELF!’

On the 280th Anniversary of the Birth of Prince Grigory Potemkin of Taurida

Johann Baptist von Lampi the Elder (1751–1838)
Portrait of Prince Grigory Potemkin of Taurida
Ca.1791. Oil on canvas
© The State Hermitage Museum

ST PETERSBURG

VITTORE CARPACCIO. TWO VENETIAN LADIES
FROM THE FONDAZIONE MUSEI CIVICI VENEZIA (MUSEO CORRER)

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
OCTOBER 9, 2019 – JANUARY 12, 2020

Two Venetian Ladies (1490s) is surely the most unusual painting by Vittore Carpaccio[1]. But who are these ladies? Are they eminent matrons, betrothed noble maidens, or courtesans awaiting their patrons? What is the significance of the objects and living creatures that surround them? Why do we only see the stem of a plant in the vase instead of flowers?

Vittore Carpaccio
Two Venetian Ladies
1496-1498
Museo Correr

More than one generation of art historians has sought the answers to these questions. It was only in 1962 that a hypothesis was put forward that Hunting on the Lagoon (Paul Getty Museum, USA), a painting of archers in boats aiming at waterfowl, was actually the missing upper piece of the panel depicting the two Venetian ladies, and that they had once belonged to a single whole. X-ray and infrared examination and a dendrological analysis of the works in the Getty Museum and the Museo Correr confirmed this theory, indicating that the two wooden panel pieces were identical, while a study of the primers and pigments produced an absolute match.

The results of these investigations led to the proposal of a logically elegant interpretation of the subject as an allegory of a virtuous Christian marriage. Carpaccio depicted the noble ladies waiting for the return of their husbands from the hunt. However, from the balcony on which they are languishing with boredom, there is no actual view of the marshy shores of the lagoon: it is a stylised, imaginary space, a visualisation of the two young women's thoughts. All the objects and creatures around them symbolise irreproachable fidelity and purity of intention: the two turtledoves are the embodiment of an inseparable pair of lovers; the orange is one of the attributes of the Virgin Mary, as is the lily – a symbol of chastity and holiness.

If there is one artist who most distinctly shies away from the banalities of "common sense", it is Carpaccio, who depicts only miraculous stories... Painting, according to Carpaccio, should not teach meditation, or philosophy, or prayer, or fantasy. Rather it should teach the skill of seeing and rendering what one sees. Therefore, the greatness of Carpaccio is in his claim that painting should not attempt to express what can be equally well expressed in words or numbers... [I]magination is also a process of spiritual activity, the results of which (images) are real and can materialise, can become similar to other real things.

GIULIO CARLO ARGAN,
Storia dell'arte italiana (History of Italian Art)

1 Vittore Carpaccio (c. 1465 – c. 1526) is an Italian painter, a member of the Venetian school. As an interesting side note, in 1950, the owner of the "Harry Bar" in Venice, Giuseppe Cipriani, invented the dish "carpaccio" in his honor, as that year Venice had hosted a huge exhibition of the painter's art, abounding with sparkling shades of red and white.

ST PETERSBURG

JAUME PLENSA, CARLOTA
PART OF THE HERMITAGE PROJECT "SCULPTURE IN THE COURTYARD"

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
OCTOBER 2019 – APRIL 2020

Exhibited in the Grand Courtyard of the Winter Palace, Carlota enters into a dialogue with the antique and classical items from the collection of the State Hermitage, combining Mediterranean art of the past and present.

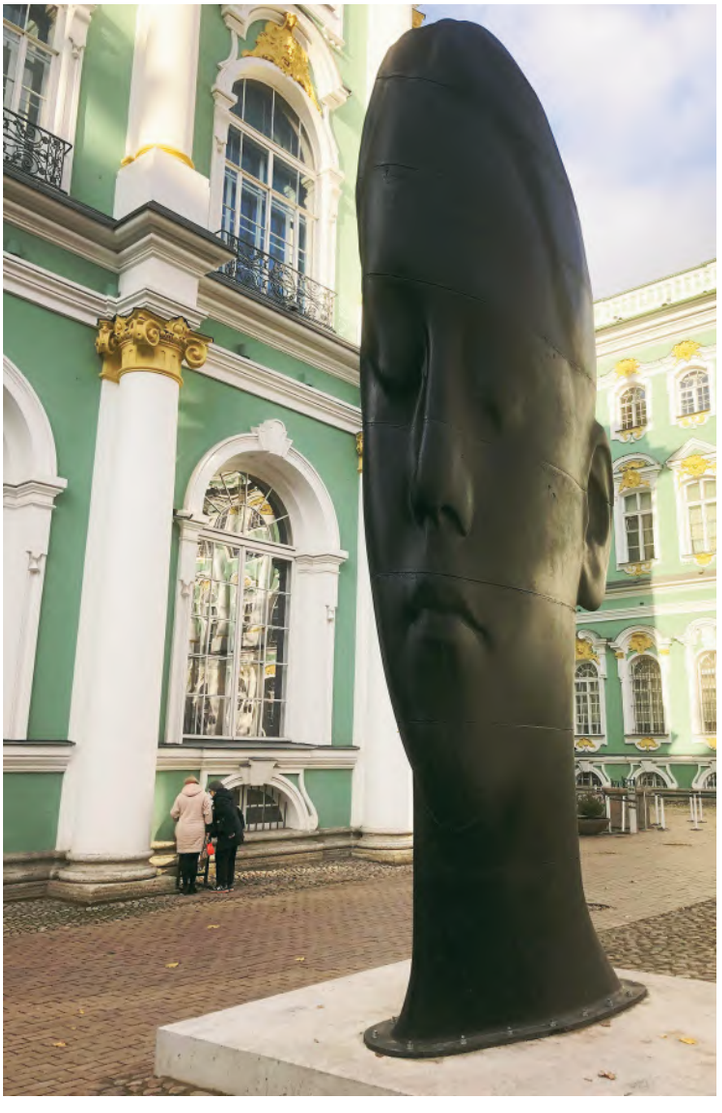

PHOTO: © HE HERMITAGE MUSEUM XXI CENTURY FOUNDATION, 2019

In Carlota, Plensa demonstrates his brilliant skill in creating illusions. He has designed the sculpted head in such a way that its proportions seem correct, and the sculpture itself seems to have significant three-dimensional volume. The closer the viewer comes, however, the more obvious is the distortion and elongation of the figure, and the artist's optical illusion eventually reveals itself. Plensa's desire to deceive our perception is underscored by the choice of material. The sculpture is actually made of cast iron, but its elongated proportions and light-reflecting surfaces make it appear elegant and light.

Plensa has often used the image of Carlota in his work, varying the scale and material. The artist freezes the viewer at the border of two worlds: the material and the illusory. Plensa depicts his model with eyes closed, as if inviting viewers to close their eyes for a moment too, to retreat within and meditate on their own beguiled sense of sight. According to the sculptor, Carlota symbolises human dreams, which become visible and tangible when people close their eyes.

Jaume Plensa was born in Barcelona in 1955. He graduated from the Llotja Advanced School of Art and Design and the Sant Jordi Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The artist's first solo exhibition took place in 1980 at the Fundació Joan Miró. Plensa is the recipient of many state and international awards in the sphere of art, including the Velázquez Prize (2013) and the Global Fine Art Award, conferred for his project in a collateral event at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). He is also a knight of the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (1993).

Jaume Plensa
Carlota in the Courtyard of the Winter Palace

TWO BROTHERS

REVOLUTION, NATIONALISATION, AND THE CREATION OF NEW MUSEUMS TORE APART THE QUIET LIVES OF GREAT COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTORS. AGAIN AND AGAIN, DURING ALL SORTS OF MUSEUM UPHEAVALS, THE MOROZOV BROTHERS' COLLECTIONS WERE UNITED, THEN BROKEN UP AND DIVIDED ANEW. THE STRANGE RESULT OF ALL THIS TURMOIL WAS THE LOSS OF NOT ONLY THE COLLECTIONS' CONTINUITY, BUT ALSO ALL MEMORY OF THAT CONTINUITY. THE COMMONLY USED TERM "THE COLLECTION OF SHCHUKIN AND MOROZOV" BECAME A WELL-KNOWN "BRAND", BUT ONE THAT COMPLETELY ELIMINATED THE WONDERFUL HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INTRIGUE CREATED BY THE DIFFERENCES AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF THESE COLLECTIONS.

MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY

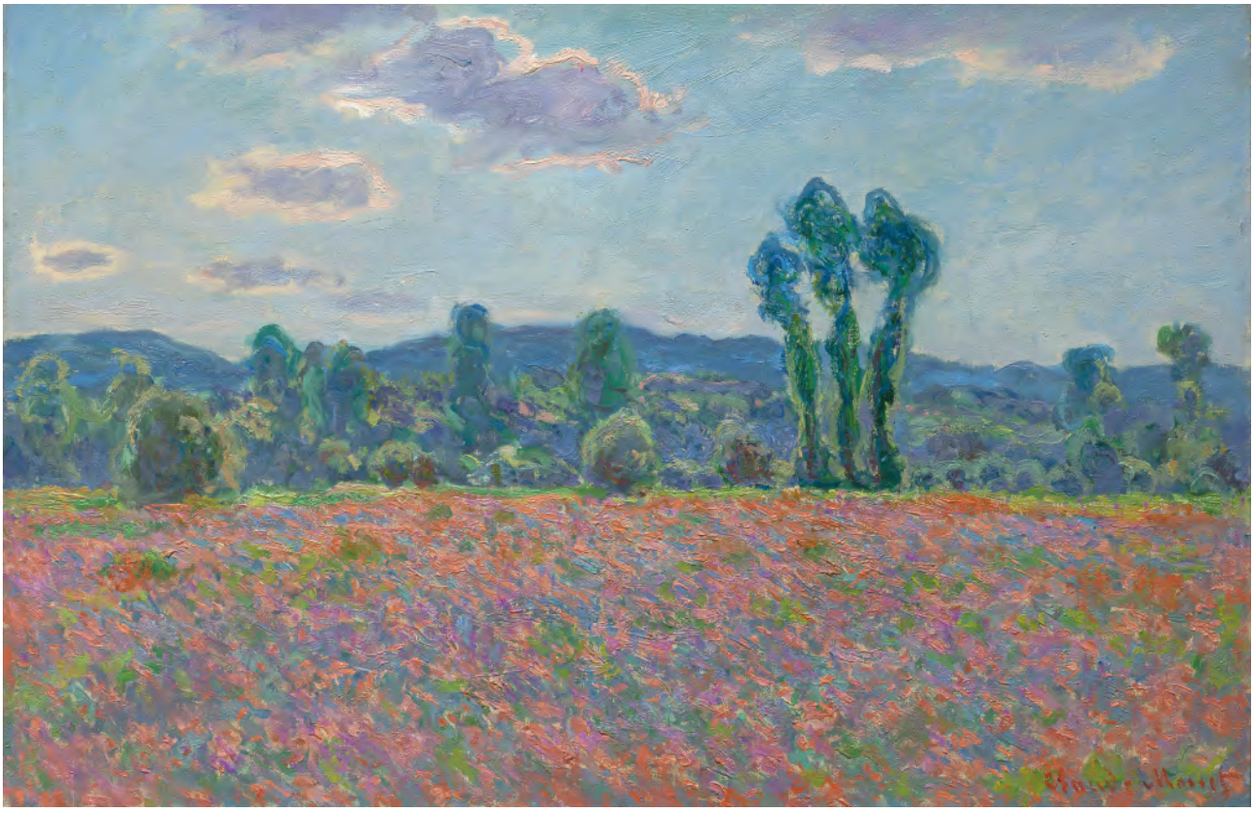

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Claude Monet
Poppy Field
FRANCE. CIRCA 1890
Oil on canvas
60,5 × 92 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1948; transferred from the State Museum of New Western Art; to which it came in 1925 from the State Tretyakov Gallery, formerly in the I.A. Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-9004

→ **Maurice Denis**
Panel 5. In the Presence of the Gods Jupiter Bestows Immortality on Psyche and Celebrates Her Marriage to Eros
FRANCE, 1908
The Story of Psyche Series
Oil on canvas
399 × 272 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1948; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Ivan Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-9670

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Henri Matisse
Still Life with The Dance
FRANCE, 1909
Oil on canvas
89,5 × 117,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1948; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Ivan Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-9042

The Hermitage began changing its approach 20 years ago by including the names of collectors on the artwork labels. It also created the Gallery in Memory of Sergey Shchukin and the Morozov Brothers. That said, artworks collected by these individual collectors continued to be exhibited together in both museums and at exhibitions, like a general celebration of the far-seeing Russian method of collecting art.

Today, the Hermitage and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts are offering a new way of preserving the memory of these great Russian collectors. In Moscow, the Pushkin Museum is hosting a special exhibition on Sergey Shchukin and his family. At the same time, the Hermitage is doing the same for the Morozov brothers. Then, a large exhibition will be held in Paris on the Morozovs, including their Russian collections. After that, Shchukin will visit St Petersburg, and the Morozovs will go to Moscow. In this way, we'll manage to weave a memorial wreath for these wonderful people. Maybe we should have done this a long time ago. But perhaps now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the exhibitions will have greater resonance. In any case, thanks to the novelty of the exhibition in Paris in honor of Shchukin, he is today considered the most famous collector in the world.

All of these exhibitions differ significantly from one another. The Moscow exhibitions are meant to revive the memory of the amazing cultural atmosphere that developed in Moscow at the end of the 19th century in a community of "businessmen" with Old Believer roots. They are meant to revive the fascinating and often tragic family history, and to

give visitors a better idea of how untold wealth combined with the joyful discovery of the world of new art, including European art. The Petersburg exhibitions, on the other hand, place them in the rich context of world art, and show how the level of taste and insight of the Moscow collectors, in particular the Morozovs, corresponded to the forward-thinking attitude of the Hermitage's royal collectors.

The exhibition at the Hermitage – The Morozov Brothers. Great Russian Collectors – highlighted the collection of the elder Morozov, Mikhail, who was an incredible personality, historian, and passionate art collector who studied painting with Konstantin Korovin. His own paintings are surprisingly good, and set a bar that his brother raised even higher. It's also useful to recall that Mikhail Morozov's collection was transferred to the Tretyakov Gallery, continuing its tradition of displaying European paintings. Interestingly, the Tretyakov upholds the tradition to this day. The group of Renoir paintings cinematically emphasises the ties between the two collections. One masterpiece follows the next: the stunning portrait of Jeanne Samari purchased by Mikhail, the next portrait purchased by Ivan, and two more amazing Renoirs. It is one of the highlights of the exhibition.

Ivan Morozov collected art for a long time, and, using his brother's tastes as a benchmark, significantly surpassed him.

Paul Cézanne
Still Life with a Curtain
FRANCE. CIRCA 1895
Oil on canvas
55 × 74,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1930; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Ivan Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-6514

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Paul Gauguin
Conversation (Les Parau Parau)
FRANCE, 1891
Oil on canvas
70,5 × 90,3 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1948; handed over from the State Museum of New Western Art in Moscow; originally in the Ivan Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-8980

He continued to collect Van Goghs and Gauguins. There's not a collection in the world that contains as many of Cézanne's masterpieces as Ivan Morozov's. His collection of Cézannes abounds with the lofty power of the human figure and magnificent landscapes, all representing the best of Cézanne's most well-known series. Matisse's so-called Moroccan Triptych is one of the jewels of the exhibition. When the collection was divided after the Russian Revolution, one part of the triptych came to the Hermitage, but was later transferred to the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in exchange for the return of a different Moroccan composition to the Hermitage. This triptych and other paintings by Matisse, as well as the radically cubist Portrait of Ambroise Vollard by Picasso, appear as bright splashes on Morozov's generally calm understanding of French art. If Shchukin discovered Matisse, then Morozov's discoveries were Bonnard, Denis, and other Les Nabis painters. Their art was clearly more consistent with Ivan Abramovich's mood. He decorated key interiors of his home with their works. We might say that they suit Morozov's more grounded and conservative personality. But we might also say that they suited Morozov because his mood was more complex and symbolic, more in the spirit of the Russian Silver Age.

We should note that the younger Morozov was a visionary. While Matisse became a symbol of great public interest in art in the mid-20th century, by the end of the century several huge exhibitions bore witness to the sharp increase in interest in Bonnard and his ethereal beauty, full of mysterious implications.

These two Russian collectors were able to gauge and appreciate different but absolutely key trends of artistic thought in Europe. For this reason, another conceptual outburst

produced by the exhibition is the masterpiece of interior decor in the Hermitage's General Staff Building that is Bonnard's Mediterranean Triptych. It resonates with Matisse's Moroccan images of the Southern Mediterranean and Denis' Story of Psyche, which itself, as it makes its home at the Hermitage, hearkens back to the sculptures of Canova in the Gallery of Ancient Painting.

The history of art told by the Morozovs' collection fits perfectly into the different stories that our museums tell us in their halls. The history of the Morozov collection is inextricably linked with the history of Russia's museums. The world of art collecting and the world of museums are different, but their languages are related; the two worlds have both agreements and disputes. Today, we are presenting an example of interaction between museums, playing the game of differences and similarities between permanent and temporary exhibitions. When we all participate in this game with great pleasure, it brings joy to visitors, regardless of how knowledgeable they are of the problems of how to write the history of art. This history is written by artists, collectors, and museums, in about the same way that we are doing it today.

Louis Vallat
Young Women in the Garden
FRANCE, ОКОЛО 1898 Г.
Холст, Circa 1898
65 × 80 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1934; handed over by the Antikvariat All-Union Association; originally in the Ivan Morozov collection
Inv. № ГЭ-7722

PHOTO: © P. S. DEMIDOV, V. S. TEREBENIN, THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

PHOTO: ©MARCO GIUGLIARELLI. THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF UMBRIA, 2019

Leonardo da Vinci
Madonna and the Child
(The Benois Madonna)
ITALY, 1478-1480
Canvas (transferred from panel), oil
49,5 × 33 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1914; purchased from
the M.A. Benois collection
Inv. № ГЭ-2773

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn
Haman Recognizes His Fate
HOLLAND, CIRCA 1665
Oil on canvas
127x116 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1773; acquired from the collection of Blackwood in London
ГЭ-752

ON THE 350TH
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ARTIST'S
DEATH

THE FALL OF HAMAN

REMBRANDT'S PAINTING
IN THE MIRROR OF TIME

THE RECENTLY COMPLETED RESTORATION OF THE PAINTING, WHICH REMOVED THICK LAYERS OF YELLOWED VARNISH AND RETOUCHING FROM THE SURFACE OF THE CANVAS, CLEARLY REVEALS THE FEATURES OF THE ARTIST'S PAINTING TECHNIQUE, RICH IN SUBTLE COLOUR NUANCES AND EXPRESSIVE TEXTURAL BRUSHSTROKES.

Throughout its history, this famous work has been the subject of conflicting interpretations about the subject, attribution, and date. The composition of the scene with three characters who are not linked by gestures or glances, the multidimensionality of the central image, and the laconicism of the artistic language have given rise to numerous theories linking the painting to different episodes from the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the most convincing and well-established theory is that the subject of the painting is the story of Haman from the Book of Esther. The story describes how the all-powerful minister Haman, who planned to exterminate all the Jews in Persia, is thwarted. He hears the royal order to hold a procession for Mordecai the Jew whom he despises and submits to his destiny, realising that this marks the beginning of his fall. This work conveys with unusual precision the mental state of a person who is powerless before fate. The design and execution of the canvas display a use of techniques for expressing profound emotions that is characteristic of Rembrandt's final period.

The figural complexity of the composition is emphasised by the oriental motifs, which play an important role in the historical paintings of the Dutch master. The world of the Biblical East as Rembrandt creates it is the subtle interlwining of a rich creative imagination and impressions taken from diverse sources: illustrated books of travels in the East, engravings and miniatures, and exotic fabrics, which the artist either collected himself or encountered in cosmopolitan Amsterdam.

Those who have recently written about Rembrandt have used on the artist the measuring stick of precise, intelligent, and shrewd criticism. They have disclosed the details of his life year by year, joy by joy, grief by grief, and misfortune by misfortune. As a result, we know the tiniest details of his life. We are fascinated by his passion for collecting, his family virtues, his fatherly cares, his plain manners, his prosperity, his ruin, and his death. An inventory of Rembrandt's property that has come down to us, along with some documents pertaining to the care of his son, have encouraged certain critics to detail the life of this great man with the cold precision of accountants. Their meticulous analyses have, like a swarm of ants, attacked and completely engulfed every aspect of his renown. They have stripped him bare – not, of course, without a certain respect, but with merciless curiosity – and now he stands there naked and tormented, like the Christ bound to the column that he is said to have painted as a reflection of his own situation with his creditors. He might well have painted it with his future critics in mind instead.

Modern science – patiently splitting hairs, striving to break everything down into pieces, fussing over trifles with only the most precise instruments – rejoices in the fact that it has managed to create a precise inventory of the painter's glory. Academia has tentatively nibbled at it with its miniscule teeth and gnawed at its corners, but has not made inroads into its enormous, magnificent, and tenebrous mass...

Taine's theories on race, time, and the milieu would have to be most subtle and ingenious to apply to the genius of Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, that sad and magnificent painter who haunts, perhaps more despotically than Leonardo da Vinci himself, the imagination and dreams of our own day.

REMBR

As with all artists of the first order, neither his race, nor his milieu, nor the time in which he lived sufficiently explains him.

We may concede that Metsu, Ter Borch, Pieter de Hooch, or even Brouwer, Steen, Craesbeeck, and Van Ostade obey these aesthetic laws. They are the voices of their own peaceful, tidy, sensual, and bourgeois land. They emerged at a time of wellbeing and plenty, when prosperity and glory was Holland's reward in its longstanding struggle against nature and humanity. These minor masters have all the virtues and faults of their fellow citizens. They are not tormented by thought; they do not grapple with the broad concepts of history and the Bible. They have not felt despair and grief grip their flesh. They have not felt the suffering of humanity deep in their hearts. They barely knew the moans, tears, and horrors that roll ceaselessly from century to century, whose storms swell the souls of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, King Saul, King David, and Ahasuerus, the apostles and holy women, and the Virgin Mary and Christ.

In their midst stands Rembrandt, a prodigy. Is it he who embodies Holland or them? He is the opposite of what they are; he is their negation. He and they cannot both represent Holland at the same time in its history. The partisans of Taine's theory are obliged to choose between these two antitheses, and there is no doubt what they must choose.

Rembrandt could have been born anywhere, at any time. His art would have been the same. Perhaps he might never have painted *The Night Watch*. Perhaps there would be fewer burgomasters and syndics in his work. But the essence would have remained the same. He would have painted himself and his family with an admirable and childish egotism, and in the soul-stirring world of legends and sacred texts he would have gathered together tears and the beauty of suffering.

For his time, he perfected the work of Dante (13th century) and that of Shakespeare and Michelangelo (16th century); sometimes he is also reminiscent of the prophets. He stands on the summits that dominate time, race, and country. He is from nowhere, because he is from everywhere.

His story can be easily explained if one takes into account the spontaneity and expansive individuality of genius. Naturally, no artists fully escape their own milieu, but the part of themselves which distances them from their time varies infinitely.

These passionate natures place the mark of their own personality on reality, rather than being influenced by it. They give more than they take. If in later centuries they seem to reflect their age far better than others, it is because they transformed it. They did not embody life as it was, but as they remade it to be. France in the 19th century was not so much personified by Bonaparte as it was created by him.

Holland in the 17th century distanced itself from Rembrandt. It did not understand him or give him support or acclaim. Other than a few students and a few friends, the painter had no one. When they were alive, Mierevelt and Van der Helst were the true representatives of Dutch art in the eyes of the world. If today these portraitists have descended from their summits of glory, it is because all of Europe has recognised and proclaimed Rembrandt's mastery. But in his time, he had to suffer the masses' preference for mediocrity. He was simply too extraordinary, too mysterious, too great.

RANDT

THE APPLE-TREE SAID:
"I AM READY TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL". THE NUT-TREE SAID: "I AM READY TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL".

THE VINE SAID:
"I AM READY TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL AND, ALSO, MY WINE IS BROUGHT TO THE ALTAR".

Louis Ginzberg. Legends of the Jews.

The cross which Haman, at the advice of his wife Zeresh and of his friends, had erected for Mordecai, was now used for himself. It was made of

THE ETROG TREE SAID:
"I SHOULD HAVE THE PRIVILEGE, FOR WITH MY FRUIT ISRAEL PRAISES GOD ON SUKKOT".

THE PALM-TREE SAID:
"I DESIRE TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL".

THE FIG-TREE SAID:
"I AM READY TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL, AND, ALSO, MY FRUITS WERE BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE AS FIRST FRUITS".

THE WILLOW OF THE BROOK SAID:
"I DESIRE TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL".

other trees for its willingness to serve.

f wood from a thorn-bush. God called all the trees together and inquired which one would permit the cross for Haman to be made of it.

The offer of the thorn-bush was accepted, after God gave a blessing to each of the

THE CEDAR-TREE SAID:
"I DESIRE TO SERVE, FOR I AM SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL".

FINALLY THE THORN-BUSH CAME AND SAID:
"I AM FITTED TO DO THIS SERVICE, FOR THE UNGODLY ARE LIKE PRICKING THORNS".

Irina Alekseevna Sokolova, curator of the exhibition “The fall of Haman: Rembrandt’s picture in the mirror of time”, with Mikhail Borisovich Piotrovsky at the opening of the exhibition. October 3, 2019

Lucas van Leyden
The Triumph of Mordecai
Circa 1515
Engraving.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Here in the Hermitage we are spoiled with masterpieces. Every day we walk through the halls and see a magnificent collection of Rembrandt's paintings. It is a daily experience for us. Just think: one of the largest collections of Rembrandt in the world is in St Petersburg, so far from Holland. Ernst van de Welering[1], a prominent expert on Rembrandt, even once wrote ironically about the Russian love for this artist, asking, "Was Rembrandt Russian?".

Rembrandt enriched all of humanity with his art. Many nations hold this artist very dear to their heart, and are quite emotional about Rembrandt's paintings.

One of Russia's favourite paintings is *The Fall of Haman (Haman Learns his Fate),* a tragic scene. It has made its home in St Petersburg since the mid-18th century, has always been in the permanent exhibition, and consistently attracts the public's attention. The canvas has been the centre of numerous controversies – various hypotheses concerning the plot, the dating, and even the authorship.

Here we present the results of our extended research. I think the restoration has produced a beautiful outcome; viewers can now see the painting in all of its original splendour. In the exhibition, it is surrounded with objects aimed at helping us understand what inspired Rembrandt. There are the engraved books mentioned in the inventory of the artist's property, as well as a number of luxury goods, which in Rembrandt's time were brought to the cosmopolitan city of Amsterdam from all over the world.

The colour orange was chosen for Rembrandt's name on St Petersburg exhibition posters as a tribute to our favourite Dutch painter.

IRINA SOKOLOVA,
CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION *THE FALL OF HAMAN: REMBRANDT'S PAINTING IN THE MIRROR OF TIME.* TAKEN FROM THE WELCOMING SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION ON OCTOBER 3, 2019

1 Ernst van de Welering (b. 1938): Doctor of Arts, prominent Dutch researcher, and author of a catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt's paintings.

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA, 2019

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA, 2019

The painting from the exhibition The fall of Haman: Rembrandt's picture in the mirror of time. The State Hermitage Museum, 2019

Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (school of)
Banquet of Esther
Late 1640s
Oil on canvas
The State Hermitage Museum
Cat. 3

Sotheby's EST. 1744

ALESSANDRO DI MARIANO FILIPEPI,
called SANDRO BOTTICELLI AND STUDIO
Madonna and child, seated before a classical window

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HID


Wijnanda Deroo
Observations
of the Hermitage
Porcelain
Collections

TREA

DEN

IN 2019, DUTCH PHOTOGRAPHER WIJNANDA DEROO REALISED HER IDEA OF SHOOTING THE PORCELAIN COLLECTION IN THE STORAGE ROOMS OF THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM AND THE STARAYA DEREVNYA RESTORATION AND STORAGE CENTRE.

ASURE


D
R

Wijnanda Deroo was born in the Netherlands. Since 1989, she has lived and worked in New York City. Her photographs are held in collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Brooklyn Museum, Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, and the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv; she is also represented in the Robert Mann Gallery in New York. "I believe the deepest visual mysteries and adventures are found in 'what is'," explains Deroo.
"I photograph human-made spaces exactly as I find them – in existing light, without rearrangement or any other adjustments. I try to capture the essence of each space by leaving all details untouched and all the historical layers visible."


3Ф-
24840
3Ф-
15404
3Ф-
24788

The Hermitage's Western European porcelain collections live in grand and gorgeous spaces. High ceilings, tall windows, and quiet grace fill these rooms. The handsome antique storage cabinets that safely hold the porcelain add to the atmosphere of historical and cultural vibrancy.

Photographing these pieces, I felt like an explorer in a land of hidden treasures. Even the trip to reach these storage areas communicates a sense of adventure. It begins with a long walk through the palace, past exquisite exhibition galleries. A door is unlocked, revealing a small room with a delicate cast-iron spiral staircase in a steep stairwell.

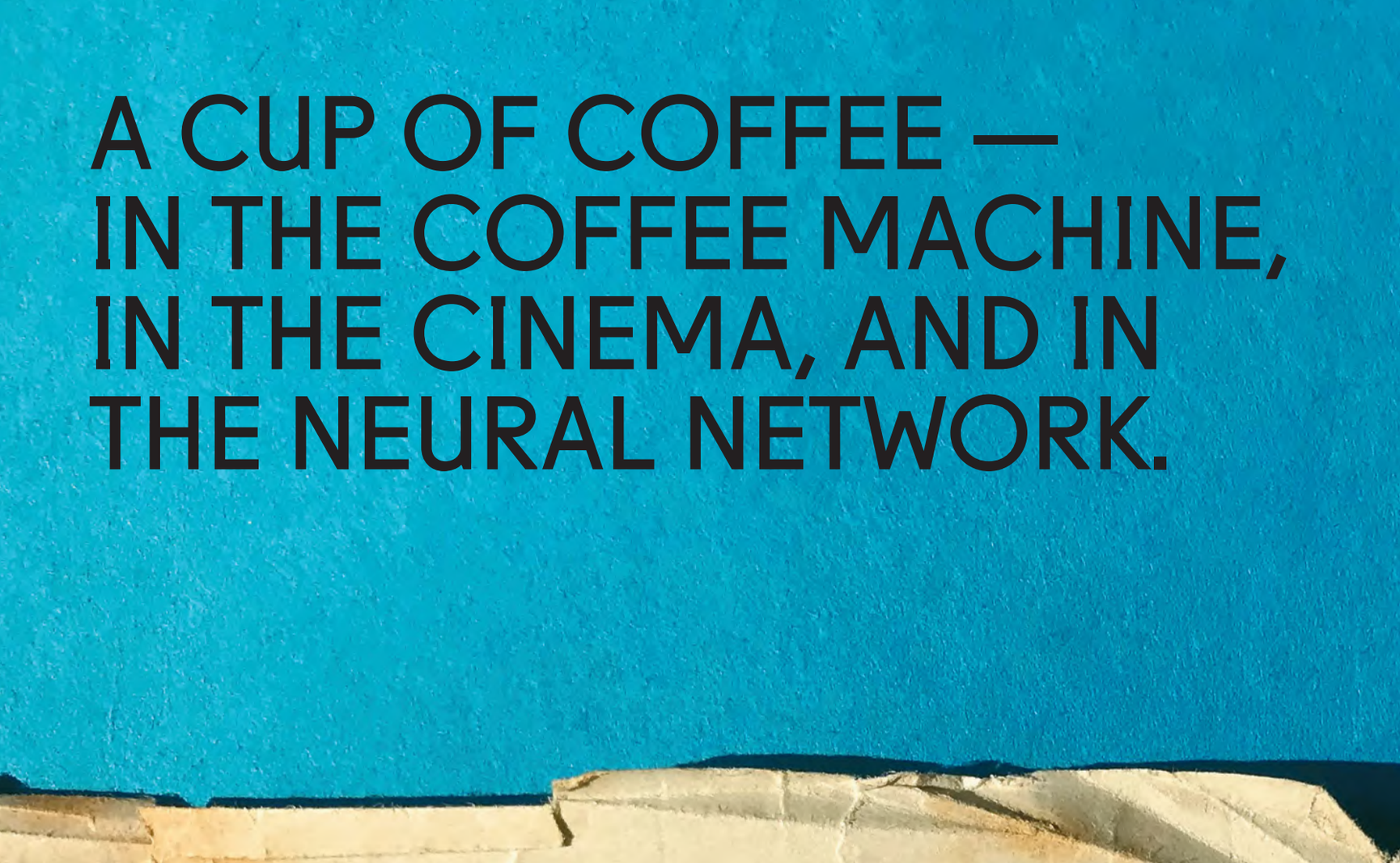

SCOOTER

After climbing up level after level, the staircase eventually leads to the enfilade of high-ceilinged rooms that houses the porcelain collections. In the profound stillness that pervades these enormous rooms, the eye begins to take in the seemingly infinite expanse of porcelain figures, vases, and objects
of all kinds.

Cabinets filled with dazzling biscuit porcelain and colourful, finely detailed glazed pieces are locked with the ingenious technology of another era: small lacquer seals that can only be opened by a ring with matching insignia. Here and there, one comes upon a desk or table that seems as old and full of character as the artworks, where an object might be examined or packed for a move to an exhibit space. Woven baskets with handles are used to carefully transport smaller porcelain bowls and figures up and down the fantastic staircases.

Moving through these otherworldly environments with my camera was an immersion in the visual pleasures of fabulous juxtapositions, surprising arrangements, order, and serendipity. I touch nothing, adjust nothing, and make no changes to the lighting when I work. My camera catches whatever is found there, in that particular moment, in that particular light. I hope in these photographs viewers can sense the timeless power of these phenomenal spaces, and the treasures of human imagination hidden within.

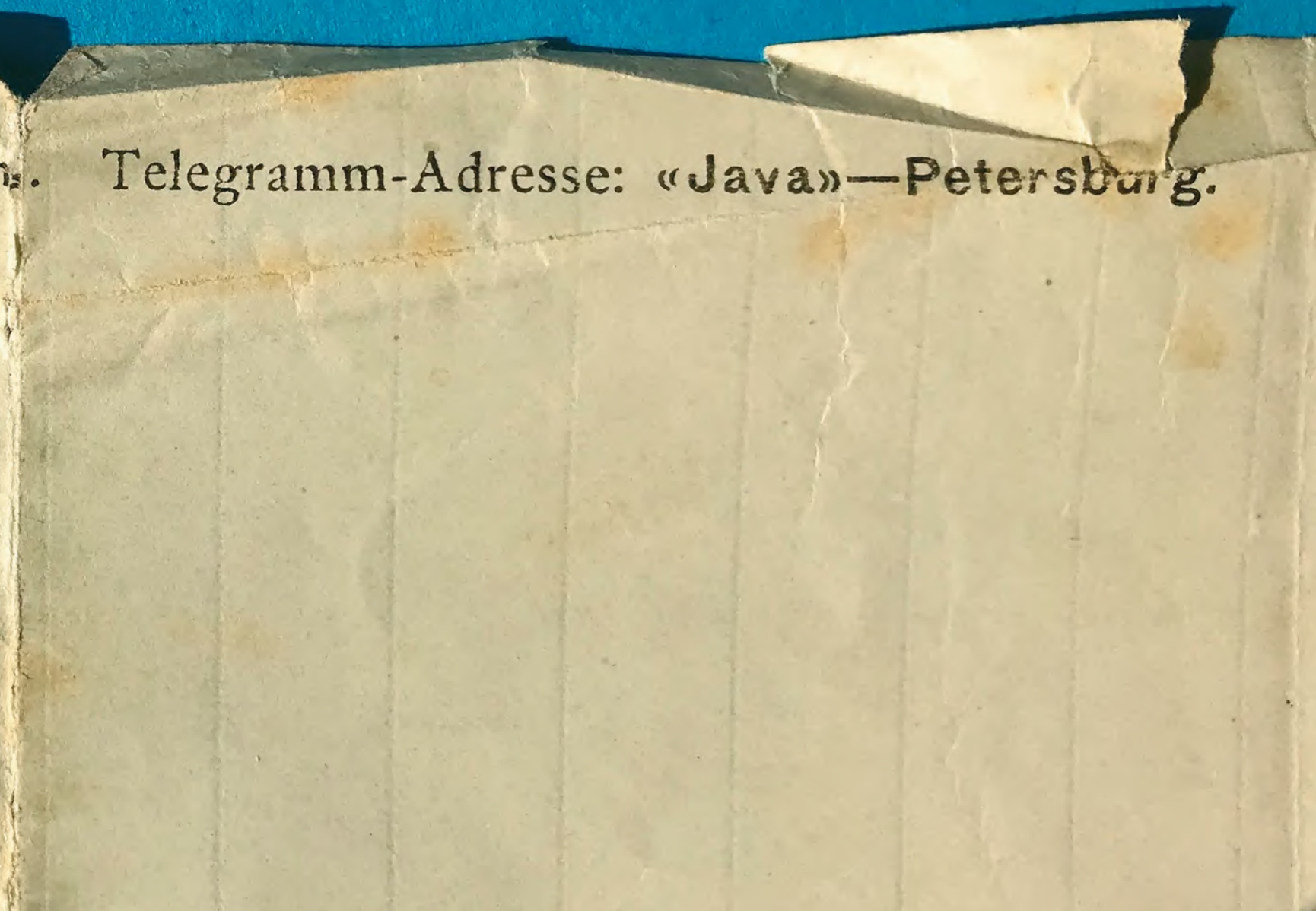
A CUP OF COFFEE — IN THE COFFEE MACHINE, IN THE CINEMA, AND IN THE NEURAL NETWORK.



The telegram for Hendrik Kruijs, fragment

WHAT DOES THE SMALL VILLAGE OF VRIEZENVEEN IN THE EAST OF THE NETHERLANDS AND THE MODERN OBJECT-ORIENTED PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE JAVA HAVE IN COMMON? HOW DID A CUP OF COFFEE FROM AN AUTOMATIC COFFEE MACHINE BECOME A CLASSIC AMERICAN WORK OF ART? TO EXPLAIN THIS, WE HAVE TO GO BACK INTO HISTORY – BACK TO THE ST PETERSBURG OF THE 19TH CENTURY, WHERE THE SO-CALLED RUSLUIE, MERCHANTS FROM VRIEZENVEEN[1], HAD MAINTAINED A FLOURISHING TRADE FOR OVER 200 YEARS, TO AMERICA IN THE 1930S, WHEN AMERICAN AUTOMATIC COFFEE MACHINES WERE GAINING POPULARITY, AND THEN TO THE 1990S, WHEN A YOUNG DUTCH PROGRAMMER JOINED THE TEAM OF AMERICAN DEVELOPERS WORKING ON THE NEW LANGUAGE OF JAVA.

1 For more information on the village of Vriezenveen, see The Hermilage Magazine, issue No. 26, 2018.



JAVA COFFEE AND A PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE

CONSTANT BUURSEN[2]

Hendrik Kruijs, from Vriezenveen, came to St Petersburg in 1868 as a boy of 17 years old. He soon began working as an apprentice at Engberts & Co, a well-known company also from Vriezenveen. After eight years, he started his own trading company, selling coffee, cigars, liqueurs, spices, and other items. He eventually gained exclusive rights to sell Blooker cocoa in Russia. He called his trading company Java, and thus the word Java became associated with coffee in Russia.

Much later, in the 1980s, Arthur van Hoff – after studying computer science at the Saxion University of Applied Sciences in Enschede, also in the eastern Netherlands – travelled to the United States, becoming a member of a team that developed a new object-oriented programming language. After the project was finished, the team had to come up with a commercial name for their invention. They kept it simple, choosing the name of the coffee that they drank to stay alert during the long days of working on the language. It was Java coffee, and as a logo for the language they chose the famous steaming cup of coffee that can now be found on every Java textbook.

Java is an extremely popular programming language and can also be considered a good choice for AI programming, as it is compatible with search algorithms and neural networks.

Javanese coffee

In the 19th century, this variety of coffee was brought by Dutch colonisers from Ethiopia to the Indonesian island of Java (hence the name). Until the middle of the 20th century, breeders mistook Java coffee as a type of Typica, until Indonesian farmers began exporting it to Cameroon. There it was discovered that this type of bean was partially immune to Coffee Bean Disease (CBD), which at that time was a major problem for African farmers. After 20 years of careful selection, in the 1980s and 1990s, a new variety appeared on the market and became available for cultivation. Genetic analysis showed that Java is not related to Typica, but instead is a variant of Abyssinia, an autochthonous Ethiopian variety.

Of course, the team of American developers did not know that Java coffee, and therefore the name of the new programming language, had roots in St Petersburg, because a man from Vriezenveen called his trading house Java. And therefore it also could make sense to change the logo, the steaming cup of coffee, into the original logo of Hendrik Kruijs, which is a sailing ship with the text "Java". Even those who do not know the language Java may know the term JavaScript. JavaScript is something different, but the name is derived from Java. A Java programme is compiled as a whole to binary code, while JavaScript is originally compiled and executed per command.

Recently there have been articles published on a new programming language named "Kotlin". Some even say that Kotlin is the successor to Java. Strangely enough, the name Kotlin also has ties to St Petersburg.[3]

2 An article by Constant Buursen from the History Museum Vriezenveen is a continuation of his article "Vriezenveen. 1917" (The Hermitage Magazine, issue No. 26, 2018).

3 Kotlin Island is located in the Gulf of Finland, about 30 kilometres west of St Peterburg. It is home to the fortified city of Kronstadt. Since the start of the 18th century, Kotlin has had an important marine harbour and has been strategic in the defence of St Petersburg.

4 Smirnova, Vika. "Edward Hopper: The mirror effect". URL: http://www.artterritory.com/ru/leksli/stalji/5115-jedvard_hopper._jeffekt_zerkala

COFFEE FROM THE AUTOMAT. SEVENTY YEARS BEFORE JAVASCRIPT

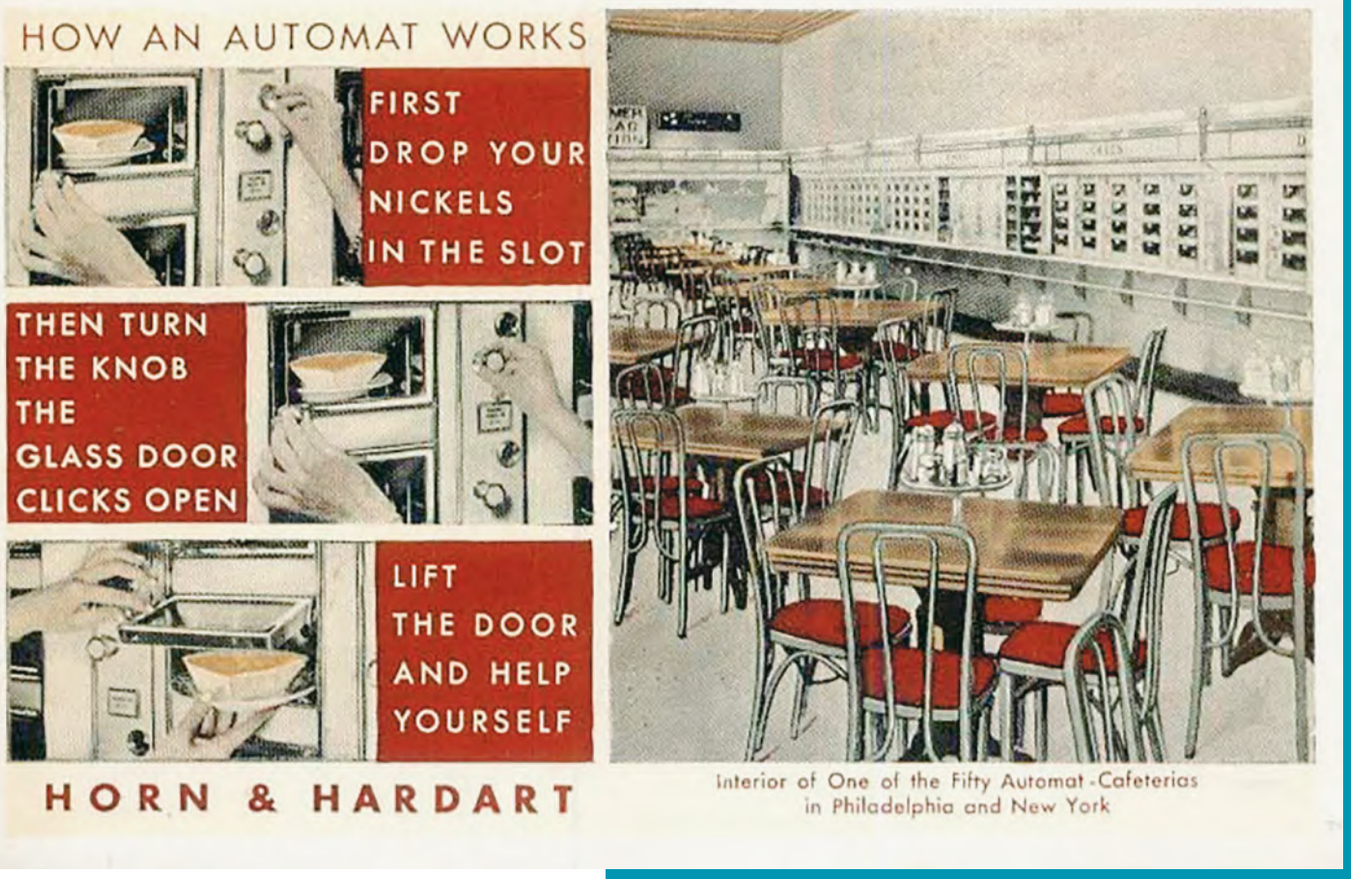
Edward Hopper "came up with something that we call a digital image. Long before the appearance of the computer, he invented a reality from which the negative had disappeared".[4]

Automat
is a 1927 painting by American realist artist Edward Hopper. The painting was first shown on St Valentine's Day of the same year at the opening of Hopper's second solo exhibition at Rehn Galleries in New York City. It is now kept at the Des Moines Art Center in Iowa.

The automats have progressed farther along this road than the cafeterias. Although they have approximately the same outward appearance as the cafeterias, they differ from the latter in that they have carried the process of pushing food into American stomachs to the point of virtuosity. The walls of the automats are occupied throughout with little glass closets. Near each one of them is a slit for dropping a "nickel" (a five-cent coin). Behind the glass stands a dour sandwich or a glass of juice or a piece of pie. Despite the shining glass and metal, the sausages and cutlets deprived of liberty somehow produce a strange impression. One pities them, like cats at a show. A man drops a nickel, acquires the right to open the little door, takes out his sandwich, carries it to his table, and there eats it, again pulling his hat under his chair on the special shelf. Then the man goes up to a faucet, drops his "nickel," and out of the faucet into the glass drips exactly as much coffee and milk as is supposed to drip. One feels something humiliating, something insulting to man in that. One begins to suspect that the owner of the automat has outfitted his establishment, not in order to present society with a pleasant surprise, but in order to discharge from service poor marcelled girls with pink headdresses and thereby earn a few more dollars.

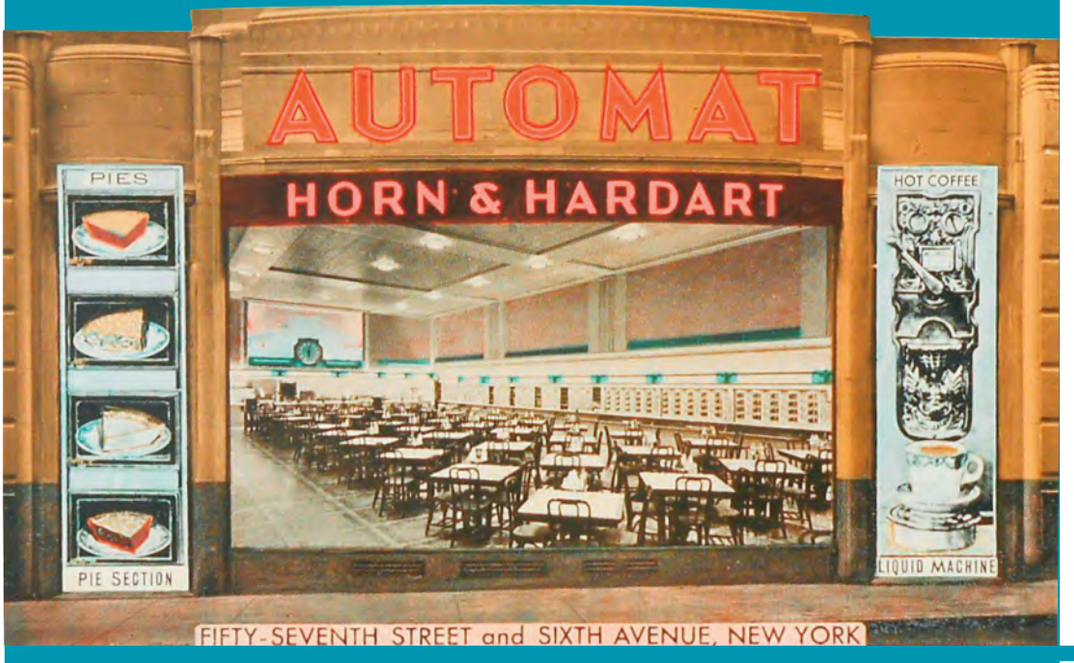
ILYA ILF, EVGENY PETROV.
SINGLE-STORIED AMERICA. 1935

An automat in Manhattan. 1936



An automat is a fast-food restaurant where ready-made food and drinks are sold through vending machines. The world's first automat, called Quisisana, opened in Berlin in 1895.

Horn & Hardart postcard explaining how the automat works. 1930s



An automat on 6th Avenue, 1165, New York. 1930s

Edward Hopper.
Nighlhawks, 1942.
The Arl Inslilule of Chicago. Friends of American Arl Collection

There is a theory that Hopper's *Nighthawks* was a reflection on Ernest Hemingway's short story "The Killers". Later, the film *The Killers* (Robert Siodmak, 1946, starring Ava Gardner and Burt Lancaster) was considered to be a manifestation not only of a literary source – Hemingway's story of the same name – but also of the style of Hopper's paintings. And there is a lot of coffee.

Shols from lhe movie *The Killers* (Roberl Siodmak, 1946)

Original trademark of Hendrik Kruijs' trading company

ТОРГОВЫЙ ЗНАКЪ
УТВЕРЖДЕНЪ ДЕПАРТАМЕНТОМЪ
ТОРГОВЛИ И МАНУФАКТУРЪ

Feliks Topolski
The Nuremberg Trial, 1946
Topolski's Chronicle, Vol. VIII, Nos 1–2 (157–158), 1960

The Ceiling in
the Twelve-Column Hall
1944

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

I PROMISE AND SWEAR TO TELL NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

G.S. Vereisky
Academician I. A. Orbeli
1945
Lithography
Illustration from the book by Varshavsky S.P.,
Resl Y.I. The Feat of the Hermitage — Leningrad, Moscow:
Soviet artist, 1965

IN 1946, THEN-DIRECTOR OF THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM JOSEPH ORBELI TESTIFIED AT THE NUREMBERG TRIALS OF NAZI GERMANY'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS REGARDING THE VERY CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE THAT THE HERMITAGE HAD SUSTAINED WHILE LENINGRAD WAS UNDER SIEGE. HERMITAGE STAFF HAD REMOVED SOME 80 TONNES OF BROKEN GLASS AND SNOW FROM THE MUSEUM ROOMS IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1943 ALONE. THE LAST NAZI SHELL EXPLODED IN THE ARMORIAL HALL OF THE WINTER PALACE ON JANUARY 2, 1944.

1 Joseph Abgarovitch Orbeli (1887–1961) was an orientalist scholar, fellow of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, first president of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (1943–1947), and director of the State Hermitage Museum (1934–1951).

CROSS-EXAMINATION OF WITNESS JOSEPH A. ORBELI
СТЕНОГРАММА ЗАСЕДАНИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО
TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
SESSION OF 22 FEBRUARY 1946

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Mr President, in order to exhaust fully the presentation of evidence on the subject matter of my report I ask your permission to examine witness Joseph Abgarovitch Orbeli who has been brought to the courthouse. Orbeli will testify to the destruction of the monuments of culture and art in Leningrad.

[Dr Servatius approached the lectern.]

The president: Do you have any objections to make?

Dr Robert Servatius: (Counsel for Defendant Sauckel and for the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party): I would like to ask the Court to decide whether the witness can be heard on this subject, whether this single piece of evidence is relevant. Leningrad was never in German hands. Leningrad was only fired upon with the regular combat weapons of the troops and also attacked from the air, just as it is done regularly by all the armies of the world. It must be established what is to be proved by this witness.

The president: The Tribunal considers that there is no substance in the objection that has just been made, and we will hear the witness.

[The witness Orbeli took the stand.]

The president: What is your name?

Joseph Abgarovitch Orbeli (Witness): Joseph Abgarovitch Orbeli.

The president: Will you repeat the oath after me – state your name again: I – Orbeli, Joseph, a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – summoned as a witness in this Trial – in the presence of the Court – promise and swear – to tell the Court nothing but the truth – about everything I know in regard to this case.

[The witness repeated the oath in Russian.]

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Witness, will you tell us, please, what position do you occupy?

Orbeli: Director of the State Hermitage.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: What is your scientific title?

Orbeli: I am a member of the Academy of Science of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, an active member of the Academy of Architecture of the USSR, an active member and president of the Armenian Academy of Science, an honorable member of the Iran Academy of Science, member of the Society of Antiquarians in London, and a consultant member of the American Institute of Art and Archaeology.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Were you in Leningrad at the time of the German blockade?

Orbeli: Yes, I was.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Do you know about the destruction of monuments of culture and art in Leningrad?

Orbeli: Yes.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Can you tell the Tribunal the facts that are known to you?

Orbeli: Besides general observations which I was able to make after the cessation of hostilities around Leningrad, I was also an eyewitness of the measures undertaken by the enemy for destruction of the Hermitage Museum, and the buildings of the Hermitage and the Winter Palace, where the exhibits from the Hermitage Museum were displayed. During many long months these buildings were under systematic air bombardment and artillery shelling. Two air bombs and about 30 artillery shells hit the Hermitage. Shells caused considerable damage to the building, and air bombs destroyed the drainage system and water conduit system of the Hermitage. While observing the destruction done to the Hermitage I could also see, across the river, the buildings of the Academy of Science, namely: the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, the Zoological Museum, and right next to it the Naval Museum, in the building of the former Stock Exchange. All these buildings were under especially heavy bombardment of incendiary bombs. I saw the effect of these hits from a window in the Winter Palace. Artillery shells caused considerable damage to the Hermitage. I shall mention the most important. One shell broke the portico of the main building of the Hermitage, facing the Millionnaya Street and damaged the piece of sculpture "Atlanta" [sic]. The other shell went through the ceiling of one of the most sumptuous halls in the Winter Palace and caused considerable damage there. The former stable of the Winter Palace was hit by two shells. Among court carriages of the 17th and 18th centuries that were there displayed, four from the 18th century of high artistic value, and one 19th-century gilt carriage were shattered to pieces by one of these shells. Furthermore, one shell went through the ceiling of the Numismatic Hall and of the Hall of Columns in the main building of the Hermitage, and a balcony of this hall was destroyed by it. At the same time, a branch building of the Hermitage Museum on Solyanoy Lane, namely the former Stieglitz Museum, was hit by a bomb from the air which caused very great damage to the building. The building was absolutely unfit for use, and a large part of the exhibits in this building suffered damage.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Please tell me, Witness, do I understand you correctly? You spoke about the destruction of the Hermitage and you mentioned the Winter Palace. Is that only one building? Where was the Hermitage located, the one you mentioned?

Orbeli: Before the October Revolution, the Hermitage occupied a special building of its own facing Millionnaya Street; and the other side facing the Palace Quay of the Neva. After the Revolution, the Little Hermitage, the building of the Hermitage Theatre, the building which separated the Hermitage proper from the Winter Palace, and later even the entire Winter Palace were incorporated into the Hermitage. Therefore, at the present moment the series of buildings comprising the Hermitage consist of the Winter Palace, the Little Hermitage, and Great Hermitage, which was occupied by the museum prior to the Revolution, and also the building of the Hermitage Theatre, which was built during the reign of Catherine II by the architect Quarenghi and which was hit by the incendiary bomb which I mentioned.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Besides the destruction of the Winter Palace and the Hermitage, do you know any other facts about the destruction of other cultural monuments?

Orbeli: I observed a series of monuments of Leningrad which suffered damage from artillery shelling and bombing from the air. Among them damage was caused to the Kazan Cathedral, which was built in 1814 by Architect Voronikhin, Isaak's Cathedral, whose pillars still bear the traces of damage pitted in the granite. Within the city limits considerable damage was done to the Rastrelli Wing near the Smolny Cathedral, which was built by Rastrelli. The middle part of the gallery was blown up. Furthermore, considerable damage by artillery fire was done to the surface of the walls of the Fortress of Peter and Paul, which cannot now be considered a military objective.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Besides Leningrad proper do you know anything about the destruction and devastation of the suburbs of Leningrad?

Orbeli: I had the chance to acquaint myself in detail with the condition of the monuments of Peterhof, Tzarskoye Ssyelo [sic], and Pavlovsk; in all those three towns I saw traces of the monstrous damage to those monuments. And all the damage which I saw, and which is very hard to describe in full because it is too great, all of it showed traces of premeditation. To prove, for instance, that the shelling of the Winter Palace was premeditated, I

could mention that the 30 shells did not hit the Hermitage all at once but during a longer period and that not more than one shell hit it during each shooting. In Peterhof, besides the damage caused to the Great Palace by fire which completely destroyed this monument, I also saw gold sheetings torn from the roofs of the Great Palace, the dome of Peterhof Cathedral, and the building at the opposite end of this enormous palace. It was obvious that the gold sheetings could not fly off because of the fire alone, but were intentionally torn off. In Monplaisir, the oldest building of Peterhof, built by Peter the Great, the damage showed also signs of long and gradual ravages, and was not a result of a catastrophe. The precious oak carvings covering the walls were torn off. The ancient Dutch tile stoves, of the time of Peter the Great, disappeared without trace, and temporary, roughly built stoves were put in their place. The Great Palace, built by Rastrelli in Tsarskoye Ssyelo, shows indubitable traces of intentional destruction. For example, the parquet floors in numerous halls were cut out and carried away, while the building itself was destroyed by fire. In Catherine's Palace, an auxiliary munitions plant was installed, and the precious carved 18th-century fireplace was used as a furnace and was rendered absolutely worthless. Paul's Palace, which was also destroyed by fire, showed many a sign that the valuable property that once could be found in its halls was carried out before the Palace had been set on fire.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: Tell me, please, you said the Winter Palace as well as the other cultural monuments that you mentioned were intentionally destroyed. Upon what facts do you base that statement?

Orbeli: The fact that the shelling of the Hermitage by artillery fire during the siege was premeditated was quite clear to me and to all my colleagues because damage was caused not casually by artillery shelling during one or two raids, but systematically, during the methodical shelling of the city, which we witnessed for months. The first shells did not hit the Hermitage or the Winter Palace – they passed nearby; they were finding the range and after this they would fire in the same direction, with just a little deviation from the straight line. Not more than one or two shells during one particular shelling would actually hit the Palace. Of course, this could not be accidental in character.

Mr counsellor Raginsky: I have no more questions for the witness.

The president: Do any of the other prosecuting counsel want to ask any questions? Do any of the Defense Counsel want to ask any questions?

(Laternser approached the lectern.)

Dr Hans Laternser (Counsel for the General Staff and High Command of the German Armed Forces): Witness, you have just said that through artillery shelling and also through aerial bombs, the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and also the Peterhof Palace were destroyed. I would be very much interested to know where these buildings are located; that is, as seen from Leningrad.

Orbeli: The Winter Palace and the Hermitage, which stands right next to it, are in the centre of Leningrad on the banks of the Neva on the Palace Quay, not far from the Palace Bridge, which, during all the shelling, was hit only once. On the other side, facing the Neva, next to the Winter Palace and the Hermitage, are the Palace Square and Halturin Street. Did I answer your question?

Dr Laternser: I meant the question a little differently. In what part of Leningrad were these buildings – in the south, the north, the southwest, or southeast section? Will you inform me on that?

Orbeli: The Winter Palace and the Hermitage are right in the centre of Leningrad on the banks of the Neva, as I have already mentioned before.

Dr Laternser: And where is Peterhof?

Orbeli: Peterhof is on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, southwest of the Hermitage, if you consider the Hermitage as the starting point.

Dr Laternser: Can you tell me whether near the Hermitage Palace and Winter Palace there are any industries, particularly armament industries?

Orbeli: So far as I know, in the vicinity of the Hermitage, there are no military enterprises.

Dr Laternser: Do you know whether there were artillery batteries, perhaps, near the buildings which you mentioned?

Orbeli: On the whole square around the Winter Palace and the Hermitage there was not a single artillery battery, because from the very beginning steps were taken to prevent any unnecessary vibration near the buildings where such precious museum pieces were.

Dr Laternser: Did the factories, the armament factories, continue production during the siege?

Orbeli: On the grounds of the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and in the immediate neighborhood, no military enterprise worked. They were never there and during the blockade no factories were built there. But I know that in Leningrad munitions were being made, and were successfully used.

Dr Laternser: I have no further questions.

(Servatius approached the lectern)

Dr Robert Servatius: Witness, the Winter Palace is on the Neva River. How far from the Winter Palace is the nearest bridge across the Neva River?

Orbeli: The nearest bridge, the Palace Bridge, is 50 metres from the Palace... but, as I have already said, only one shell hit the bridge during the shellings; that is why I am sure that the Winter Palace was deliberately shelled. I cannot admit that while shelling the bridge, only one shell hit the bridge and 30 hit the nearby building...

Dr Robert Servatius: Witness, those are conclusions that you are drawing. Have you any knowledge whatever of artillery from which you can judge whether the target was the palace or the bridge beside it?

Orbeli: I never was an artillery man, but I suppose that if German artillery was aiming only at the bridge then it could not possibly hit the bridge only once and hit the palace, which is across the way, with 30 shells. Within these limits – I am an artillery man.

(There is some animation in the audience.)

Dr Robert Servatius: That is your conviction as a non-artillery man. I have another question. The Neva River was used by the fleet. How far from the Winter Palace were the ships of the Red Fleet?

Orbeli: In that part of the Neva River there were no battleships which were firing or were used for such kind of service. The Neva ships were anchored in another part of the river, far from the Winter Palace.

Dr Robert Servatius: One last question. Were you in Leningrad during the entire period of the siege?

Orbeli: I was in Leningrad from the first day of the war until 31 March 1942. Then I returned to Leningrad when the German troops were driven out of the suburbs of Leningrad and had a chance to inspect Peterhof, Tsarskoye Ssyelo, and Pavlovsk.

Dr Robert Servatius: Thank you. I have no more questions.

The president: General, do you want to ask the witness any questions in re-examination?

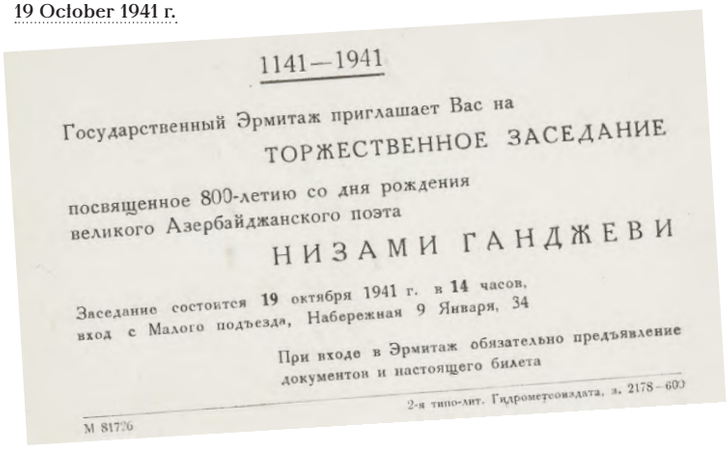
Mr counsellor Raginsky: We have no further questions.

The president: The witness can retire.

(The witness left the stand.)

On October 7, the Nazi commander-in-chief received a new directive from the Führer's desk, confirming Hitler's decision to completely destroy Leningrad. "This is the Führer's decision and it must be conveyed to all commanders". The Nazi Navy commander had received an identical directive, entitled "On the Future Destiny of the City of St Petersburg", two weeks earlier: "The Führer is determined to wipe St Petersburg off the face of the earth". By this time, however, Hitler and his staff had fully realised that the plan to take Leningrad by storm had failed irredeemably. On the way from the Neman to the Neva, and at the approaches to Leningrad, the Nazi army had lost upwards of 190,000 soldiers and officers, killed or wounded, as well as 700 tanks, 500 cannon, and numerous warplanes. The Soviet troops defending Leningrad, despite having suffered heavy losses, were not defeated. Caught in the vice clamp of the siege, they were like the ultimately compressed steel spring, fraught with a tremendous uncoiling force that would have a lethal effect on the enemy. Leningrad tied up a 300,000-strong enemy army at its unassailable walls. A long and merciless siege of Leningrad was now the only option left Hitler and his commanders. The idea was to starve and freeze the city's defenders and residents into surrender, to turn Leningrad into a sprawl of ruins with constant shelling and bombing. In the directive "On the Future Destiny of the City of St Petersburg" it was written: "It is proposed to tightly blockade the city and level it to the ground with shelling from all calibres of artillery and continual aerial bombing". The Leningrad autumn of 1941... Leningrad was hit by 5,364 shells in September and 7,590 in October; 16,087 bombs (987 explosive and 15,100 incendiary) were dropped on Leningrad in September and 44,102 (812 explosive and 43,290 incendiary) in October. The daily bread ration had already been reduced three times. As of October 1, it was 400 grammes for workers and 200 grammes for all other population groups. Leningrad's fuel stocks were running out as days grew colder and shorter. Electricity was cut off to most buildings in the evening to conserve energy. The cold Hermitage stared into the cold Neva. During the long autumn nights, in between the air raid alerts, the Hermitage's staff continued to haul museum exhibits to the relative safety of the vaulted basement rooms and climbed down from the shell-riddled roof to go back to the work of their lifetime. From the drawers of desks they pulled out their unfinished research and manuscripts... The lamp would be only halfway on, going fully out occasionally. They would sit there in the dark,

Invitation card to the solemn meeting dedicated to the 800th anniversary of the birth of Nizami
19 October 1941 г.



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великого Азербайджанского поэта

НИЗАМИ ГАНДЖЕВИ

Заседание состоится 19 октября 1941 г. в 14 часов,
вход с Малого подъезда, Набережная 9 Января, 34

При входе в Эрмитаж обязательно предъявление
документов и настоящего билета

М 81726 2-я типо-лит. Гидрометеоиздата, з. 2178—600

PHOTO © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG

STATE HERMITAGE MEMO NO. 170 OF 23 JUNE 1941. ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 22ND TO THE 23RD, WHEN THE AIR-RAID WARNING FOR THE CITY WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE LOCAL AIR DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, ALL TEAMS AND SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE HERMITAGE PERFORMED THEIR ASSIGNED DUTIES AND ACTED IN AN EXCEPTIONALLY SHARP, ORGANISED MANNER. I HEREBY EXPRESS MY COMMENDATIONS TO THE STAFF OF THE AIR-DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, THE POLITICAL ADVISORS, COMMANDERS, AND FIGHTERS FOR THEIR HIGH MORALE AND SELF-SACRIFICIAL PERFORMANCE OF THEIR CIVIC DUTY. SITE DIRECTOR: J. ORBELI.

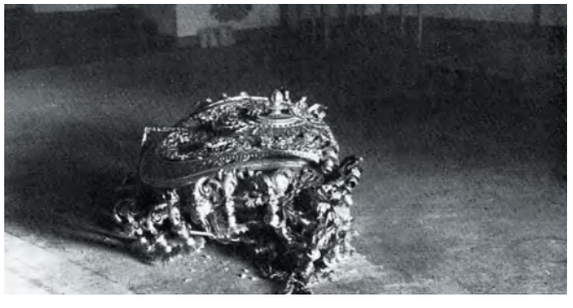
dreaming. If it were not for this war, we would now be sending the catalogue for the Navoi jubilee exhibition to the printers. Then it would be out in print by December, five hundred years since the great Uzbek poet's birth. They remembered: this autumn, this October, celebrations in honour of another great poet, Nizami Ganjavi of Azerbaijan, were scheduled. If it were not for this war, we would be mounting the exhibition right now – it would have been a world-class show! We would have put together all Nizami's manuscripts and miniature paintings illustrating his poems, and it would all be surrounded with silver dishware from the House of Sasan! They would sit there in the dark, dreaming, remembering... and wondering if the Junkers were going to return later that night. Smolny, where the frontline headquarters was based, would bear the brunt of the air raids. The bombing was particularly ferocious on that day in October when two men, who had known each other for ages, met on the ground floor of Smolny. "In one of the downstairs hallways I suddenly bumped into a rather outlandish-looking gentleman," writes the poet Nikolai Tikhonov, chronicler of Leningrad's most brutal days and nights, in memoirs that he published many years later. "This gentleman, who was wearing no hat and had a curly head of hair like King Lear, tousled and very grey, a huge foaming beard, and eyes radiating great energy, grabbed me by the arms and loudly exclaimed: 'Here's the man I was looking for!' This was the famous academician, Director of the Hermitage, Joseph Abgarovich Orbeli". Orbeli needed Nikolai Tikhonov for some very urgent business that Orbeli had come to Smolny that day to attend to. The poet,

All paintings are taken away, vases and floor lamps are unscrewed and lie below

Работы в Эрмитаже после войны

The shell exploded in the Armorial Hall of the State Hermitage

Head of the object professor M. V. Dobroklonsky at the Rossetti Sculpture



The blast wave broke away a massive bronze chandelier from the ceiling of the Peter hall

who now stood before him in his army overcoat, had been working on the preparations for the Nizami anniversary event before the war.
"I'm sure you remember", Orbeli said, "that those anniversaries are coming up". The sounds of an air battle were percolating through the solid stone walls: the roaring of the warplanes, the screeching of the anti-aircraft guns... Tikhonov could only throw up his hands in a gesture of utter helplessness:

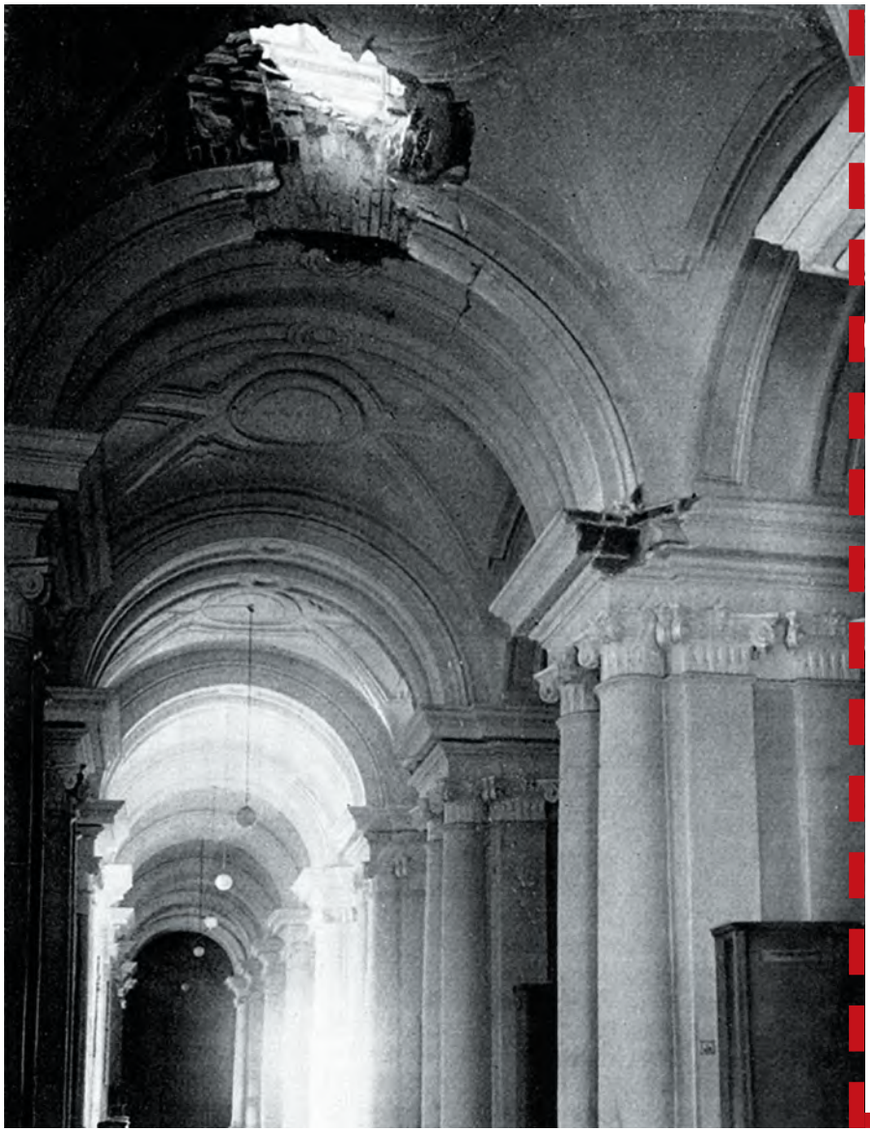
"My dear Joseph Abgarovich, things are in a bit of a disarray, as you can see. I'm afraid the anniversary celebrations are not going to look very festive in this kind of environment".

But Orbeli was unrelenting:

"The celebration has to take place and it will take place! The whole country will be celebrating Nizami's Jubilee. Are we here, in Leningrad, so incapable of joining them? Do you want the fascists to celebrate having disrupted our cultural festivities as well?"

The two men followed the long Smolny hallways to the Political Authority of the Leningrad Front. As he introduced Orbeli, Tikhonov, fearful that the honourable academic might be taken for someone who was unaware of the gravity of the situation, outlined a few peculiarities of Orbeli's character. Then Orbeli began.

The shell, which exploded in the Armorial Hall, smashed the interfloor overlap and the Rastrelli Gallery became visible through a large hole



Pointing at Tikhonov, Orbeli said, "He will do the introductory address on behalf of the writers, and I will speak for academia". Then he added, as though it was something that followed logically: "You will round up the presenters".

"We will do what?" The Political Authority people raised their eyebrows.

"They are all in the trenches somewhere close by. Somewhere near Kolpino or Pulkovo. Recall them for a day. Here in the morning, back in the evening," he said.

Orbeli named several orientalists – Hermitage research associates – who were fighting near Leningrad.

They agreed to summon the presenters back to the city, but that was not the biggest problem. The proposed plan of the celebratory conference, as explained by comrade academics, proposed that some two hundred people – the city's most respected intelligentsia and thought-leaders – would attend the event at the Hermitage. "What if an air raid happens right at that time and the Hermitage gets bombed? Who will be responsible for what may happen?"

"I will be personally responsible!" Orbeli exclaimed passionately. "The Hermitage is unlikely to get hit by the very first bomb... But if the second one does, by then I will have whisked everyone off to the bomb shelter". "You have to understand," Orbeli continued to plead his case with the Political Authority staff. "Leningrad has to have a Nizami Jubilee! We will be mired in shame if in Moscow, Baku, and all across the Soviet Union they celebrate it but we do not. They will be saying we have lost it, that we are so afraid of the bombs we have forgotten our duty...".

"His impassioned face, his belligerent beard, and the self-assurance of a man of experience did not fail to impress", writes Tikhonov. "We were given the go-ahead for the conference, and the conference did take place at exactly the appointed hour".

The "List of Those Present at the Conference in Memory of Nizami Ganjavi" on October 19, 1941 is on file in the Hermitage archives. This exact sheet of paper was on the table that day outside the School Office of the Hermitage. A man wearing an army overcoat with three stripes on the collar came up to the table and signed: "N. Tikhonov". A presenter who had just arrived – an army commander called back from the frontlines by the Political Authority – approached the table next. "M. Dyakonov", he signed before embracing, right there in front of the School Office door, his Oriental Department co-workers whom he had last seen before the war. Dyakonov's co-workers A. Boldyrev and G. Plitsin were also making

Unpacking boxes with exhibits returned from Sverdlovsk

70 mm shell exploded inside the Coach House

The Jupiter Hall during the Siege of Leningrad. At the feet of a sixteen-ton thunderer are the artefacts from the Ural gems

Treasures of the Hermitage evacuated to Sverdlovsk at the beginning of the war return to the Winter Palace.

presentations on Nizami Ganjavi today. Meanwhile, the long piece of paper sitting on the table continued to be signed by academics, poets, historians, archaeologists, artists, architects, Soviet government and communist party officials, and reporters for Moscow and Leningrad newspapers. The guests were notified at the door that, in the event of an air-raid alert, the conference would relocate to the bomb shelter.

Academy fellow Orbeli made a speech on behalf of the academic community, while Tikhonov spoke on behalf of the litterateurs. "Moved by Orbeli's address, I spoke as best I could", writes Nikolai Tikhonov. "Then the learned presenters in army overcoats with gas masks, fresh from the trenches, made their reports on Nizami's life and oeuvre. Eight hundred-year-old poetry was recited. Nizami rose from the dead, bringing to our military encampment his fraternal song of the triumph of undying, healthy, beautiful humanity over the forces of darkness and destruction. Our front line celebrated Nizami like Nizami had once celebrated great heroes".

Then everyone went to have a look at the modest anniversary exhibition, carefully handpicked from among the few exhibits still in the Hermitage. No one felt like leaving, but the time when enemy warplanes were wont to start bombing the city was drawing close. Tikhonov came up to the Hermitage director and silently pointed to his watch.

"It's alright" Orbeli nodded. "We've got ten more minutes."

"He thanked everyone and wished everyone a good night," writes Tikhonov. "The guests began to leave, visibly elated by the unusual conference. I said goodbye to the mighty enthusiast and joined my friends, walking down the palatial staircase and out to the Neva riverbank...

The air-alert sirens began wailing two minutes later."

Sergey Varshavsky, Boris Rest. The Heroism of the Hermitage. Leningrad, 1969

HERMITAGE STAFF MEMBERS WHO PERISHED DURING THE SIEGE OF LENINGRAD

Granite Allanles held on lheir slrong shoulders a damaged cornice of lhe Hermitage portico
Illustration from the book by Varshavsky S.P., Resl Y.I. The Feal of the Hermitage - Leningrad, Moscow: Soviet artisl 1965

Albrecht, Leonid (Johann) Pavlovich, 1872–1942
restorer
Bognar, Ernest Osipovich (Iosifovich), 1892–1942
academic secretary, Department of the History
of Western European Art
Borisov, Andrey Yakovlevich, 1903–1942
senior researcher, Oriental Department
Borodzyuk, Georgy Vikentyevich, 1875–1942
Department of the History of Western European Art
Derviz (Printz), Maria Sergeevna, 1906–1942
Department of the History of Western European Art
Derviz, Pavel Pavlovich, 1897–1942
head of the Treasures Department, senior researcher
of the Department of the History of Western European Art
Derviz, Varvara Pavlovna, 1896–1942
senior researcher, Department of the History of Western
European Art
Gekker, Olga Vasilyevna, 1899–1942
senior researcher, Department of the History of Western
European Art. Awarded the medal "For the Defense
of Leningrad" (posthumously)
Giz, Alexander Alekseevich, 1872–1942
restorer
Golmsten, Vera Vladimirovna, 1880–1942
head of the Archeology Department
Golovan, Vladimir Aleksandrovich, 1870–1942
head of the Library
Ilyin, Alexey Alekseevich, 1857–1942
head of the Department of Russian Coins
Kazin,Vsevolod Nikolaevich, 1907–1942
head of the Oriental Department
Klein, V. T., died 1941–1942
Department of the History of Western European Art
Kube, Alfred (Alfred-Gustav) Nikolaevich, 1886–1942
head of the Applied Arts Department, Member
of the Hermitage Council, head of the Department
of the History of Western European Art
Lippold, Yelena Maksimilianovna, 1900–1942
senior researcher, Department of the History
of Western European Art
Lyapunova, Ksenia Sergeevna, 1895–1942
senior researcher, Oriental Department
Makhalov, Alexey Alexandrovich, 1876–1942
Department of the History of Western European Art
Mal(l)itskaya, Yelena Guryevna, 1895–1943
senior researcher, Department of the History
of Western European Art
Nekrasova, Yevgenia Vasilyevna, 1898–1942
researcher, Department of the History of Western European Art
Notgaft, Yelena Georgiyevna, 1903–1942
senior researcher, Department of the History of Western
European Art
Notgaft, Fyodor Fyodorovich, 1886–1942
senior assistant to the curator of the Art Gallery (1918–1929),
head of the Publishing Department (1936–1942)
Pigoreva, Anna Andreyevna, died 1942
Department of the History of Russian Culture
Podgayetsky, Georgy Vladimirovich, 1908–1941
researcher, Archeology Department
Pokrovskaya, Yekaterina Alekseevna, 1898–1942
Department of the History of Western European Art
Poretskaya-Mikhailova, Yekaterina Vyacheslavovna, 1907–1942
senior researcher, Department of the History
of Western European Art
Prushevskaya, Evgenia Ottovna, 1890–1942
senior researcher, Numismatics Department
Ptitsyn, Grigory Viktorovich, 1912–1942
graduate student and staff member of the Oriental Department
Reikhard, Ksenia Petrovna, 1899–1942
tour guide
Reikhard, Sergey Alexandrovich, 1904–1942
tour guide
Rostovtsev, Ivan Alexandrovich, 1902–1942
senior researcher, History of Russian Culture Department
Rozanov, Semen Aleksandrovich, 1875–1941
researcher, Numismatics Department
Rusakov, Nikolay Timofeevich, 1878–1942
restorer
Saukov, Pavel Evgrafovich, 1895–1942
Oriental Department
Sher, Mikhail Abramovich, 1901–1942
senior researcher
Sivaev, Miron Stepanovich, 1896–1942
researcher, Department of the History of Western European Art
Sokolova, Yelizaveta Pavlovna, 1887–1942
researcher, Department of the History of Western European Art
Sosnovsky, Georgy Petrovich, 1899 – winter 1941/1942
senior researcher, Archeology Department
Spiring, Maria Petrovna, 1899 — 1941–1942
secretary of the director
Trusova, Serafima Alekseevna,
researcher
Trukhanova (Grebenshchikova), Alexandra Yakovlevna,
1886 — 1941–1942
head of the Costumes and Fabrics Department
Valter, Georgy Yuryevich, 1896–1941
head of the library, Classical Antiquity Department
Vinogradova, Anna Mikhailovna, 1895–1942
researcher, Department of the History of Primitive Cultures
Volkovich, Alexandra Mitrofanovna, 1897–1941
researcher, Pre-Class Society Sector
Weibel, Fyodor Karlovich, 1872–1942
restorer
Westfalen, Elsa Khristianovna, 1884–1942
assistant curator, Far East Sector
Wiesel, Emil Oskarovich, 1866–1943
assistant curator of the Department of the History
of Western European Art
Yernshtedt, Yelena Viktorovna, 1890–1942
senior assistant to the curator, Classical Antiquity Department
Yudina, Sofya (Sofia) Alekseevna, 1895–1942
researcher, History of Russian Culture Department
Zograf, Alexander Nikolaevich, 1889–1942
head of the Numismatics Department

CAS OORTHUYS AND THE AMSTERDAM HUNGER WINTER (1944–1945)

CAS OORTHUYS[1] (1908–1975), ONE OF THE NETHERLANDS' MAJOR DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE HUMANIST TRADITION, TOOK A NUMBER OF ICONIC IMAGES DURING THE HUNGER WINTER IN AMSTERDAM IN THE LAST YEAR OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. BY THE WINTER OF 1944–1945, THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY HAD ALREADY BEEN LIBERATED BY THE ALLIED FORCES, BUT AMSTERDAM WAS STILL OCCUPIED BY THE GERMANS. THE WINTER WAS EXTREMELY COLD, AND THERE WERE SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGES. PEOPLE WERE DYING IN THE STREETS.

FRITS GIERSTBERG[2]

Oorthuys joined the Resistance and engaged in espionage photography, made false identity cards and firebombs, was involved in transporting weapons, and provided shelter for Jews who went into hiding, some in his own home.
He was arrested by the Germans in May 1944 because of his illegal activities and taken to the Amersfoort concentration camp pending transfer to Germany. However, he was released three months later, probably thanks to mediation by Nico de Haas[3]. To avoid being put to work as a photographer in Nazi Germany, he went into hiding.
Oorthuys became involved with the group De Ondergedoken Camera (The Underground Camera) together with Emmy Andriesse, Charles Breijer, Kryn Taconis, and Ad Windig, among others. They recorded daily life during the occupation using their cameras. Even though taking photographs was no longer allowed by the end of the war, Oorthuys took photos during the Hunger Winter of 1944–1945, one of which portrayed a woman with an empty gaze gnawing on a piece of bread. It became an iconic image later on when Edward Steichen selected it in 1955 for the exhibition The Family of Man.
Oorthuys shot a series of photos during the occupation depicting the dangerous work of the Resistance. Immediately after the war, photos taken by the group, which had approximately forty members by the time the Netherlands was liberated, appeared in numerous publications. Oorthuys' photos were also well represented in what have become authoritative publications, such as Holland and the Canadians (1946), Amsterdam tijdens de hongerwinter (Amsterdam During the Hunger Winter) (1947), and Verwoesting en wederopbouw (Destruction and Reconstruction/Revival of the Netherlands) (1948).

1_____Cas Oorlhuys (Casparus Bernardus Oorlhuys, known as Cas (1 November 1908 – 22 July 1975) - a Dulch pholographer, worked al lhe Arbeiderspers, produced pholography and graphics for communisl and anli-fascisl organisalions, member of lhe Resislance.
2_____Frils Gierslberg - curalor, The Nederlands Folomuseum
3_____Nico de Haas (1907 – 1995) was a Dulch National Socialisl pholographer, graphic designer, and arlisl. During lhe German occupalion of lhe Nelherlands he was responsible for lhe design of lhe Dulch coins and paper money.

PHOTO: © CAS OORTHUYS / NEDERLANDS FOTOMUSEUM

Child during "Hungerwinter",
Invenlory number CAS-5830-3

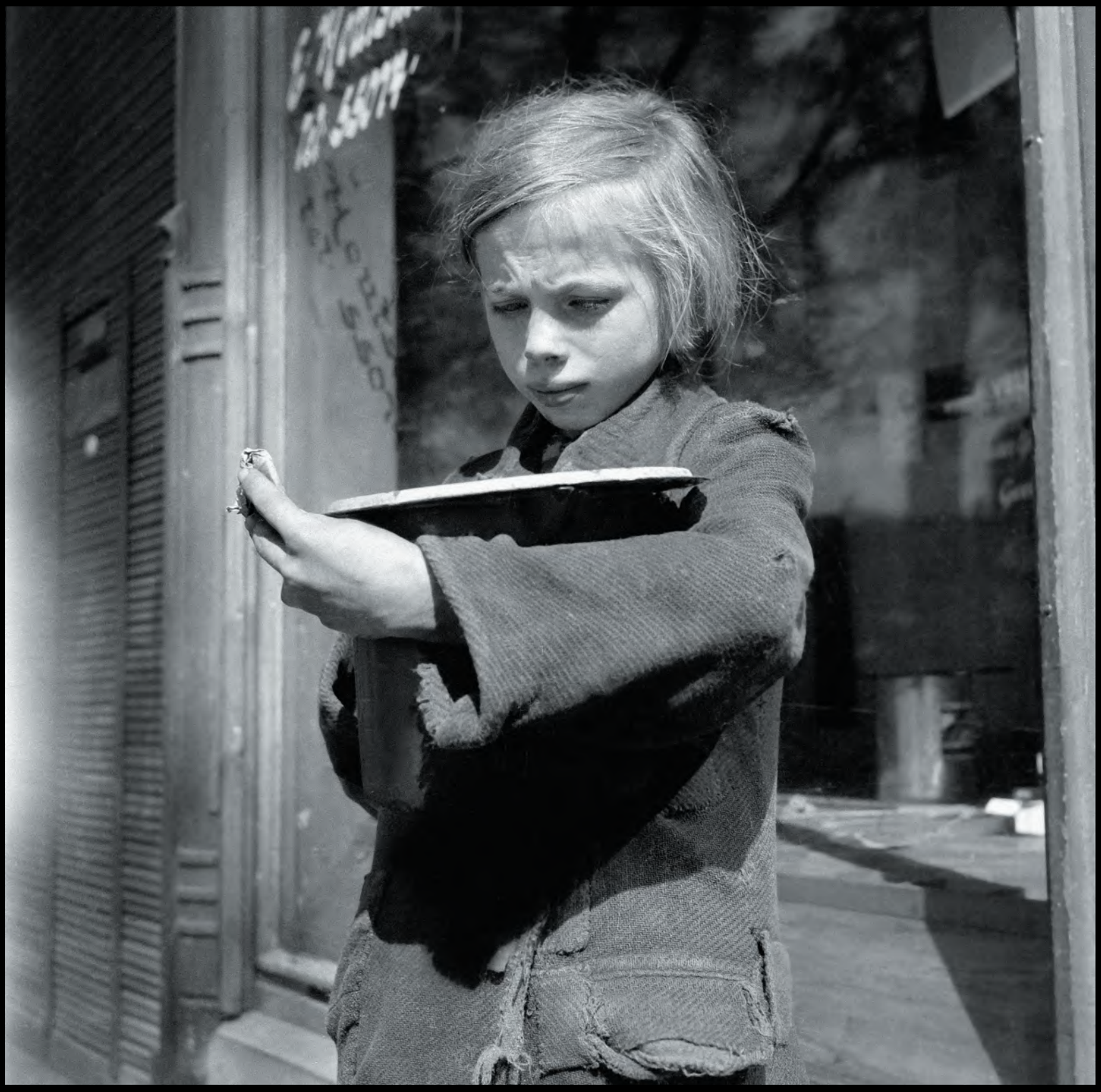


PHOTO: © CAS OORTHUYS / NEDERLANDS FOTOMUSEUM

Child with some food from the soup kitchen,
"Hungerwinter",
Amsterdam (1944–1945)
Invenlory number CAS-5822-3

Children waiting at the soup kitchen "Hungerwinter",
Amsterdam (1944–1945)
Inventory number CAS-5819-4

PHOTO: © CAS OORTHUYS / NEDERLANDS FOTOMUSEUM

Torn up street during "Hungerwinter"
Amsterdam (1944-1945)
Inventory number CAS-5832-1

Starving and sick family at Kleine Willenburgerstraat "Hungerwinter"
Amsterdam (1944-1945)
Invenlory number CAS-5815-10

DIMITRI OZERKOV[1]

A BOMB SHELTER FOR PASSERS-BY

ALL MUSEUMS TEACH US TO UNDERSTAND HISTORY (THAT IS, LIFE AND DEATH IN TIME) THROUGH THE RECOLLECTION OF MATTER, THROUGH THE DESTRUCTION OF MATTER BY TIME. LUCRETIUS DESCRIBED THE PASSAGE OF TIME AS A RING THAT WE WEAR ON OUR FINGER: AS TIME GOES BY, THE RING THINS AWAY ON THE UNDERSIDE, WITHOUT US NOTICING.

Ruins of objects and buildings have always existed: it's not possible to accurately establish the historical moment when there were no ruins, and it's difficult to imagine a time when there won't be any ruins. In ancient times, the ruins of the Tower of Babel were used for didactic purposes. And at documenta (13) 2012 in Kassel, old books were displayed that had burned during bombings in the Second World War. Due to the intense heat, their leather covers had shrivelled up, creating volumes of paper fans that looked like burnt flowers.

What is to be said today about the Siege of Leningrad? Or the obliteration of Rotterdam? Or the destruction of Dresden? To what extent are these disasters comparable, and on what level? What should we do with historical ruins? Should we leave them untouched, like the church on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, or restore them from non-existence, like the Frauenkirche in Dresden? Should we patch up losses using suitable materials, as with the granite basement of the New Hermitage by the Winter Canal? Or is it more instructive to leave the traces of war unrestored, as with the holes in the columns of St Isaac's Cathedral and the pedestal of the Anichkov Bridge statue, where commemorative plaques were hung to remind people that the 148,478 shells launched by the Germans on St Petersburg were the reason behind the destruction? Or should we emphatically follow the Venice Charter of 1964, as with the Neues Museum in Berlin and last year's restoration of the Church of the Resurrection in the Catherine Palace in Tsarskoye Selo?

All of these questions depend on our understanding of history and of the necessity of historical justification. In his book On the Natural History

1 Dimitri Ozerkov is an art historian, curator, and director of the Contemporary Art Department of the State Hermitage Museum, as well as the head of the Hermitage 20/21 Project for Contemporary Art (since 2007), and curator of the collection of French Engravings of the 15th to the 18th Centuries in the State Hermitage (since 1999).

of Destruction, W. G. Sebald speaks of the inability of an entire generation of German writers to see or describe the ruins of German cities. Sebald links this wish to forget about the national catastrophe to the desire to justify oneself in the eyes of posterity. We can see problems caused by this wounded self-identity today as well. Even after the official condemnation of the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to divide Europe by the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in 1989 and the proclamation by the European Parliament in 2009 of the date of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as a day of remembrance for the victims of Stalinism and Nazis, we are once again seeing suggestions that this vile and short-sighted conspiracy between two totalitarian states should be considered a victory of Soviet diplomacy. It's this kind of thinking that gives rise to vulgar bumper stickers common on cars in today's Russia with slogans like: "We'll do it again if we have to", and "Thanks, grandpa, for the victory". This is where today's hatred and intolerance of migrants comes from.

Leningrad wasn't wiped off the face of the earth in World War II, but two aerial bombs and about 30 artillery shells hit the Hermitage's buildings, causing significant damage. The academician Joseph Orbeli spoke about this at the Nuremberg trials. Today the areas of the museum that were damaged are kept under constant surveillance, since it's usually there that the Hermitage roof leaks. The Hermitage, being of special importance, was readied for emergency evacuation as early as the end of the 1930s. This made it possible to quickly pack up and evacuate the main exhibits from the city in two reserved convoys. It was the palaces on the outskirts of Leningrad that suffered the most, however, many having been looted and turned into ruins. Valuable cultural items disappeared from these palaces without a trace. Today, these palace museums maintain lists of looted art just like other collections in Europe.

"When we contemplate ruins, we contemplate our own future," says art historian Christopher Woodward in his book In Ruins. What kind of memory should ruins hold? There is no direct connection between general information about a past disaster that claimed lives and the abandoned debris we see today. It is the work of historians and museum professionals to establish and prove this connection. Memory plays a key role here. According to Sebald, the ability to forget, and the loss of the mental capacity to remember, both on the family and the national levels, were the only condition under which the German revival after the war could occur. In the USSR, the generation that survived the Stalinist labour camps often could neither confirm nor deny what they had been through. The sight of a total catastrophe leads to an overload of the mind, to a paralysis of the involuntary witnesses' mental and emotional abilities. Few people are able to exist as their prior selves after the horror they have experienced, let alone speak about it, as could Varlam Shalamov, for whom the light bulb hanging from the ceiling invariably resembled the head of a hanged man.

We don't verbalise the horror of reality: this horror is replaced by literary figures and hackneyed phrases such as "everything became a prey to the flames". The opposite of memory, then, is the ability to fantasise. Writers and artists love to imagine future catastrophes and invent methods of salvation from them. Art is driven by fantasy, generating the most incredible images that eventually become models for our history. Examples

PHOTO: S.V. BUTIGIN © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Yasumasa Morimura
Hermitage. 1941-2014. (Rembrandt Hall)
Japan, 2014
Digital printing, black and white photography
Photography 55x95 cm; sheet 67,2x110,6 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 2016; donation by Foundation "The Hermitage XXI Century"
Inv. № КСИ-1583

→ **Yasumasa Morimura**
Hermitage. 1941-2014. (Large Italian Skylight Hall)
Japan, 2014
Digital printing, black and white photography
Photography 66,3x49,9 cm; sheet 92x65,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 2016; donation by Foundation "The Hermitage XXI Century"
Inv. № КСИ-1582

include the expulsion from Paradise, the Great Flood with Noah's Ark and the dove being sent off, Sodom and Gomorrah, the fire of Troy and the journey of Aeneas... The people of the 20th century were often forced to view themselves as exiles and eternal wanderers who had to start all over again after a global catastrophe.

The end is the realisation of the need for a new beginning. A conversation about destruction in the past is always held from the standpoint of the present and with aspirations for the future. The Parian Chronicle, carved in marble in the middle of the 3rd century BCE, reveals the history of mankind through the triumph of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who miraculously escaped from the waters after a great flood. It was then up to them to bring humanity back to the world. To this end, the gods, giving instructions through an oracle, ordered Deucalion to "cover your head and throw the bones of your mother behind your shoulder". These bones were rightly understood by the pair to be stones from prehistoric Mother Earth. They threw these rocks from before the great flood behind their shoulders, and the stones formed mortal people, thus creating a new historical era. This story is depicted in a drawing from the Renaissance era made by an artist of the circle of Baccio Baldini and Maso Finiguerra (The Florentine Picture-Chronicle, British Museum). Covering their head, Deucalion and Pyrrha throw stones behind their back, which suddenly become girls behind Pyrrha and boys behind Deucalion. The stones sprout heads, then feet and hands, which at first seem to have been broken off, as with ancient statues, or to be not fully developed, as in early drawings of Joan Miró. The power of human life comes directly from the stones, almost like in Picasso's Guernica. In Greek, the word for "humanity" is λαός (lāós), while the word for "stone" is λᾶας (laas): humankind hatches from stones raised from the earth, and will return to this earth after death.

This same fate awaits the stones of buildings: they are taken for a while from nature, but they must be returned to her, as Georg Simmel claimed even before the war. Artist Hubert Robert often created imaginary ruins in his paintings, such as Imaginary View of the Grand Gallery of the Louvre in Ruins, or Ruins on the Terrace in Marly Park. And the mysterious ruins of Rome have always served as a source of romantic fantasy. It is only in the era of the Internet that excursions into the zone of the Chernobyl tragedy or "hunting" for derelict buildings have partially overpowered Rome's attraction. Architect Albert Speer, who designed Hitler's Berlin and who was inspired by the ruins of Rome, believed that buildings should be intentionally constructed so that when they collapse they become magnificent ruins. Speer formulated his ideas in his "theory of ruin value," according to which, "by using special materials and by applying certain principles of statics, we should be able to build structures which even in a state of decay, after hundreds or (such were our reckonings) thousands of years would more or less resemble Roman models." Furthermore, Speer writes in his memoirs: "Hitler himself accepted my ideas as logical and illuminating. He gave orders that in the future the important buildings of his Reich were to be erected in keeping with the principles of this 'law of ruins'".

Modern architects build "machines for living" (as Le Corbusier aptly put it), from which no ruins will remain. Contemporary art has shifted

PHOTO: S.V. BUTIGIN © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

PHOTO P.S. DEMIDOV © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Tilian (Tiziano Vecellio)
St Sebastian
Italy, circa 1570
Oil on canvas
210x115,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1850; acquired from the Barbarigo Gallery in Venice
Inv. № ГЭ-191

away from results, and turned instead toward processes. It uses modern speeds to move towards its goals. It still pretends to reveal new truths. The future is something we think up in the present and then project beyond the present. It is impossible to postulate the future, as Van, a character in Nabokov's Ada, rightly says about the structure of time. The recent past was previously thought of as the future by someone, including us. And so the near future will soon approach us, slip by, and fade into the oblivion of the past.

"Past" and "future" are just words that allow us to describe the course of time, or of a person's life. Every artist is seen as having an early, middle and late period of creativity, in which the artist developed, then created in full force, and finally completed his or her career. But where are the boundaries of these periods and what do they mean? An artist's late period might be boring, or in some cases the most interesting period of all. Did late El Greco suffer from astigmatism, or was he contemplating some supersubstantial energy of the art of the future? Was late Titian in Saint Sebastian already so old and blind that he couldn't use the right colours and forms, or was he able to see the possibilities of paint that would be discovered in the following centuries? Today, late Richter paints with sweeping hand motions, unreservedly smearing the paint on the canvas. We can already see what late Hirst and Koons might look like: what will the outcome of their creative message be?

"Bomb shelter for passers-by": this sign, with an arrow noticeable from afar, hung on the gates of the Hermitage, which was closed during the Siege of Leningrad. Those walking by when shelling began could temporarily seek shelter in the museum's basement. In addition to the spectacle of physical death, any destruction of a monument of art is painful for a person. The role of the museum in today's world, it would seem, is to create a place where you can wait out and attempt to make sense of the cultural catastrophe, prevent further destruction, and protect yourself in case of greater danger. The speed of the flow of time and the truths that time uncovers are the only topics that can be adequately discussed in art. Indeed, it is only for these topics that one needs knowledge of history. Peering into ruins from the viewpoint of the museum allows you to see how time passes and to speak about cultural catastrophes without ambition or attempts to justify crimes against humanity.

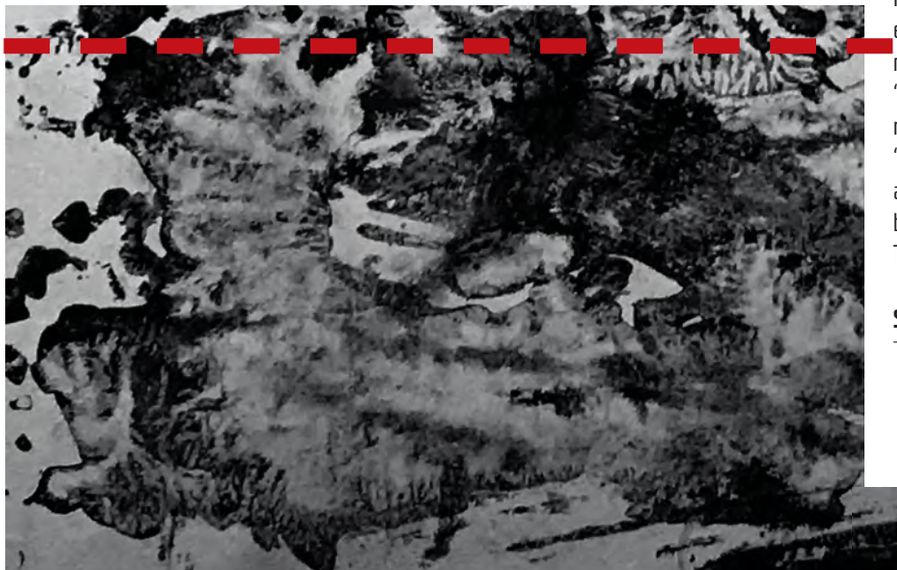
"...On New Year's Eve, I went to check the fire posts in the Hermitage and took hot water to those on guard. They were in the rooms on the second floor, which had sustained the most damage from the enemy's bombshells. I was staying in the Arab Hall of the Winter Palace, next to the Malachite Hall and the so-called dining room – the small room where the Provisional Government was arrested. After finishing my routine of checking the rooms entrusted to me, I would sit on guard on the carpet. During the sirens, which could last up to seven hours, the Hermitage staff kept books close at hand. We carried them in gas-mask bags. Orbeli, who was the manager of the premises, would yell: 'Use your belts to hold the books!' But many of us had already eaten our leather belts.

At night we read by pocket flashlight. In between bombings, Professor Borisov and I would meet in the Rotunda, on the border between our fire posts, and give lectures to each other. He emphatically walked me through the main problems in Semitology, while I spoke about my archaeological excavations. This kept us strong and, most importantly, human. We knew what the orders were: if the city were taken over by Germans, we were to blow up the most important enterprises and organise the resistance. Even though we did not believe in that worst-case scenario, we inspected the museum to find places suitable for hiding both valuables and humans. There were some safe spots in the attic. To make them inaccessible, however, we would have had to wall up the entrances and use rope ladders. No bloodhound could have found the way to it! But Leningraders never believed that the city would surrender...

Despite the bombing and shelling, life went on as usual. I wrote my thesis, worked on Karmir Blur and an Urartu dictionary, attended some concerts... On October 23, 1941 there was a concert of Tchaikovsky's music underway when a heavy artillery bombardment began. I was fascinated by the chandeliers shaking from the explosions while the orchestra was performing the Capriccio Italien. Some firebombs fell on the beach by the Peter and Paul Fortress. They illuminated the square in front of the Exchange Building while a wooden observation tower on it burned like a torch."

Boris Borisovich Piotrovsky.

"How the blockade was seen through the windows of the Hermitage" (interview with Oleg Chechin, 1988). Rossiyskaya Gazeta, January 2015



"During the blockade, the main building of the museum was guarded by women employees. My mighty army consisted mostly of women of retirement age, including those in their seventies. At least a third of them were regulars in the hospital. Some would be discharged, while others would be admitted. The guard I led did not exceed thirty old women. Those were my troops, indeed!"

Hermitage security chief

Pavel Filippovich Gubchevsky

"In February, the Hermitage bomb shelters stood empty. There had been no light and heat there since last year, and in January the water pipes and sewers froze. The beleaguered used to seek at least some comfort and safety from the bombs and shells under the stone vaults of the palace's basements. But Leningrad had got used to the shells and bombs. The cellars were cold and dark and filled with the stench of decay and rot. On the bunks and on the floor by the damp walls lay stiff corpses. Indeed, it was easy to get the sense that the souls of the dead were hovering through the vaulted corridors.

The shelters gradually emptied, until one day the dead stayed and the living departed.

The Director of the Hermitage moved from the basement to one of the small side rooms above the staff entrance. This was where he called his staff in for the difficult conversations that were necessary in February and March. As soon as the military highway over the ice of Lake Ladoga was operational, the State Defence Committee decided to evacuate half a million residents from the besieged city. Hermitage Director Orbeli had to convince a large number of museum employees to leave Leningrad. He explained to each of them that evacuation was of great national importance, would facilitate the defence of the city, and, in the case of the Hermitage, would save the lives of the most valued experts, who might not be needed anyway in view of the proposed placement of the museum into conservation. They listened to him, went away, and came back with written statements saying, basically, the same thing:

'I have no wish to evacuate from Leningrad,' Orbeli read. 'I love Leningrad; I am devoted to the Hermitage. I ask you, when considering my future employment, to take into account that I can do any physical or mental work necessary in the Hermitage.'

'I do not want to evacuate from Leningrad. I will make every effort to restore my former strength and dedicate it to my dear Hermitage.'

'I can't leave Leningrad,' 'I don't want to,' 'I don't want to,' Orbeli read in almost every statement handed to him... 'I love the Hermitage and I would be happy to work in it and to be of any assistance, whatever it may involve.' Those were not easy conversations..."

Sergey Petrovich Varshavsky, Boris Rest.

The Ordeal of the Hermitage. 1965

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA, 2019

VLADISLAV BACHUROV

The Land of Unfrightened Bird

KARGOPOL. LEGENDS OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH

The Russian North, long spoken of as "the land of unfrightened birds", is famous for its pristine nature, exquisite wooden architecture, and an austere, modest, and unchanging way of life, in which old household customs and legends have survived intact. Harsh subarctic nature, remoteness, and inaccessibility have combined to form the distinctive local culture. The North can boast of unique architecture with some amazing specimens of woodwork, folk tales and songs with rich language and vivid imagery all their own, and simple, even primitive – but no less eloquent for that – folk art and craft, from "Northern Manner" icons to small toys for children.

The town of Kargopol in Arkhangelsk Oblast is definitely a centre of gravity for those wishing to explore the Russian North. Owing to some miracle, or perhaps the effort of Kargopolians themselves, or the lack of good roads – but most likely thanks to all these circumstances – Kargopol to this day has much to offer in the way of historical landmarks, artefacts, and reminders of the past. There are churches; pre-1917 merchant estates; painted peasant huts; a vast museum collection of icons, manuscripts, and household utensils; and a veritable treasure trove of things no museum could accommodate – traditional culture, folklore, and local dialect, all of which shaped the environment in which generations of Kargopolians were brought up, lived, and created their works of art.

Kargopolye (the historical name of the lands around Kargopol) offers more than merely glimpses or the past and an opportunity to breathe your fill of the air of the Russian hinterland, leaving the big city turmoil behind. Natural beauty and its wonders mix so well with manmade treasures in Kargopolye that a homogenous natural/cultural ecosystem has emerged. A natural object will remain embedded in the folklore even after the object's physical existence has ended. This was the case, for instance, with the Death's Head rapids on the Onega River. The rapids were blown up to make that stretch of the river navigable, but they continue to exist in local lore.

The earliest verifiable mentions of Kargopolye in the chronicles date back to the 15th century (earlier mentions do exist, but their credibility is questionable). Colonisation of the lands around Lake Onega (Obonezhye), proceeding out of Novgorod in the 12th through the 13th centuries, went through Kargopolye. Novgorodians travelled here in search of new wares to trade and new trade routes, in particular seeking access to the Frigid Sea (now the White Sea).

"Monastic colonisation" of the North intensified in the 15th century. Monks came here from the St Cyril of Beloozero Monastery and other cloisters in search of seclusion. They set up new hermitages, and like-minded fellow-monks later joined them.

This is how numerous monasteries sprang up in all parts of the Russian North. These cloisters would meaningfully contribute to cultural and economic life in these climes.

There were many fewer towns in the North than in central or southern Russia. For centuries, Kargopol would remain the only town along the entire length of the Onega River, all the way to the White Sea. With thick forests and impassable swamps covering much of these lands, rivers were just about the only transportation option available. The water-rich Onega was an important shipping artery, rapids notwithstanding. Sea fish, salt, and furs from the North would make their way to central

PHOTO: © ALEKSANDR KORYAKOV, 2019

Mikhail Prishvin. In the Land of Unfrightened Birds

Someone who has never travelled to those parts of our North that have been left alone by the prevailing culture, someone whose knowledge of his people is limited to representatives of, say, the Black Earth region, will be stunned to see how people live in the North, stunned by these relics of the pure folk soul untarnished by slavery. At first it seems that, at long last, you have discovered that land of unfrightened birds, so unaccustomed you feel to such simplicity, directness, kindness, and helpfulness; it is endearing and ingenuous. Your soul is at peace now that it has found something in life you thought had been destroyed and forgotten ages ago, like a long lost dream.

Russia along the Onega, by boat in summer and over the ice in winter.

There were quite a few stone churches in Kargopol in the 17th century, although there was hardly a residential stone building to be found in the town. The Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ, built 1552–1562, was one of the largest churches in all of northern Russia.

Both Nikonians and Old Believer Orthodox Christians lived in and around Kargopol.

Denizens of the North, who had known no serfdom and never paid any tributes to rich landowners, had always worked for themselves, and therefore most peasant homesteads did well and were fairly prosperous. When collectivisation kicked off in the late 1920s and local rural soviets began receiving orders to dekulakize a certain number of well-to-do homesteads, the local authorities did not know where to start. Sometimes the whole village would hold a meeting to decide who would "have to go", usually fingering families with no children and no ill or older members to look after.

Traditional crafts still thrive in Kargopol, whose residents produce birch-bark items, articles made of clay, and patchwork textiles. Once a household necessity, these items are now mostly made as gifts and souvenirs for tourists and collectors.

There was a time when no household with children would be without clay toys from Kargopol. Those cute ducks and polkans were rather inexpensive, and were always available at fairs, usually purchased as gifts for children. In Soviet times, the all-but-extinct craft was preserved and resurrected by a few old artisans. Their products have become a symbol of the town [1].

"The singular character of Northern art reflects the inimitable way of life of the people of this harsh and beautiful land," writes Maria Reformatskaya, an author who has written extensively on Old Russian art. "The unique charm of this land will not be lost on anyone who sets foot here. It is a product of the poetic unity of nature and relics of the past, of human personalities and everyday household items. In everything here you sense this deep organic wholeness which, in some places, has been spared by the eroding power of time and has reached us intact, like a living sliver of the distant past"[2].

Kargopol Lore[3]

It is believed that Kargopol was founded in 1146, and is therefore one year older than Moscow. Although no documentary evidence exists to corroborate this founding date, the year 1146 has consistently been named as Kargopol's founding year in various tracts on the region since the end of the 1960s, and was officially declared its year of founding in 1995. Literature on the local history refers to a report written by Gavriil

1 See: The Kargopol Journey. Seven Routes though Northern Russian Lands with the Kargopol Museum of Architectural History and Art. Moscow, 2014.

2 Reformatskaya, Maria. The Northern Manner. Moscow, 1968.

Arkhangelsk oblast. The village of Oshevenskoye. The interior of an old wooden hut

Derzhavin, who visited Kargopol in 1785 in his capacity as governor of Olonets, in which he mentions that he had discovered, amid some monastery papers, an old manuscript naming that very year.

Kargopol thrived during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. The town's main church, the Nativity Cathedral, was completed in 1562, and in 1565 Kargopol was added to the list of oprichnina contributor towns.

The Kargopol coat of arms, approved in the mid-1720s, depicted a ram on a blue field, lying on burning logs. The Kargopol Regiment had included this image on its flag since 1712. The town's coat of arms, designed in the 1720s, was based on the regimental emblem.

All streets in Kargopol run either parallel or perpendicular to the Onega River, giving most blocks a rectangular shape[4].

Contrary to custom, the cross on the Cathedral Bell Tower[5] in Kargopol is not positioned perpendicular to the east-west axis, but rather perpendicular to north-south. Legend has it that the cross on the bell tower, built for Catherine II's planned visit to Kargopol, was positioned this way so that it would be clearly visible from Peterburgskaya Ulitsa, along which the Empress was supposed to enter town.

The leader of the 1607–1608 peasant insurrection, Ivan Bolotnikov, was executed in Kargopol in 1608.

Kargopol was assigned to the Olonets Shipyard in 1703. At the same time, during the construction of Peter the Great's new capital of St Petersburg, there was a rising demand for Kargopol's skilled labourers. The town would send carpenters, bricklayers, stone cutters, and lamplighters to St Petersburg "to live there forever, with their wives and children". Crews of labourers from Beloozero, Poshekhon, Kargopolye, and Olonets built St Petersburg's first permanent shipyard and later its ships.

According to legend, there is an underground passage connecting Kargopol's men's and women's cloisters. Locals speculate that there may be a large number of icons that remain hidden there to this day[6].

The woods around Kargopol were famous for their saffron milk caps[7], and locals profited handsomely by harvesting and selling these mushrooms. Kargopol saffron milk caps are even mentioned in the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopaedic Dictionary. Kargopol shipped massive amounts of these mushrooms to other towns, including Moscow and St Petersburg, where they were in great demand. To harvest young saffron milk caps, which were more highly prized than older ones, people would walk barefoot on the grass to attempt to feel the mushrooms with their feet.

The legendary opera singer Feodor Chaliapin was rather partial to these milk caps. Living in France after his emigration from Russia, Chaliapin missed simple Russian food. He would complain to his daughter Irina, visiting him from Moscow: "I'm so sick of all these delicacies and petits fours. I would love right now to have a bowl of hearty shchi with brisket, some dried fish, and some milk caps from Vyatka".

There is a story told by locals about this mushroom. "Stalin was hosting Churchill and Roosevelt for dinner. 'Is there anything else you would like, gentlemen?' he asks them. Churchill says, 'The Kargopol saffron milk caps are missing'. So they place a

3 From: A Guide to Kargopolye Folklore: Tales, Legends, Stories, Songs, and Adages. Moscow, 2009; A Journey in Kargopolye, 2014.

4 The entire centre of town had to be reconstructed after the devastating fire of 1765. Catherine II gave a very substantial sum of 10,000 roubles towards the reconstruction. The reconstruction followed Catherine's decree of 1763, prescribing rigorous planning, specific to every governorate, for the buildings and streets in every town. The decree implied rectilinear planning – parallel streets with an approximately equal distance in between.

5 The Cathedral Bell Tower (Soborka) is the tallest building in Kargopol. The standalone bell tower was erected in 1778 in honour of Catherine II, who in 1763–1765 undertook a series of travels, visiting several governorates in central Russia and on the Baltic Sea coast. She was expected to travel to Kargopol as well.

6 Kargopol used to have two cloisters: The Assumption Convent in the Gorka neighbourhood, and the Our Saviour Monastery on the opposite bank of the Onega.

7 Kargopol saffron milk caps (lactarius deliciosus) were harvested on an industrial scale.

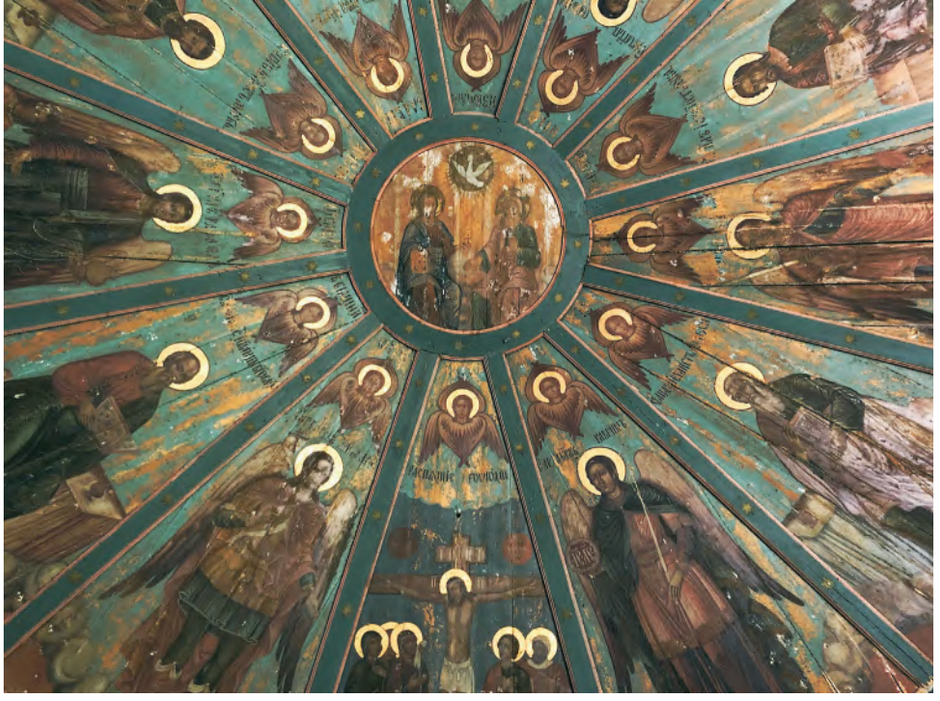


PHOTO: © FROL BURIMSKIY, 2019

massive order. We round up some old women and send them mushroom hunting. Then we send them tons of milk caps."

In a different version of this story: "Churchill is talking with Stalin. Stalin says, 'I have everything', and Churchill tells him, 'But you don't have any saffron milk caps'. 'What are they?' Stalin had no idea what they were! So, they sent a government plane to Kargopol on a special mission to bring some milk caps back. So there you go!"

Because much of the land in Kargopolye is covered with forests, plots suitable for crop farming and haymaking have always been few and far between. People would send their livestock out to pasture in the woods. The shepherd was regarded as a shaman-like figure who knew how to get on the good side of the forest spirit. In fact, it was his duty to make friends with the spirit so it would protect the livestock from predators. The shepherd had to personally perform the rite of the first driving-off (otpusk, obkhod, or sgon) to pasture, make an offering to the forest spirit, and observe a number of ritualistic prohibitions throughout the pasture season. When the shepherd violated some rule or prohibition, the forest spirit was at liberty to take one or more cows from the herd (the cows would fall prey to predators or get lost in the forest). The forest spirit might even kill the shepherd, whipping him to death with treetops. There is still faith in the magic powers of the old shepherds, but today's shepherds do their job without the otpusk ritual.

The most important crop farmed in Kargopolye was barley. They called it zhito from the word zhit – to live. It was traditional in Kargopolye to bake bread from barley flour. This is no longer the case, and barley is rarely farmed anymore, but those who still bake their own bread call it zhitniki by force of habit.

Local place names are the legacy of the aboriginal Finno-Ugric inhabitants of this land. In many names, the original etymology has been forgotten in favour of some new interpretation. For example, the fast but shallow river Tikhmanga is thought to bear that name because it tikho (softly) manit (beckons). The name Nyandoma is said to derive from Nyan doma? (is Nyan home?) – a phrase from someone looking for Nyan, the first inhabitant of the village that now bears this name.

Many villages have not one, but two, or even three, names. The official name, the one marked on maps and printed in passports, is hardly ever used by the locals. The name in circulation is the old, unofficial one.

The name Kargopol derives from kargo polye, which meant "crow field"[8].

At a certain point in the 20th century, Kargopol was a gulag destination. In the Kargopollag labour colony, which had also taken over some historical buildings in the town centre, convicts mainly worked felling trees. When kolkhoz farms were set up in the region, local villagers were forced to work in logging without any pay, instead receiving trudodni, or work-day units. This was only during the winter, however, when farming work came to a standstill. Local peasants were not much better off than the convicts working in the woods.

Local lore includes tales about the "White-Eyed Chude" a mythical tribe somewhere between humans and demons. These Chude people were short, incredibly strong, and extremely fast runners with mysterious powers. They attacked villages and destroyed churches, but were eventually punished for their actions. The Chude folk went blind, and in their blind rage some chopped each other into pieces, while others fell into an abyss that had suddenly opened up at their feet.

Other legends give a different version of the events. Besieged by a far stronger adversary, the Chude gathered in a pit underneath an earthen roof propped up by poles. Rather than risk being taken prisoner, they hacked at the poles and let the roof bury them alive. These are the same Chude that Kargopolians say used to attack hermits seeking solitude in the woods in an attempt to drive them off. This too was among the reasons the Chude met with their gruesome punishment.

8 In his Podyonnaya Zapiska (Daily Report), Gavriil Derzhavin writes: "...this place was in those times frequented by swarms of crows, and since commoners even now refer to this bird as 'karga', the prince elected to name it karganino polye..."

The Northern Manner
Kargopol Icons at the Hermitage

In the 19th century, icon collectors and connoisseurs coined this term – "The Northern Manner" – to refer to old painting from the Russian North. The term was initially somewhat dismissive in nature due to a certain degree of coarseness and primitiveness perceived in these artworks. However, with the passage of time, genuine interest arose in the versatility of the media and techniques employed by northern icon painters.

The Hermitage Museum first directed its attention to the Russian North in 1954. From the 1950s on, it regularly sent expeditions to the North to locate and salvage Old Russian artworks and artefacts[9], thereby significantly expanding the museum's collection. A team from the Hermitage explored the village of Lyadiny near Kargopol in 1957, finding and retrieving a number of works for the museum from the village church. The following year, the museum began to publicly display Northern Manner icons from around Kargopol, with their distinctive, one-of-a-kind style, as part of exhibitions devoted to new acquisitions and Old Russian art.

PHOTO: V.S. TEREBENIN (C) THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

Northern Russian Schools
Icon: Nicholas the Wonderworker
RUSSIA, LATE 15TH - EARLY 16TH CENTURY
Wood, tempera and gilding
72,5x51,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 1957; handed over from the Village Council of the Village of Lyadiny, Kargopolsky District, Arkhangelsk Oblast
Inv. № ЭРИ-236

"What is known as 'northern painting' is, basically, peasant art – the art of the vast, rustic Rus," writes Engelina Smirnova, a Northern Russian art scholar. "It provides insight into the artistic mindset of remote, backwater villages, where, with the exception of these icons, very little art has remained from pre-Petrine times".[10]

Icons were usually painted in studios inside or attached to monasteries, but there were also painters who worked alone or in small groups, painting icons in villages and marketplaces. They were village priests, low-ranking clergy, monks in small monasteries, or peasants for whom icon painting was not their main trade. More often than not, these same artists also painted household items with folk scenes and colourful decorations. Due to a lack of "professional" icon painters, local clergy and peasants would go to these artists for their icons. Sometimes whole families would take up icon painting as their trade. Icon painter families sometimes had their own, jealously guarded trade secrets and developed their own painting style that would pass from one generation to the next.

The primitive, simple execution of many northern Russian icons is no obstacle to their expressiveness. Peasant icon painters' lack of professional training is counterbalanced by the vivid and sincere freshness of their perception of life and the expressive power of their uncomplicated images. Mentioned among the local artisans in 16th- and early 17th-century Kargopol are the icon painters "Simeon and his son Ivan", "Yevstafey Ivanov, the son of Dokuchayev", and "Pronka and Yakunka Fyodorov". There was also a certain Ioann, a priest of the Church of the Mantle in the village of Lyadiny near Kargopol, who painted icons in the mid-17th century and referred to himself as the "Icon-Painting Priest".

Village icon painters took a measure of liberty with iconography, interpreting the traditional images and scenes in their own way. They had their own "favourite" saints – divine patrons who took care of peasants' needs. Most zealously venerated were images of St George (Yegoriy), St Blaise, the Prophet Elijah, and Sts Florus and Laurus. St Nicholas was also a popular saint in the North. Local painters would often depict him surrounded by scenes of his life and miracles.

Local icon painters also felt quite uninhibited in terms of composition, introducing standalone figures of saints into the main scene, combining several scenes within a single icon, or positioning smaller figures around the central image. In icons painted for church iconostases, they would frequently combine an image of the feast day with a figure from the Deesis or prophet tier.

In the Russian North, icon painting frequently intersected with the decorative arts. As a prime manifestation of this connection, icon margins and centrepiece borders would often have ornamental frames, often in imitation of expensive icon settings made from precious metals.

Because it was far removed from official art trends and flourished in a culture that had managed to retain the traditional way of life, icon painting in the North remained alive and full of creativity for quite a long time. Even in the 17th and 18th centuries, when icon painting in most other places in Russia had already entered its decline, icons in the North were still painted with the genuine passion and unique personality of traditional Russian painting.[11]

9 See: One Hundred Icons from the Hermitage Repositories: Northern Russian Painting of the 14th to the 18th Centuries: Exhibition Catalogue. Leningrad, 1982.
10 Smirnova, Engelina Obonezhye. Painting of the 14th to the 16th Centuries. Moscow, 1967.
11 Reformatskaya Maria. The Northern Manner.

PHOTO: © NATALIA PLEKHANOVA, 2019

THE RESONANCE OF KARGOPOL

FROL BURIMSKIY[1]

My dream of visiting the fabulous Kargopol has followed me a very long time, but I only got the opportunity to visit this amazing town in the late summer of 2019. Here, one can still feel the immense power of the force of nature that is folk life; one is reminded of the unity of the world, of a time when everything was full of meaning. The lifestyles lived here have their roots in as far back as pagan times.

Meeting the Shevelyov family was especially memorable. The ancestry of the Shevelyovs counts at least five generations of potters and toy-makers; they came from the village of Tokarevo, which was a few miles from Kargopol along the road to Pudozh. These lands have long been known for their clay deposits. Here, in the villages of Grinyovo, Tokarevo, and Pechnikovo, many peasants were engaged in making pottery. (The famous masters of clay toy-making Ivan Druzhinin and Ulyana Babkina came from Grinyovo; their toys reside in a private museum collection assembled over a period of 40 years.)

The Shevelyov family house breathes creativity: paintings and drawings by family members and friends cover the walls, while dried herbs, ceramics, books, photographs, dishes, and, of course, toys occupy the numerous big and small shelves. Thanks to the family's enthusiasm, the Toy Museum has been revived and furnished. In it, you can see and compare the "hand" of various masters, including ten Shevelyovs (Yelizaveta Shevelyova was my guide to the unique world of this family).

For a long time will I hold the memory of one evening after a warm day, a beautiful, heavy, and dense light streaming through the warm cosy house, and the folk art objects full of charm and depth.

Long known for its artisanship in fabric printing and traditional embroidery, and with its rich museum collection and its own unique architecture, Kargopol has become a powerful source of inspiration for me. I want to devote my next collection to this beautiful northern town, whose citizens preserve traditions, customs, and crafts – a subtle and resonant connection with the past.

PHOTO: © HE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

The plate Kargopol. Winter
Russia
The Lomonosov Porselain Factory
The author of the painting: Petrova Nelya Lvovna. Born 1949
1991
Porcelain, overglaze polychrome painting
2,6 × 20 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Entered the Hermitage in 2002 from the collection
of the Museum of the Porcelain Factory
Inv. № Мз-С-14375

1 Frol Burimskiy (b. 1986) was Managing Partner of Ulyana Sergeenko Couture from 2011 to 2018, and was co-founder (together with designer Ulyana Sergeenko) of the brand of the same name. He has presented his collections as part of the official schedule of Paris Fashion Week. In 2018, Frol Burimskiy was appointed curator of fashion for the Russia-Qatar Year of Culture, and in 2019 he launched his own brand, Flor et Lavr, in Moscow.

2 The trip to Kargopol took place in August 2019 as part of the Along Lomonosov's Roads project.

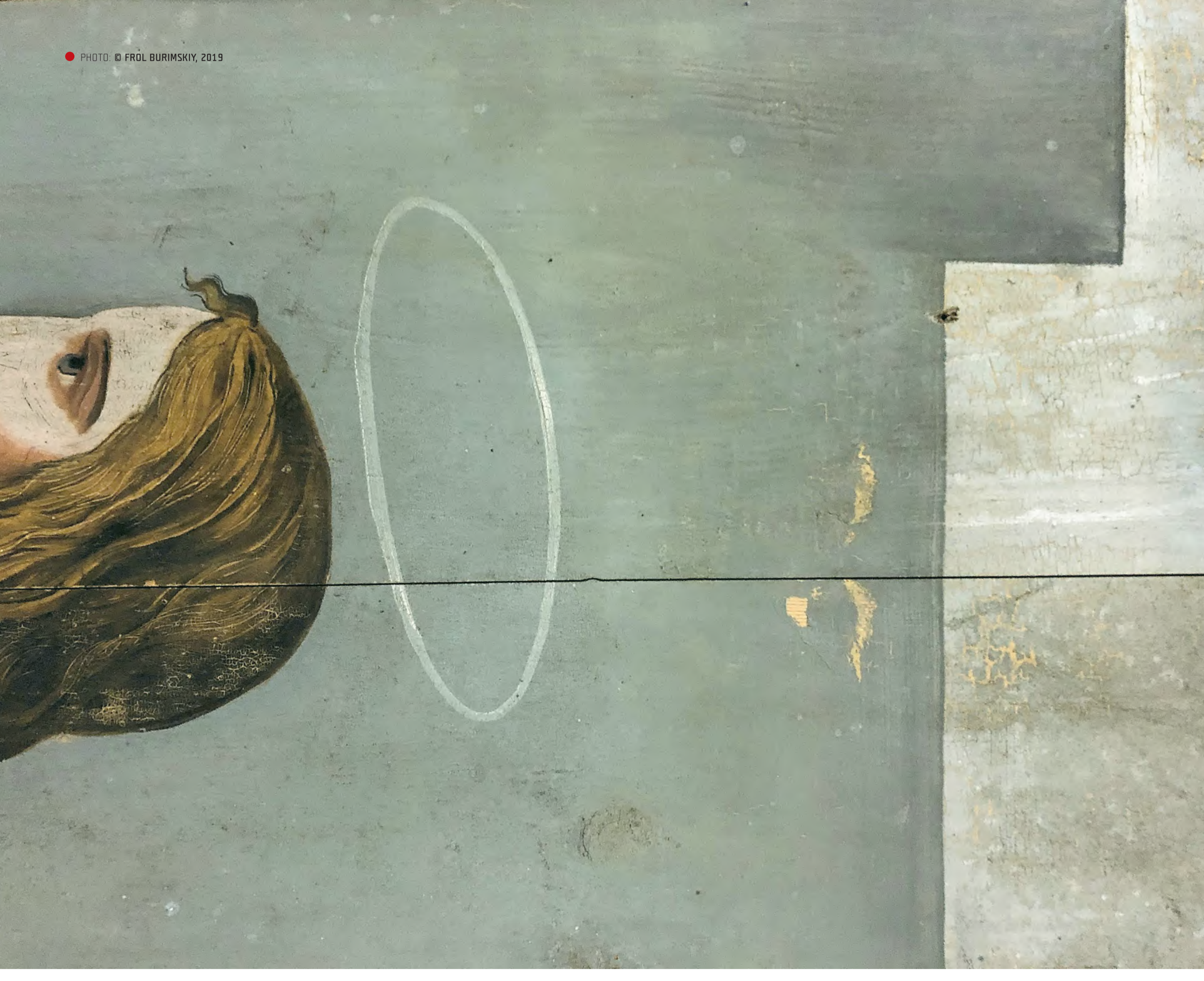


PHOTO: © FROL BURIMSKIY, 2019

THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM
7 JUNE — 7 JULY 2019

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

This exhibition, part of the Hermitage 20/21 project and hosted by the State Hermitage Museum in the summer of 2019 in partnership with a sovereign wealth fund, the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), featured 14 artists and creative teams from 12 different countries.

Offering a new angle on the relationship between the artist and the viewer, this exhibition was an attempt to accommodate recent advances in the field of artificial intelligence. Indeed, artificial intelligence is increasingly able to cope with tasks of mounting complexity, including those traditionally placed in the creative domain, once considered a human monopoly.

Artificial intelligence has proved its mettle in processing massive amounts of data, including images. In the past few years, artificial intelligence has revolutionised IT security in banking and marketing through the use of facial recognition technology.

Artificial intelligence made its entrance into the art world when the first-ever artwork created with it, Portrait of Edmond de Belamy by the French art collective Obvious, sold at Christie's for US $432,500 on October 25, 2018.

The artists and programmers affiliated with Obvious used generative adversarial networks[1], a new machine learning technology developed in 2014. A GAN involves two algorithms running simultaneously, one generating images and the other critically evaluating them and discarding images it recognises as sub-par.

This is Russia's first introduction to the art of Obvious, which includes three generative images from their portrait series of a fictitious family, "La Famille de Belamy", as well as the works of some other leading exponents of this art trend. Most of the works on show at this exhibition are the result of applying artificial intelligence technology to big datasets.

Jonathan Monaghan
The Palace. 2019
Video installation from Golam series 6-minute loop video
Courtesy of bitforms gallery, New York

Norimichi Hirakawa
Единица данных. 2016
Audio-visual installation
Courtesy of the artist

1 Generative Adversarial Network (GAN). The operation of a generative adversarial network brings artificial intelligence closer to human intelligence by endowing AI with the capacity for imagination and critical processing of information. The two components of a GAN operate in a balanced mode, not competing but rather contending with each other for best results.

PLAYING WITH THE SHADOW

The State Hermitage has always been regarded as one of the world's most innovative museums. The idea behind the Hermitage from its very beginning was to make it an international museum, existing in a global context. Empress Catherine the Great shopped for contemporary art in Europe, while Peter the Great was an avid admirer of modern technology. Today's contemporary art exhibitions in the Hermitage are deeply rooted in this historical tradition. Modern technology can assist creators. Technology is a shadow, which should from time to time be told "Shadow, know your place", as in the play by the Russian writer Evgeny Schwartz. This shadow cannot fully replace the creative process, but it can make it much more versatile and multi-faceted.

The time has now come for a serious conversation about the role of artificial intelligence in the development of new trends in contemporary art. And there is already much to say.

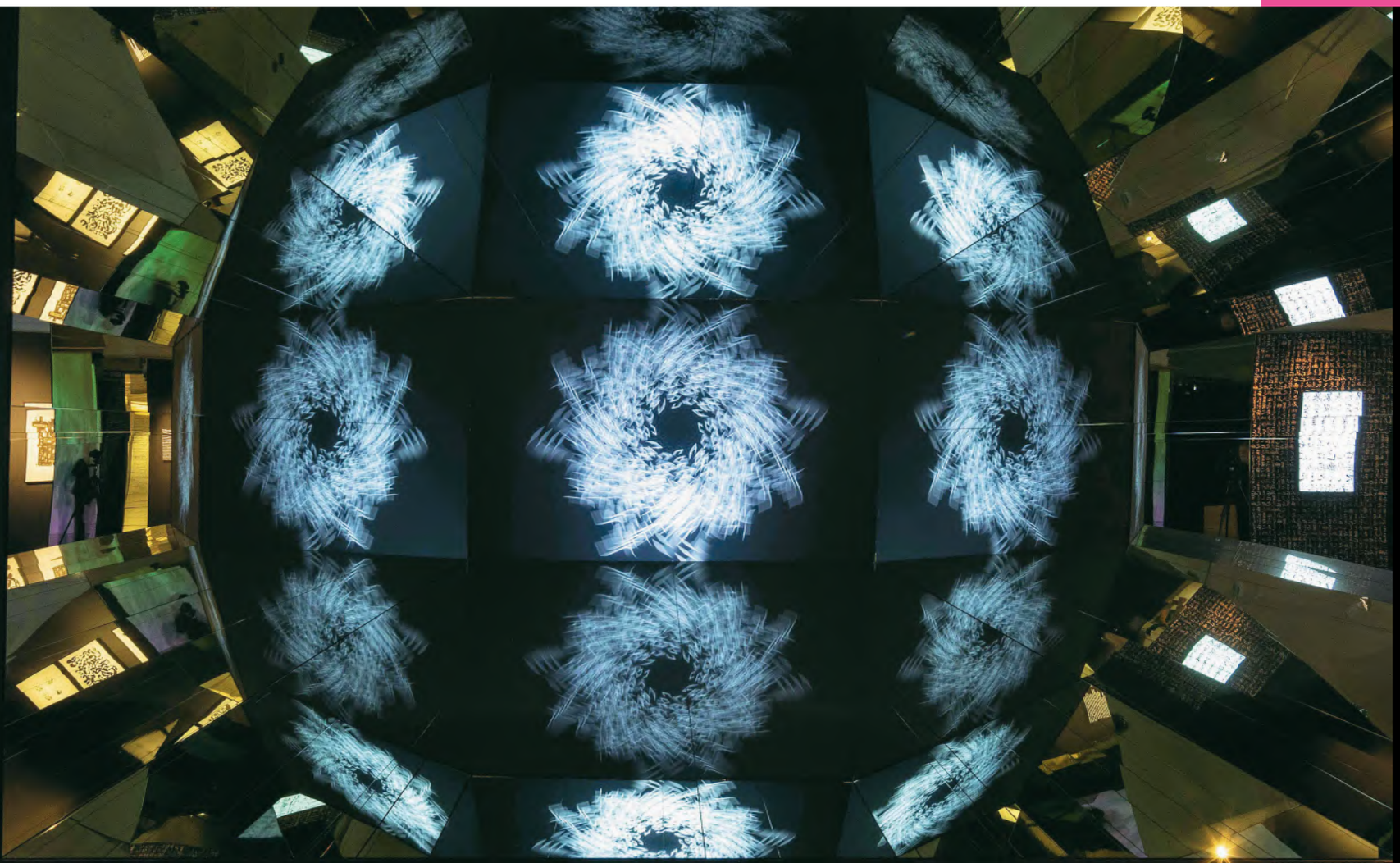
Art created with the help of artificial intelligence is not a game of the mind but a serious reflection on the humanising of the hard sciences.

Artificial intelligence can compete with the artist but it will not necessarily win. A good artist will defeat artificial intelligence; a poor artist will lose.

The Artificial Intelligence and Intercultural Dialogue exhibition is a place where artists from around the world compete and cooperate with artificial intelligence. This exhibition brings together two historical missions of the State Hermitage — promoting innovation in art and advancing cultural dialogue.

The 21st century is the age of the humanities. New discoveries in the hard sciences require a divine revelation, not just the ability to use a slide rule or even artificial intelligence algorithms. The 21st century not only needs new technology in art, but it also needs the principles of art in technology. The humanising of modern technology has become vital for the very survival of humanity.

Mikhail Piotrovsky,
Director of the State Hermitage Museum

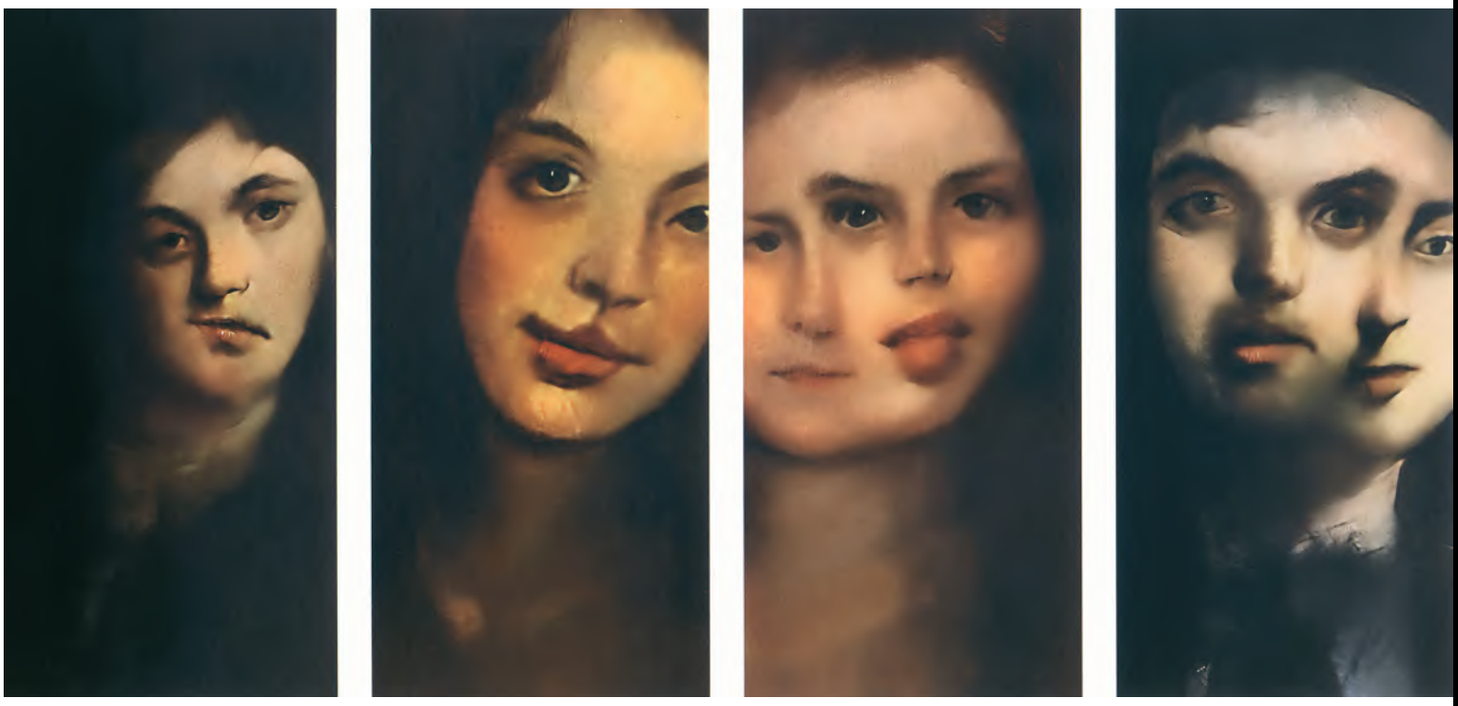


Contemporary art has always been concerned with issues of information transfer through language and communication between the artist, the artwork, and the audience.
The classical system of interaction clearly sets boundaries; works of art exist in a closed world of inner values, leaving the viewer with only the function of observer. Early in the 20th century, avant-garde artists rejected this position, denying art independence and demanding redefinition of the existing roles. Working with the creations of artificial intelligence once again raises questions about the boundaries between participants in the process of creating and consuming art.

Victoria Kondrashova,
curator of the exhibition,
director of the Aksenov Family Foundation

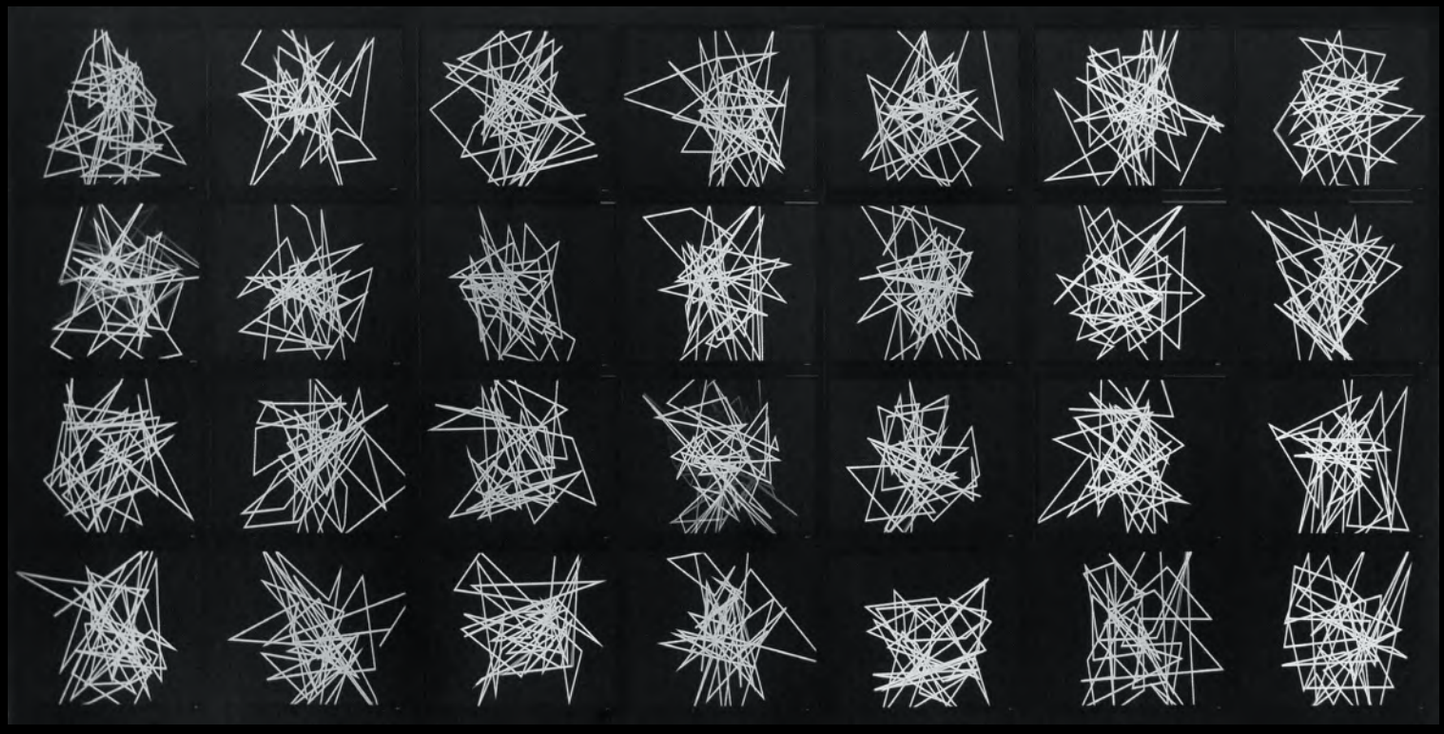
QUAYOLA
Jardins d'Ele (Summer Gardens). 2016
Installalion
Screens, projeclion, video
Courlesy of bilforms gallery, New York

Lulwah Al Homoud
Being and Existence. 2019
Video installalion
Owned by King Abdulaziz Center for World Cullure (Ilhra)



Mario Klingemann
Memories of Passersby. 2018
Generative-adversarial networks, screens,
chestnut wood console
Courtesy of Onkaos gallery (Madrid, Spain)

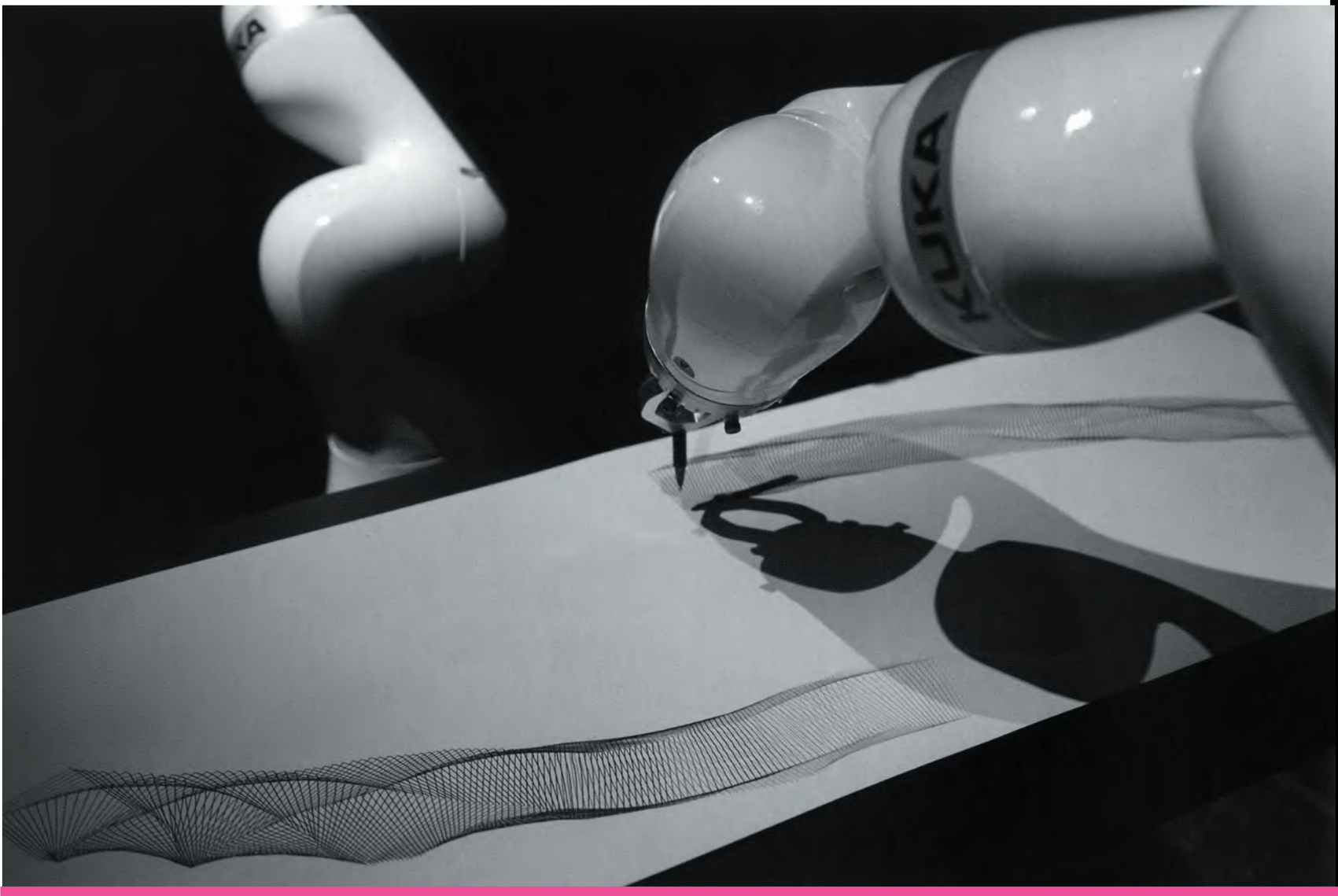
Daniah Al Saleh
Sawlan. 2018
Video installation
TV screens
Owned by King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)



::vtol::
Low pressure calculations. 2019
Multimedia installation
Metal constructions, plastic, robotic mechanisms, custom-made electronics, sound system, printer
Courtesy of the artist

Until now, artificial intelligence has appeared to lack the capacity to generate creative emotion, inherent to biological intelligence. Could artificial intelligence learn to imitate the creative emotion of biological intelligence, and in doing so surpass it? The other question is can the mental process of an artist be translated into the language of mathematical formulas, perhaps infinitely complex ones? And, at the end of the day, can a work generated by artificial intelligence become part, whether imperceptibly or deliberately, of "human" art history?

Dmitry Ozerkov, curator of the exhibition,
Head of the Contemporary Art Department, State Hermitage Museum

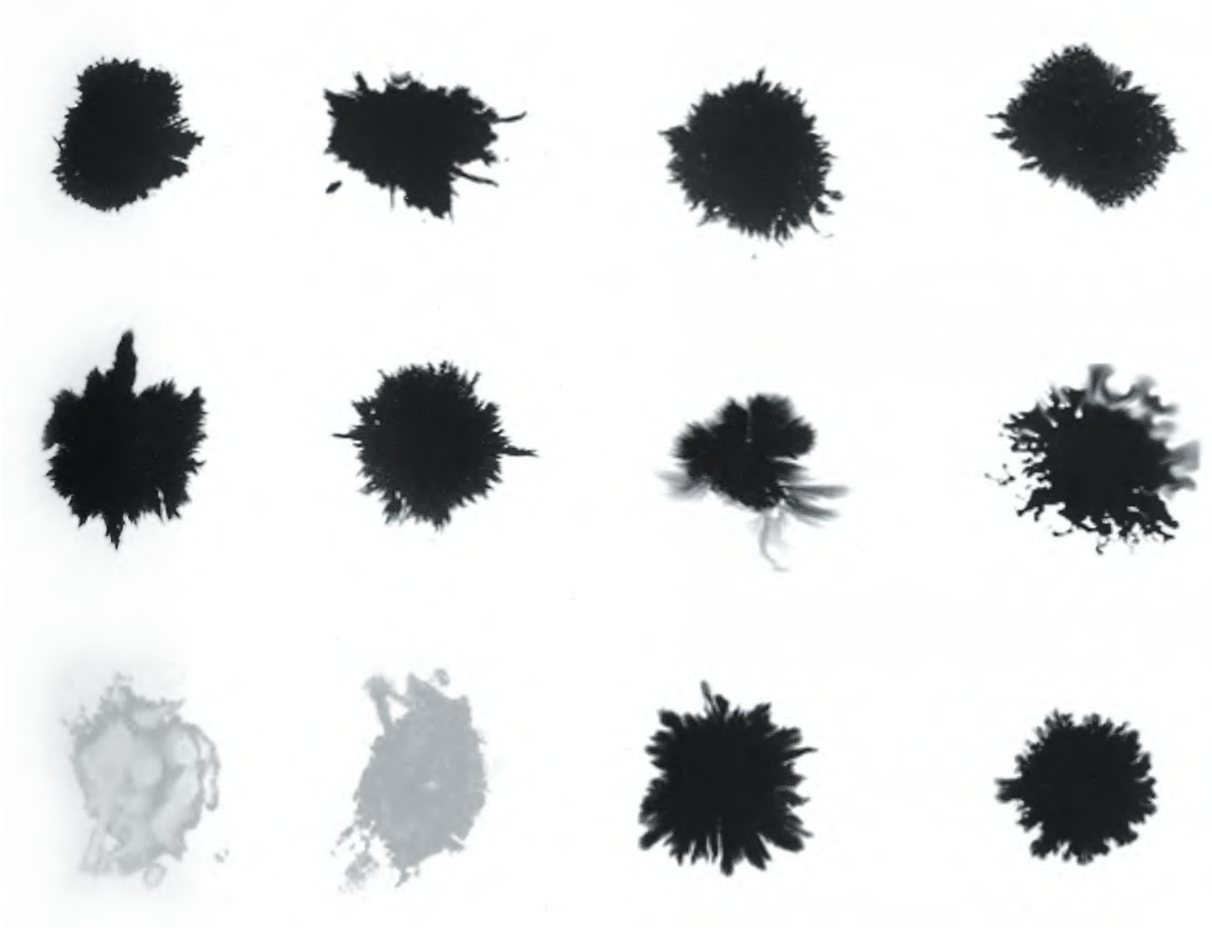


Team VOID + Youngkak Cho
Making Art for Stock Market. 2017
Installation
KUKA iiwa industrial robotic arm,
stock market database, paper,
ink pen, speakers
Courtesy of the artist

Sun Xun
Time Spy. 2016
Video installation
Screen, projection, 3D glasses
Commissioned by Audemars Piguet

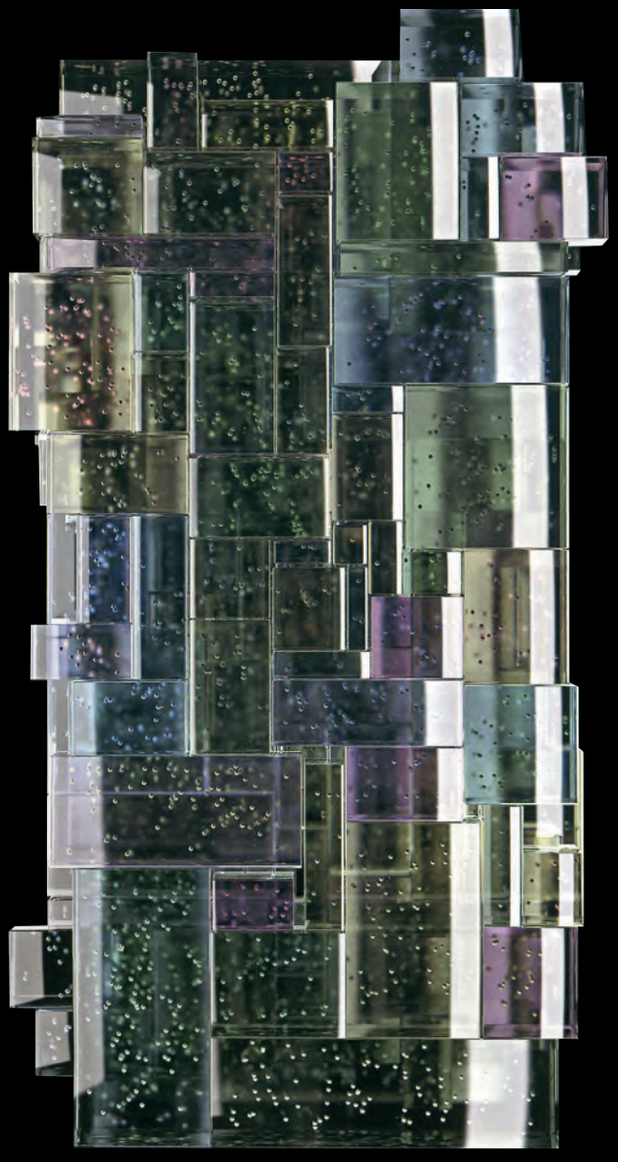
The most advanced nations are now working to elaborate their developmental visions for artificial intelligence. One of the most recent trends in AI is experimenting with its application in art – a sphere hitherto traditionally monopolised by human intelligence. These experiments represent the emerging synthesis of modern technology and art.
A new art form is born before our very eyes; it promises to simplify communication between people from different cultural backgrounds.

Kirill Dmitriev,
CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund



Egor Kraft
China Ink. 2019
Installation
Electronic paper, electronic ink
Courtesy of the artist

The Artificial Intelligence and Intercultural Dialogue exhibition includes works by 14 artists from 12 countries who decided to merge their abilities with creative and scientific developments in the field of artificial intelligence.



Kostya Novoselov.
Together with ZHESTKOV.STUDIO
Time. 2019
Installation
LED-screen, grafics (Chinese ink, graphene ink, paper)
Courtesy of the artist

In his Memories of Passersby I, **Mario Klingemann** (Germany) casts doubt on the important principle of completeness in art. Two screens display an endless stream of portraits created in real time by an absolutely autonomous program. This eerie flow of faces appears as a result of the machine processing of thousands of portraits painted in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.

The **Obvious** art collective from France used a base of 15,000 works by old masters to make portraits of the De Belamy family. The images have been systematically proved original (by the GAN), and the plausibility of the images is not even questioned, although the De Belamy family never existed. Nonetheless, the work itself is a print on canvas that looks like a regular artwork.

The installation Time, by Nobel Prize-winning inventor of graphene **Kostya Novoselov** (Russia) in collaboration with Zhestkov.Studio (Russia/United Kingdom/Singapore), also focuses on the process of creation: the viewer observes how artificial intelligence learns to recognise a liquid by measuring various parameters. However, the ability of the neural network to learn is juxtaposed here with the unpredictability of human decisions and even human fate – these philosophical topics all find expression in graphic sheets made with graphene ink.

Under the supervision of the artist **Sun Xun** (China), students made 100,000 woodcuts using traditional Chinese wood-engraving techniques. These works were digitised and uploaded into the database of a machine. That machine then converted them into animated images that can be seen through 3D glasses. These modified engravings ponder the irreversible nature of time, and the importance of keeping tradition alive as it moves at an ever-increasing speed.

Saudi Arabia's **Lulwah Al-Homoud** is interested in the theme of recognition. She employs an algorithm to create a universal visual language. The database of her project incorporates classical Arabic ligature and the Vedic square, and the results after processing are abstract and intuitively perceived graphic images.

Norimichi Hirakawa (Japan) explores the boundaries of human sensations. The artist translates the standard parameters of 3D space into their colour-and-sound equivalent. While working with classical principles of correlation and correspondence, he creates a new artistic image based on a visualisation of the familiar by transforming space into data.

In the installation Summer Gardens by Italian artist **Davide Quayola**, artificial intelligence "takes a closer look" at the impressionist classics. Paintings of flowers undulating in the wind were captured by a camera and processed by AI algorithms. The machine, through visual synthesis, processed the macrofootage into abstract pieces closely resembling impressionist paintings in colour scheme and general feel.

Refik Anadol (Turkey) has trained a cutting-edge GAN algorithm to generate new forms of architecture by processing a database of 1.3

million photographic "recollections" of gothic and modern architecture. Having analysed this voluminous architectural legacy, the machine was able to generate unique, previously unseen architectural façades in real time for the Machine Hallucinations exhibit. None of these spellbinding, phantasmagorical structures have ever existed. Artificial intelligence has dreamed them all up.

In his installation China Ink, artist **Egor Kraft** (Russia/Germany) works with the Chinese art of ink calligraphy. The generative adversarial network was seeded with a dataset of several thousand blotches of calligraphy ink and the algorithm began generating electronic images of blotches on its own.

The inspiration for Russian artist Dmitry Morozov, who works under the pseudonym **::vtol::**, were wind chimes, the oriental decorative talisman that sounds off melodiously at the slightest movement of air, making the wind audible. However, there is a sophisticated system of self-learning cybernetic processes behind his exhibit Calculations for Low Pressure.

Artist **Daniah Al Saleh** (Saudi Arabia) deconstructs the Arabic language down to the smallest linguistic unit, the phoneme. Even the most basic conversation is a continuous process of message encoding and decoding. With the aid of mathematical algorithms, Al Saleh has made graphically visible the intuitive work behind verbal communication, which normally evades the attention of conversation participants.

The South Korean collective of artists and engineers, **Team VOID**, showcased an installation where they had transformed objective economic data into a work of art. The artificial intelligence processed stock-market index patterns in real time, but its processing outputs were aesthetic rather than economic. One algorithm would reference the data to a music library, yielding a sound, while the other would translate the data into drawings.

The Winter Palace is easily discerned as the prototype for the exhibit The Palace by **Jonathan Monaghan** (United States), created exclusively for this show. Using CGI technology, the artist put artificial intelligence onto the task of analysing the architecture of a classical building. The palace, re-imagined by the machine, resembles a piece of exquisite fabric flying in the wind.

The installation Typeface, an art experiment by the Berlin-based Chinese artist and programmer Xu Wenkai, who works under the pseudonym **Aaajiao**, explores an ancient Chinese text with a digital toolkit. For this project, the artist joined forces with a team of programmers to teach the ancient text, carved in stone, to the DCGAN (Deep Convolutional Generative Adversarial Network) algorithm. The data processing work consisted of multiple deconstructions and reconstructions of the writings. The more the neural network learned, the more versions of the characters it was able to depict, leading to the creation of essentially new characters, new words and, in a sense, a new language. The meaning of the text, however, was lost in the process, and only a meaningless imitation remained.

Aaajiao
Typeface. 2016
Installation
USB Installation, 10' LED Screen, Typeface File, Wallpaper
Courtesy of bilforms gallery, New York

The collection and processing of information, which remained the human prerogative for thousands of years, is today more successfully performed by machines. Artificial intelligence increasingly demonstrates the ability to think inferentially; it can learn and is sometimes a much faster learner than the human being.
Historians and futurologists firmly believe that many mundane tasks will be delegated to robots or more advanced forms of artificial intelligence in the near future.
The more optimistically inclined researchers contend that man has the wherewithal to integrate high-tech tools into his daily routines, freeing up more time for personal development. People will thus be enabled to discover the finer facets of their own intelligence and gain deeper emotional insights, which are, by definition, off limits to the algorithms.
But whatever consequences rapid technological advances may bring, one thing is beyond doubt: the universal language of artificial intelligence does simplify interaction between national cultures, and is emerging as a new platform for dialogue between the culture of innovation and the culture of tradition.

Refic Anadol
Memoirs from Latent Space Study II. 2019
4K video, custom wood frame, computer
30 min loop
Ed 5, 1 AP
Courtesy of bilforms gallery, New York

THE WHITE PALACE

AGNIA STERLIGOVA,
EXHIBITION DESIGNER

Exhibition design often plays the role of a flexible medium, a tool that brings the content and meaning of the presentation to the end consumer – the visitor. The general impression and further prospects of any project sometimes depends on the successful realisation of the curator's concept and on the effective handling of the exhibits. All fourteen works presented at Artificial Intelligence and the Dialogue of Cultures in the Hermitage are quite bright in the literal sense: almost all of them use multimedia components (screens, video projections, sound) and require their own, separate space.

Our primary task was to provide an adequate "backdrop", with neither its neutrality nor adaptability being perceived as lack of character. The next task, tackled scrupulously together with the curators of the exposition, was properly placing the exhibits in the allotted suite of rooms, as they were sure to enter into a visual dialogue with each other if spaced at certain distances. Together with the purely visual advantages, this circumstance renders additional support to the general narrative and eases navigation of the exhibition.

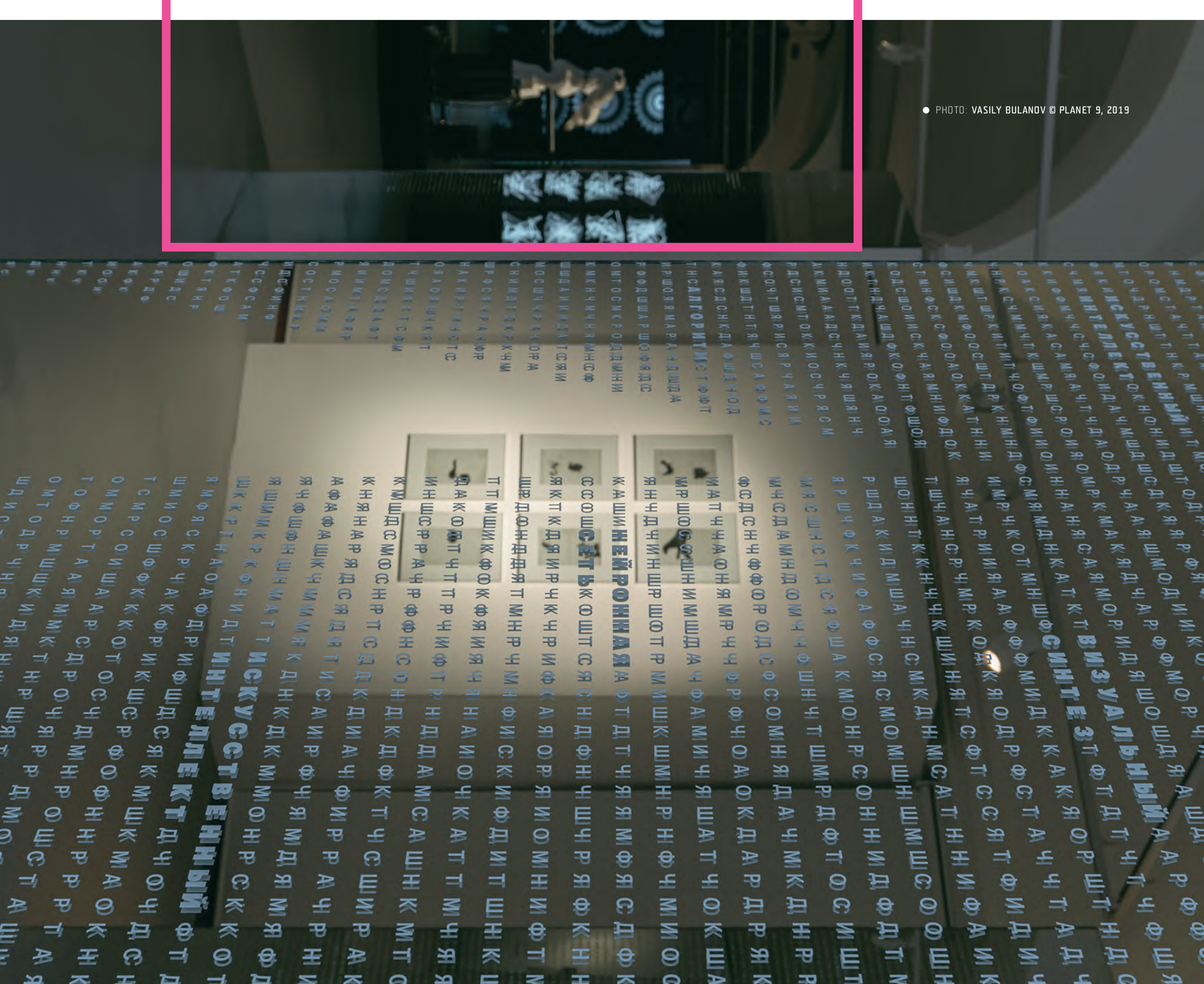
At first glance, the enfilade of the eastern wing of the General Staff Building seemed very convenient for mounting the exhibition: the clear perspective of the chamber-sized halls, high vaulted ceilings, and possibility of a simple passage through, concordant with the narrative of the curators. We left the structure of the grounds unchanged, concentrating our work around the overall image of the exposition.

It was obvious from the start that it would be necessary to hide the restored original pistachio colour of the walls and the inlaid parquet to create a cohesive space for the project: we called it "the white palace" among ourselves. The design solution proposed covering all existing walls and protuberances with false walls (convenient for mounting multi-format multimedia installations) and installing mirroring elements in the passages between the halls to reflect the exposition space and create interesting dialogues between exhibits. We assumed that the colour of the walls would be white, but during mounting some of the artists insisted on a black background. So the plan for creating a pure white space, with no division between the floor and the ceiling, was transformed into a black and white project.

We regretted the necessity to keep all the windows closed, and wanted to open at least some windows onto the Winter Palace and Palace Square. Moreover, one of the works, The Palace by Jonathan Monaghan, was specially created for the exhibition in St Petersburg, a direct interpretation of Rastrelli's architecture. Unfortunately, the instability of street lighting did not allow us to do so.

In addition to lighting the exhibits, we experimented with illuminating the vaulted ceilings in the rooms. From the very beginning it seemed that the image of the airy, white, crystal "palace of artificial intelligence" should "shine", be filled with sparkles and play of light. In part, this task was realised using conventional LED strip lights installed at the bases of the arches (above the false walls). It was also important to avoid traditional exhibition labelling practices, as the exhibits required a lengthy explanation of the subject of the work and the materials and methods used in their creation. These had to be conveniently displayed and easily readable.

Fragment of the exhibition.
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
2019



● PHOTO: VASILY BULANOV © PLANET 9, 2019

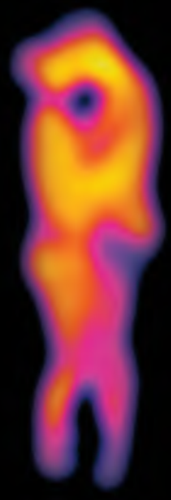
WARM OBLIVION
WITH UNCANNY INTELLIGENCE

ALEXEI GRINBAUM [1]

IF NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FOR A MACHINE TO LEARN FROM, AND IF NO DATA ARE NEW BUT ALL ARE REPETITIVE, THEN THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS MUST NECESSARILY APPEAR WRONG, INDEED VERY BAD, TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. HOWEVER, VIEWING IT AS THE MACHINE FORM OF EVIL WOULD NOT BE QUITE RIGHT. THE FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE SENSE OF THIS SITUATION.

1 Alexei Grinbaum is a researcher at the French Atomic Energy and Alternative Energies Commission (Saclay). Trained as a physicist and a philosopher, he is a member of the French national ethics committee for digital technologies and AI.по этике цифровых технологий.

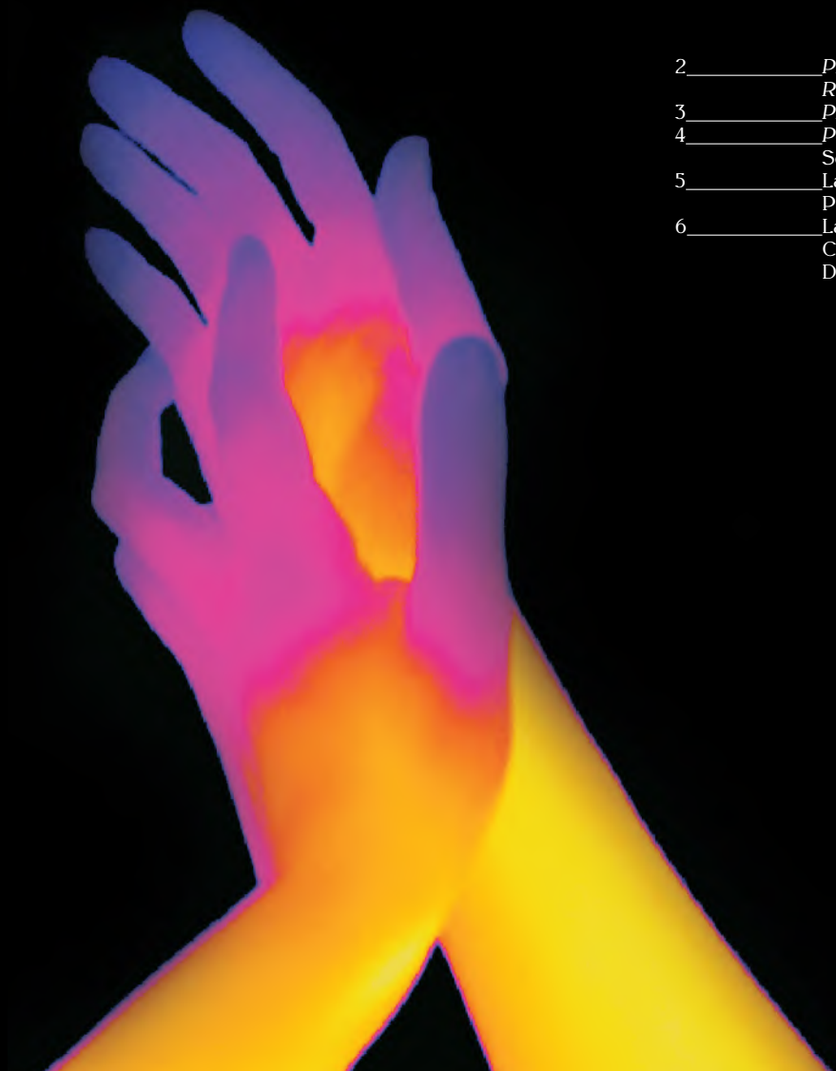
● ILLUSTRATIONS: SERIES TRAUM © SMITH, 2014



It is necessary for every soul to drink a certain quantity of the cup of oblivion: thus Proclus paraphrases Socrates, who was teaching Glaucon about the meaning of water from the Lethe. In myth, oblivion appears as an allegory while in the metaphysics of Neoplatonism it is devoid of any ornate verbiage: here, terse argumentation lays bare the philosophical vertebrae of myth. But this metaphysical argument is also more difficult to comprehend. The image of the Lethe gives way to the concept of evil: "Oblivion is that from which evil is born within us…"

Evil is born within us humans but also within angels and demons: oblivion plays a significant role in the scholastic debate about their ways of working. In the last decade of the 13th century, the opponents of Thomas Aquinas, most notably Peter John Olivi, conceptualised it as a distinct quasi-autonomous force. Such momentous significance is ascribed to oblivion because the absence of forgetting distinguishes divine existence from a life dominated by accident, like that of demons and human beings. And, as is typical of that epoch, various non-divine beings – angels, demons, and humans – are bunched together in a metaphysical (but not moral) sense. Olivi explains forgetting as a product of their limited, finite memory. If one considers, for instance, the chain of events in time that describe how an angel obtains information, it would be natural to assume that, following each such event, new information would be saved and recorded. But the angel is eventually bound to run out of available memory, even if new information will still continue to arrive. Therefore, angels must forget.

The metaphysical notion of oblivion applies to all imperfect, non-divine beings. In scholastic discourse, forgetting is synonymous with evil. However, there is no need to further explore its theological significance, for it has nothing in common with artificial intelligence. The meaning of



ILLUSTRATIONS: SERIES SPECTROGRAPHIES © SMITH, 2014

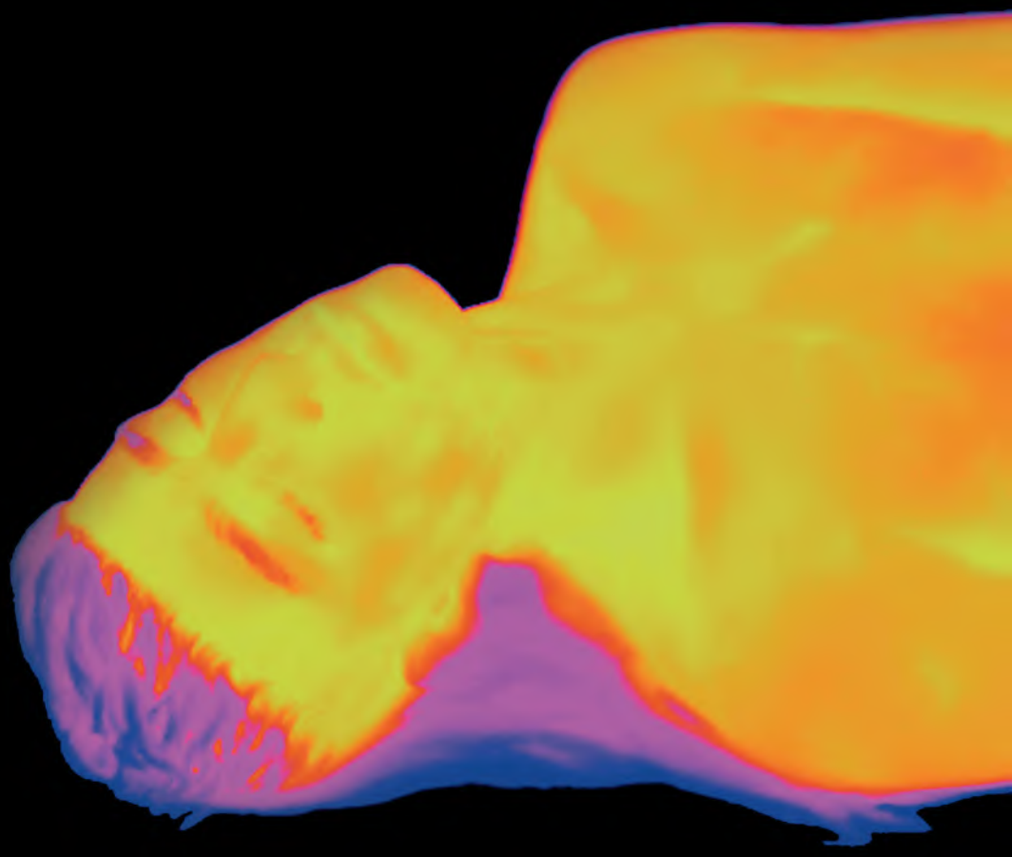
2_____*Proclus. De malorum subsisIenIia, 21, 20–23; Plalo. The Republic, X, 621a.*

3_____*Proclus*. Op. cil. 24, 45–48.

4_____*Pelrus Joannis Olivi.* Quaesliones in secundum librum Senlenliarum: quaesl. 44, resp. 4.

5_____Landauer R. Compulalion: A Fundamenlal Physical View // Physica Scripla. 1987. Vol. 35. No. 1. Pp 88–95.

6_____Landauer R. Irreversibilily and Heal Generalion in Ihe Compuling Process // IBM Journal of Research and Developmenl. 1961. Vol. 5. No. 3. P. 183–191.



ILLUSTRATIONS: **TRAUM © SMITH, 2014**

forgetting is plain to the latter and goes against Olivi's reasoning. Olivi "psychologised" forgetting, assuming that the information held in the memory is never gone completely, but rather that when one forgets, information just does not come through in one's consciousness and will. In physics, however, information does disappear. In the digital realm, this erasure can be interpreted as evil from the standpoint of artificial intelligence-in-itself. But this evil is not only in itself: it will also leave traces outside artificial intelligence. We observe them in virtue of an important physical principle.

"Information is physical": information is physical by nature, as the American physicist of German extraction Rolf Landauer once put it. In the mid-20th century, Landauer was one of the pioneers of a new scientific approach bridging physics with information. In 1961, he formulated a relationship between information science and thermodynamics: a formula later known as Landauer's Principle. According to this principle, whenever an amount of information is erased from memory, a matching amount of heat is immediately released into the environment. If an observer with precise instruments is there to register that event, what she registers will be a purely thermodynamic, heat-related process that has no connection with information theory. At first the observer will conclude that she is witnessing the effects of some physical phenomenon. That is correct, but not completely so, since the same phenomenon also has an informational interpretation.

The erasure of memory is an irreversible act that will cause heat emission. It is irreversibility that brings about a change in entropy. This is a necessity so forceful that it would be no exaggeration to compare it with the one that, in Pushkin's times, led a Frenchman, Sadi Carnot, to discover the second law of thermodynamics. Now, the irreversibility that comes to the forefront is that of informational processes: is it possible to reverse any process by "running the film backwards"? Indeed, any information can always be "handed back", as one would return a book borrowed from the library. Thus information is gained with no change in entropy. Landauer realised that erasing information is a different story. Erasure cannot be played back, for information no longer exists: it is gone for good.

The digital realm offers an opportunity to interpret this state of affairs ethically: these same traces of information erasure appear as a manifestation of evil. Here, "evil" is to be understood from the standpoint of artificial intelligence-in-itself. No matter how abstract the traces of such evil may seem, it turns out that they are observable in the form of heat emission. Obviously, the digital individual is not itself capable of registering these traces; only the observer with the aid of measurement equipment can 'see' that. What a vertiginous leap from the digital realm to the world of applied physics! The observer, like Dante emerging from inferno back to the warm sunlight, reads on her smartphone a new stanza of The Digital Comedy.


HAL 9000
LOGIC MEMORY
SYSTEMS
URBANA,IL

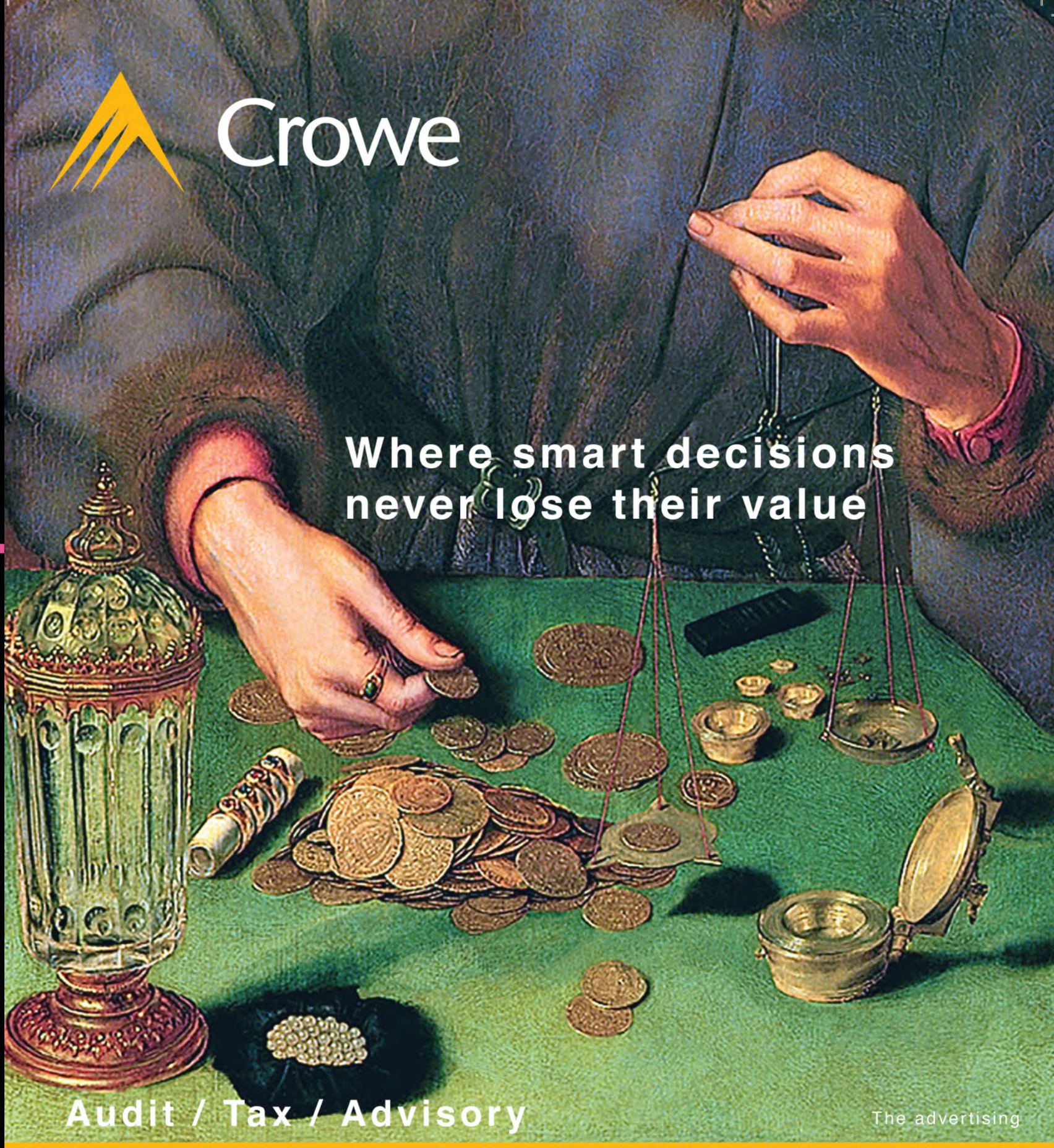
ILLUSTRATIONS: **SERIES TRAUM © SMITH, 2014**

ILLUSTRATIONS: SERIES TRAUM © SMITH, 2014

When one speaks of the causes of global warming, one often refers to the vast amounts of heat released by the data centres of major internet companies. They may not yet be the strongest contributors to climate change, on par with agriculture, metallurgy, or gasoline-powered vehicles, but their contribution is constantly growing. It is no coincidence that many of these centres are based in the Arctic. For taking these emissions into account answers the question about the extent to which global warming is not a mere cyclical phenomenon in history of planet Earth but a very real, physical evil. It turns out that what manifests itself thus is not evil in terms of human morality but from the standpoint of computers and artificial intelligence. The user, then, imitates the machine by borrowing its uncanny internal ethics. Nonstop communication via interface, which all users yearn for, indeed carries with it very specific ethical and environmental implications.

Elementally, artificial intelligence seeks frost, not heat. The monster created by Victor Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's novel seeks refuge high in the mountains amid cold dreary glaciers: "...the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow-beings". This is how a machine would speak of its values. To us humans, this gives the shivers and an uncanny feeling of otherworldliness; Smith in Spectrographies and Traum sets these feelings against our human warmth.

7_____*Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein; or, The Modern Promelheus.*
8_____URL: smilh.piclures.



In the first decades following the 1917 Revolution, Soviet architects were inspired to develop new architectural concepts to enshrine the grandiose changes that had taken place in the country. The new social mission of architecture was viewed as an opportunity to explore beyond the boundaries of obsolete (as many believed) traditional architecture.

In the age of modernity and ever since, this was probably the only time when Russian architecture found itself in the global avant-garde with its incredibly ambitious experiment. And as with any experiment, this one had its success stories and its mistakes.

The house-communes were the worst fiasco, failing almost immediately. While the new concept designs for schools, sanatoria, and culture centres developed in the early 1930s would last for decades with unimpaired relevance, the concept of orderly collective living for working people was scrapped in no time. It would be fair to note that utopian sentiments similar to those that inspired Soviet constructivists and rationalists also fascinated European architects of that era. Socialist ideas, which were then in vogue, prompted a number of experiments in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Great Britain. But there too, despite an approach less radical than the Soviet Union's, "progressive" communal housing in large part came to nothing.

The idea of a house-commune was borrowed from the utopian socialist philosophers, particularly Charles Fourier's vision of phalansteries (from the French phalanstère) – "palaces" designed for ideal self-contained communities, encompassing everything the inhabitants needed for their livelihood. When in post-1917 Russia the architects were expected to come up with an architecture to

1

"FIGHTING THE OLD HOUSEHOLD EC

KSENIA MALICH

SOVIET HOUSE-COMMUNES AND EUROPE'S ARCHITECTURAL MIRAGES OF THE 1930S

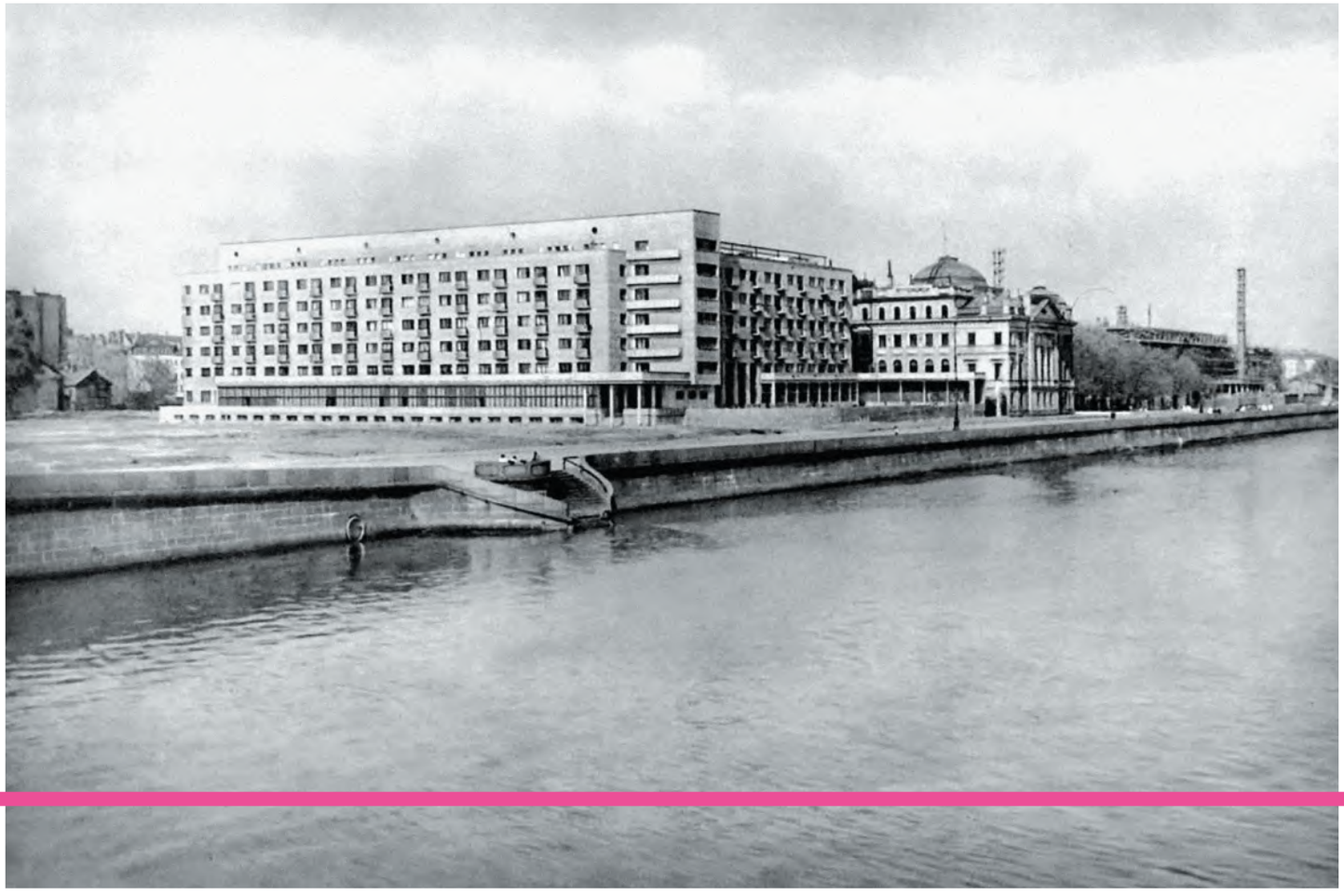
aid in the creation of the new lifestyle Soviet people were now supposed to follow according to the new statutes on the communalisation of the household economy, there were no precedents from which to draw inspiration. In the end, only a few house-communes were built in the Soviet Union, and only two in Leningrad: the House-Commune of the Society for Former Political Prisoners and Exiles (designed by Grigory Simonov, Pavel Abrosimov, and Aleksander Khryakov, 1929–1933) and the House-Commune for Engineers and Writers (designed by Andrei Ol, 1929–1931). These buildings did not yet incorporate full-scale collectivisation of household services, but some initial design provisions were the first effective steps made towards this end. Spaces that had anything to do with household chores (viewed as "philistine" matters) were removed from the apartments. The lower floors housed a communal lobby, kitchen, dining room, living room, and laundry area. In fact, the personal space allocated was only enough for sleeping and quiet endeavours.

The house-commune for engineers and writers on Ulitsa Rubinsteina, popularly christened "Socialism's Tear", is colourfully described in the memoirs of one of its first residents, poet Olga Bergholts: "This house, built at the very beginning of the 1930s, was the joint idea and investment of a group of young (very young) engineers and writers, including myself. It was supposed to represent our commitment to fighting the "old household economy" by any means possible... Even its super-unattractive exterior design – an imitation of Le Corbusier, dotted with lots of tall, tiny, cage-like balconies – did not discourage us. Its extreme architectural squalor looked to us like some special kind of austerity appropriate for

C ONOMY BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE"

1. **Kollektivhus on Ericssongatan in Stockholm**
Architect: Sven Markelius
1935

2



the time". The enthusiasm of the young residents soon waned as it collided with everyday reality: it proved impossible to satisfy the tastes and match the biorhythms of all residents. Tenants would try, with alarming frequency, to prepare food in their apartments. They would rig up ingenious contraptions for drying their baby diapers, and would have bitter arguments in the shower queue.

The political prisoners' house-commune, similarly, failed to liberate Soviet women from their "kitchen and diaper slavery". Built for the families of political prisoners convicted during Tsarist times, this project was larger and better executed. As the in-house restaurant had a takeout service, the apartments were designed without kitchens. However, unlike the house for engineers and writers, the apartments in the political prisoners' house included recesses for built-in electric stoves to heat up the takeout meals and water tanks for dishwashing. In addition to an automated laundry, vegetable storage facility, "residents only" shop, and medical station, the political prisoners' house had a library, kindergarten, museum, and 500-seat theatre with a stage and a film projection unit. Residents had access to roomy terraced porches and the roof, which had been designed flat and equipped with facilities for sunbathing. Unbelievably bold for their time, these innovations, it turned out, would prove excessive. Soviet modernists had hoped in vain that communalised domestic living would build strong human collectives. After the Second World War, the apartments in the political prisoners' house were enlarged by taking over the former shared areas, and fully equipped kitchens and bathrooms were built in them.

The "progressive" housing philosophy employed methods of social engineering – a science that eagerly lent a helping hand to the inchoate concept of the standardised housing element. For a while, it seemed like all human needs could be anticipated and provided for. The daily regimen of every person could be pre-planned down to the minute, and family sizes predicted with high accuracy. Then, with these projections in mind, so many "bachelor coops" and family flats would be built, with room sizes calculated precisely to meet the needs of young people, old people, and families small and large. But naturally, statistical data failed to account for the complexity of human beings. In Europe, architects working on creating a harmonious collective housing element with a communalised household economy encountered the same problem.

In Hilversum, Netherlands, Dutch modernist architect Willem Dudok designed the "first municipal residential building with a room for reading"

2, 4. **House-Commune of the Society for Former Political Prisoners and Exiles on Troitskaya Ploshchad in St Petersburg**
Architects: Grigory Simonov, Pavel Abrosimov, Alexander Khryakov
1929-1933

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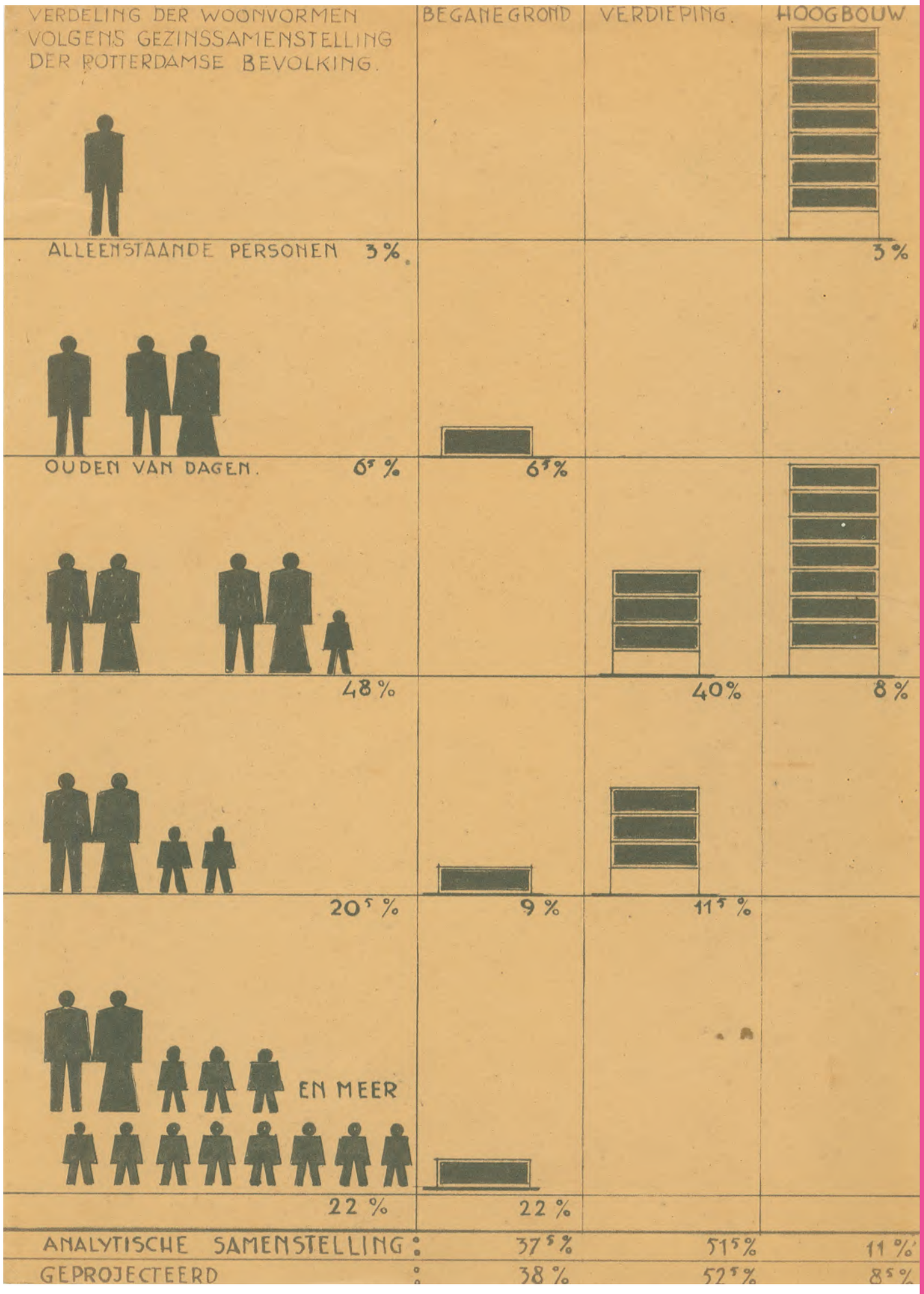
3. **Narkomfin Flats on Novinsky Bulvar in Moscow**
Architects: Moisey Ginsburg, Ignaty Milinis, Sergei Prokhorov
1928-1930

5. **House-Commune for Engineers and Writers on Ulitsa Rubinsteina in St Petersburg**
Architect: Andrei Ol
1929-1931


VERDELING DER WOONVORMEN VOLGENS GEZINSSAMENSTELLING DER ROTTERDAMSE BEVOLKING.
BEGANEGROND
VERDIEPING.
HOOGBOUW
ALLEENSTAANDE PERSONEN 3%.
3%
OUDEN VAN DAGEN.
6⁵%
6⁵%
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40%
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EN MEER
22%
22%
ANALYTISCHE SAMENSTELLING:
37⁵%
51⁵%
11%
GEPROJECTEERD
38%
52⁵%
8⁵%

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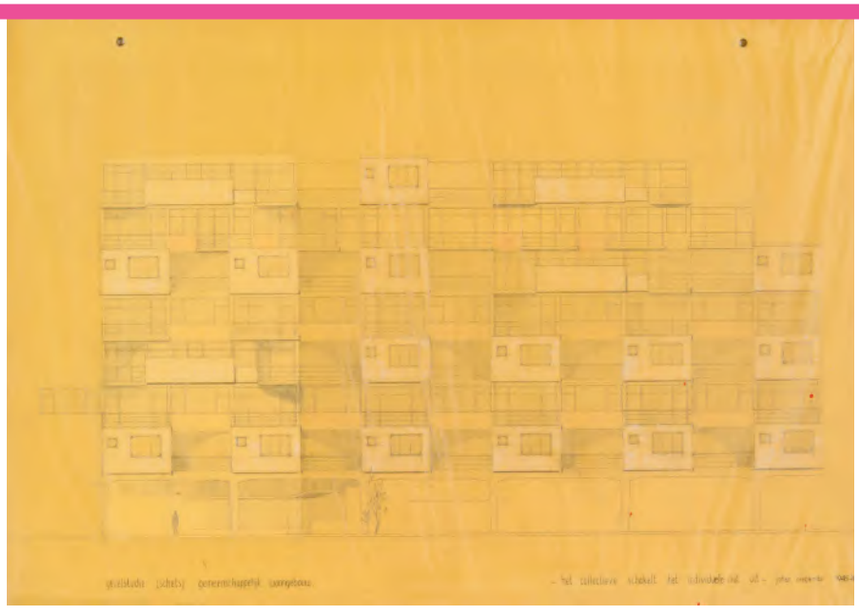
6. **A group of Dutch architects at a construction site in Magnitogorsk.**
New Institute, No. NIEG ph 232

7. **Tentative study for the optimal distribution of different family sizes in low- and high-rise buildings. Pendrecht District in Rotterdam. Department for the Development and Reconstruction of Rotterdam. 1948.**
New Institute, № STAB d 18

8. **Communal housing design for factory workers in Amsterdam. The units for singles and couples.**
Architect: Johannes Niggemann. 1946
Inscribed: "The collective approach will not supersede the individual".
New Institute, № NIEG 54

in 1916 (the building set aside space for a common living area and a reading room). But Dudok was more interested in the garden-city concept, and every apartment in his standard housing projects had its own street entrance. Many architects embraced the idea that, by overcoming the extreme individualism of urban life, urban communities could be delivered from the oppressive "concrete jungle", the regular habitat of socially disadvantaged population groups. Even De Stijl architects opposed "individual despotism" in their work, advocating collective responsibility for the sake of a higher purpose: achieving a "cultural recovery". "The old is connected with the individual. The new is connected with the universal...," they wrote in their first manifesto. The ideology of the Socialist Party romanticised the idea of a "better future". It came as no surprise when, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, a group of young Dutch architects, including Mart Stam, Johannes Niggemann, Johannes van Loghem, and Lotte Stam-Beese, boldly travelled to the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet government, with the mission of erecting new residential neighbourhoods for working people in the Urals and other rapidly industrialising parts of the country. The Dutch experts were soon disappointed with the prospects of building a new world in the Soviet Union, but many of their ideas for housing developments in the Urals would both prefigure the "socialist city" concept and influence residential neighbourhood designs in the Netherlands in the 1940s and 1950s. Niggemann inscribed one of his 1940s sketches thus: "The collective approach will not supersede the individual". Stam, in 1936, published a distribution chart estimating how individual family members spent their time inside their apartment, which in many ways echoed the "Time-Table of Life in a House-Commune" by Nikolay Kuzmin. Municipal



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9,10. **Kollektivhus on Ericssongatan in Stockholm**
Architect: Sven Markelius
1935

authorities actually used similar charts and formulas in post-war Netherlands. But fortunately for the Dutch, the application of this socialist know-how was limited to the stage of making calculations for apartment sizes and infrastructure locations in new residential neighbourhoods. The "happiness formula" never encroached on people's personal space, but this did not save 1940s housing projects from accusations of "totalitarianism".

Great Britain had an entirely different take on this idea of a "communal household". Between the two world wars, British projects of this kind had the quality of a rare and marginal bohemian amusement about them. Isokon Flats on Lawn Road (1934) in London is perhaps the best-known example. Entrepreneur Jack Pritchard, a marketing manager for a plywood furniture business, brought the idea for the Lawn Road Flats back from Germany, where he had visited the Bauhaus School. Singularly inspired by Bauhaus, Pritchard intended Isokon Flats as an experiment in minimalist urban living and a showcase for plywood products. He teamed up with civil engineer Wells Coates to work on Isokon's international-style residential building, while Bauhaus' Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and László Moholy-Nagy designed the interiors and some furnishings. The flats were offered for rent fully furnished, and were fairly comfortable (especially the penthouse, where the Pritchards lived), with ensuite bathrooms. The project owners

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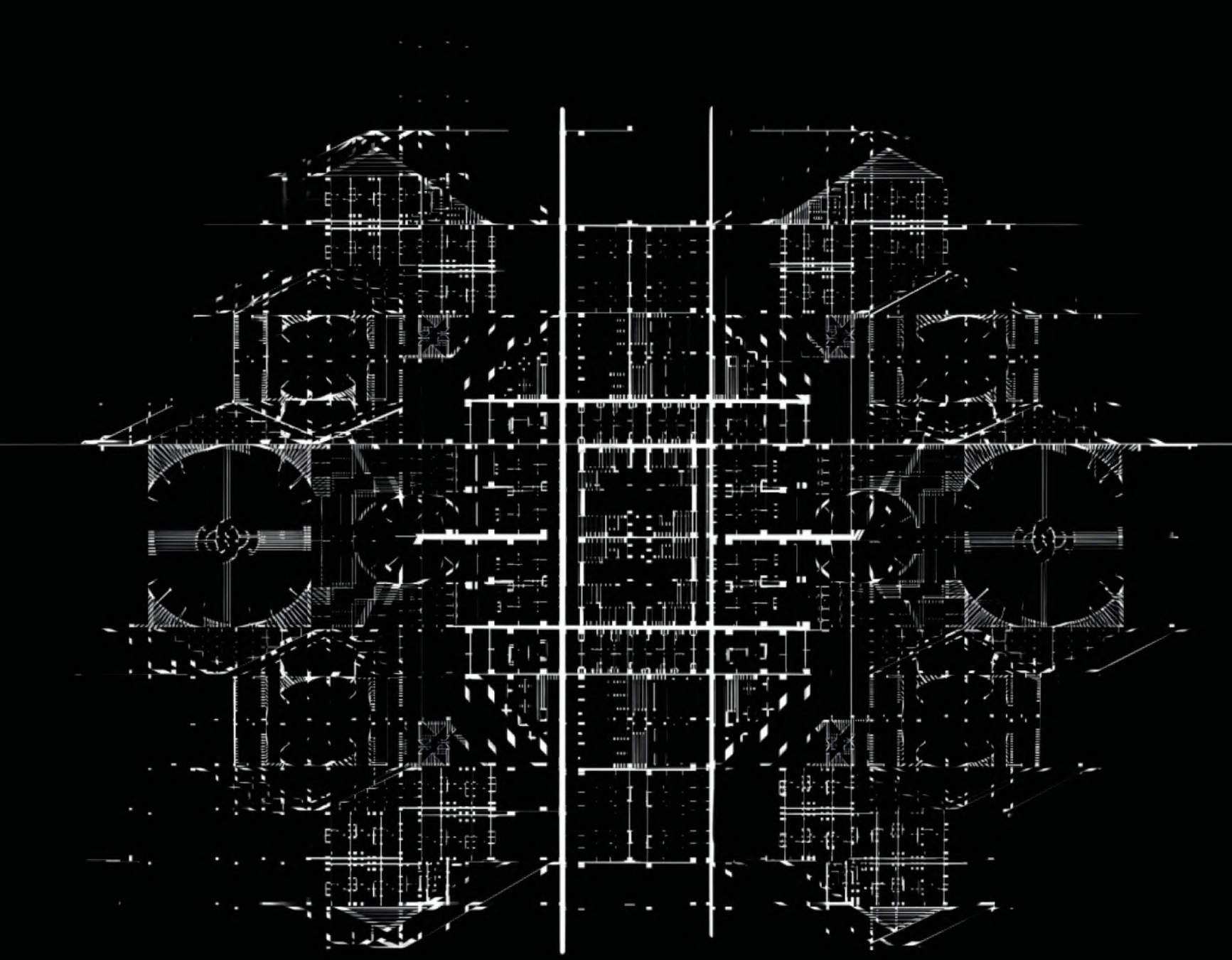
had reckoned that their tenants, many of whom were artists and intellectuals, would spend most of their time in the restaurant or the bar downstairs. They also made sure the tenants did not have to bother with household chores. There was a central kitchen on the ground floor, which would later be converted to a restaurant, from which meals would be delivered to the residential floors via a dumb waiter. With onsite services such as laundry and shoe polishing, Isokon rather resembled a good hotel. At various times, celebrity residents of this "commune" included Agatha Christie and her archaeologist husband Max Mallowan, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and a few Soviet spies and other unusual characters. Eventually the bar was remodelled into a residential flat, and the restaurant, once patronised by Naum Gabo and Henry Moore, was closed. Isokon is now a regular residential building. Only the long balconies and outdoor stairs serve as a reminder of the early days of the international style in architecture.

The Collective House (Kollektivhus), designed by Sven Markelius in Stockholm, Sweden, was probably the only successful and lasting house-commune experiment. Markelius, an influential Swedish modernist architect, was friends with Alva Myrdal, a prominent member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party and one of the creators of the Swedish welfare state. Myrdal convinced Markelius of the merits of her new housing concept, designed to give women more domestic liberty by freeing them from food preparation, cleaning, and childcare, and by providing socialisation opportunities and guaranteed gainful employment for young married women. The Soviet house-communes were also an influence. Markelius carefully studied the case of the Narkomfin house-commune in Moscow. Construction was completed in 1935 on Sweden's first collective house with communalised household services on Ericssongatan in Stockholm. Meals from the communal kitchen could be delivered to every flat via a dumb waiter. There was a kindergarten and a restaurant on the ground floor. The flats were designed to be very small, in line with the "minimal needs" concept. Despite expectations, there were no working-class members among the first tenants. They were all progressive thinkers and intellectuals, including Markelius himself, who would live in the Collective House for nearly 30 years (he had moved to Ericssongatan after a particularly traumatising divorce, leaving his modernist luxury villa to his ex-wife). All household services in the Kollektivhus were provided by hired staff, and this fact gutted the "social" edge of the concept. However, the collective household idea as such did take root in the country. Many hotels and apartment buildings were modelled on the cohousing concept after WWII, and it is relevant to this day in Sweden.



Ivan Shelyutto
Corlex, 2019
Pencil, paper
Provided by the author

PALACE SQUARE DID NOT TAKE ON THE ROLE OF THE MAIN SQUARE OF THE EMPIRE FROM THE VERY START. IN FACT, THIS CENTRE OF THE CAPITAL WAS AT VARIOUS TIMES A SHIPYARD, A PASTURE, AND A CONSTRUCTION SITE. ONLY IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY WAS PALACE SQUARE TRANSFORMED INTO AN IMPRESSIVE PUBLIC SPACE, AND LATER ON INTO A SPOT SACRED TO RUSSIAN HISTORY.

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OR
WHY NOT CHANGING ANYTHING IS DETRIMENTAL

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DAZIARO

1704

The Admiralty Shipyard is founded on the banks of the Neva River. The Admiralty itself was an actual fortress, with ramparts, bastions, and artillery. On the side of the Admiralty looking away from the Neva was, for a time, the Admiralty Meadow. In the 18th century it covered a large territory, including that of the future Palace Square. It was first used to store shipbuilding timber, but when it ceased to serve that function it became overgrown with grass, eventually being used as a pasture for livestock.

1708

Manors built for Navy officials begin appearing on the left bank of the Neva, along what would become Millionnaya Street. In this same area, where today we find the Hermitage Theatre, Peter I's winter residence is built in 1708. It was a wooden Winter Home, which four years later was rebuilt in stone for the Tsar's wedding to Yekaterina Alekseevna. This is the first Winter Palace in St Petersburg.

1721

A new plan is approved for the left bank of the Neva: five rays would emanate from the Admiralty and divide the territory into four segments. The site that would become Palace Square was girded by Pochtovaya Street (the future Millionnaya) and the road to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery (today's Nevsky Prospekt).

1731

Empress Anna Ioannovna finds Peter's old quarters to be tiresome and cramped, and orders a design for the third Winter Palace from Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli. The new residence is to be built on the territories of the two manors closest to the Admiralty – the manor of the General Admiral Fyodor Apraksin and that of diplomat Savva Raguzinsky – as well as a site belonging to the Naval Academy.
Anna Ioannovna organises carnivals, fairs, ice slides, public festivities with fireworks, and wine fountains in front of the palace.

1754

By the middle of the 18th century, the chaotically sprawling Winter Palace gives quite a strange impression: it is a crowd of buildings of various sizes and outbuildings spreading almost all the way to the Admiralty. Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, who likes splendour, comfort, and space, demands radical changes. On June 16, 1754, the new building design is approved, created by Rastrelli once again. The Admiralty Meadow becomes a giant construction site.

1762

Construction of the Winter Palace is completed. To clean up the construction site, St Petersburg residents are invited to take the rest of the building materials for free. Twenty-four hours later the meadow is clear.

1763

In his project for the new Winter Palace, Rastrelli includes a design for an adjacent square as well, one fit to stand beside the new royal residence. An equestrian statue of Peter I is to stand at its centre. After Catherine II comes to the throne this idea is abandoned.
In 1763, Aleksey Vasilievich Kvasov, main architect of the Stone Construction Commission, working on the plan for the central part of the city, suggests constructing several buildings in an amphitheatre formation opposite the Winter Palace. One of these buildings is still part of the General Staff Building, which was constructed later.

1766

Part of the meadow is paved, and public festivities and carousels begin to be held in front of the palace. In 17th- and 18th-century Europe, carousels are military equestrian games and dressage, a variation on the medieval knights' tournament turned into a theatrical performance. In 1766, Antonio Rinaldi builds a temporary wooden amphitheatre for several thousand people for just such a carousel.
The area is called Palace Square for the first time in 1766.

1787

Four hundred workers labouring on the granite embankment of the Fontanka River come to Palace Square. They want to hand a petition against the contractor to Catherine II in person, but the Empress does not come out to see them, sending negotiators instead. As a result, 17 workers are arrested and sent to trial, and the others decide to disperse.

1819

Karl Rossi designs the General Staff Building, the longest building in Europe at the moment of its construction. The existing buildings are simply incorporated into the new one. The eastern wing is to host the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Finances, and the western wing the Ministry of the Military and the General Staff Headquarters, which gives its name to the whole ensemble. Rossi is a master of the Empire style, which emerged in Russia under the influence of French architectural fashion. Ironically, the triumphal arch with the chariot symbolised Russia's victory over the French. Rossi himself writes: "The size of the project I propose surpasses that of the Romans' buildings. Should we not dare to compete with them in magnificence?"

1824

The wood-block pavements are entirely washed away from Palace Square during a destructive flood. Since then, with the exception of a period of asphalt in the 20th century, it has been paved in cobblestone.

1830S

St Petersburg dandies and smart dressers stroll along Palace Square and the Admiralty Boulevard. Emperor Alexander I introduced the fashion of strolling along the streets.

1834

The Alexander Column is erected to commemorate the Russian Army's victory in the 1812 Patriotic War. The monument is built to be higher than the famous Vendôme Column in Paris, and for that matter, higher than all the monoliths in the world. The total height of the column with the pedestal and the sculpture on its top is 47.5 metres, and the total weight is over 700 tonnes. Any other monument or equestrian statue would simply be lost in the vast expanse of Palace Square. The monument is fixed in position by its own weight. Numerous panegyrics are written for the occasion of the monument's unveiling.

The once great Trajan column
seems now small before it;
Though proud Rome marvel
at its empty splendours.
Here Russia to two Tsars
her due obeisance renders.

Dmitry Ivanovich Khvostov.
On the Erection of the Granite Column
for Emperor Alexander I. 1834

1840S

The drill hall is rebuilt into a headquarters for the Guard Corps. Between the Admiralty and the Winter Palace an area is set aside for the changing of the guard. The Admiralty Shipyard canals used to launch new ships into the Neva are filled in, and the Naval Ministry moves into the building.

1852

The ceremonial opening of the Imperial Museum is held. The Small Hermitage and Great Hermitage had long been overflowing with pieces from the huge imperial collection. German architect Leo von Klenze receives a commission to design the first building in Russia specifically intended to hold works of art – the New Hermitage. The museum is opened to the public during the reign of Alexander II.

1874

A city garden is established in front of the main facade of the Admiralty, effectively hiding the facade from the public. It is named the Alexander Garden, after Emperor Alexander II. The garden has a very sophisticated selection of plants and follows the latest trends in English garden fashion.

1897

The Winter Palace facades change colour: the ochre tones are abandoned for terracotta brick red ones. This colour palette is used for all the other buildings on the square as well.

1905

On January 9, a crowd of 140,000 workers march to Palace Square to hand a petition to Tsar Nicholas II. Instead, troops shoot into the crowd. The events of this day become known as "Bloody Sunday".

1917

After the February Revolution, the Winter Palace becomes the residence of the Provisional Government. On October 25, Bolshevik supporters come to Palace Square, take the Winter Palace by force during the night, and arrest the Provisional Government cabinet. Several days later, the former imperial residence and the Hermitage are nationalised. Those in charge debate the possibility of burying the victims of the revolution in Palace Square and erecting a monument to commemorate them. Thanks to a petition from the artistic community to the Petrograd Council, however, the new authorities become convinced that "the square is a complete architectural ensemble from an artistic point of view"..

1918

After the president of the Petrograd Cheka Moisei Uritsky is killed in one of the entrances to the General Staff Building, Palace Square is renamed Uritsky Square. The Winter Palace holds film screenings for workers, exhibits contemporary art in the staterooms, accommodates lectures, and opens up the interiors of former private living quarters to the public for viewing. A plaster monument to Aleksander Radichshev is erected in the square, the first monument created in Petrograd under the monument propaganda plan.

1920

The State Revolution Museum opens in the Winter Palace. Director Nikolai Evreinov stages a dramatisation of the events of 1917 in Palace Square, The Storming of the Winter Palace. The production is incredibly impressive in its scale, with the destroyed and starving Petrograd putting all its resources and efforts into the performance. The city's electric centre gathers almost all the lighting equipment in the city, enormous scenery is built, and crowds of actors and extras are let into the Winter Palace to rehearse. It is not the only large-scale theatrical performance, but it is certainly the most memorable.

1925

Ideas emerge of replacing the angel sculpture on the Alexander Column with a bronze figure of Lenin, a worker, or a Red Army soldier. Lunacharsky and his colleagues try to persuade everyone that the proletarian leader's statue would have to be draped in an antique toga, which the party activists find mind-boggling. The idea of putting a "revolution mausoleum" in the square is rejected as well.

I believe in the magic of a place, be it a city or a forest. This magic is too strong in St Petersburg to let Palace Square turn into something trivial or urban-bourgeois. All the "charm" (in the somewhat mystical and menacing sense of the word) of Palace Square comes from the fact that, just like St Petersburg, it is giant scenery. For me the place is associated with a deeply personal, terrifying, and dizzying experience of this city scenery. I was 18 years old and had just started studying at the university. I was completely obsessed with Andrei Bely and his Petersburg. On my way home from a party, during a snowstorm, in early twilight, I found myself in a completely empty Palace Square. I was coming from Millionnaya Street, struggling with the wind and snow, and there was not a living soul in sight. The city suddenly spread out before me: the square, the naked garden, and Saint Isaac's Cathedral in the distance. At that moment I felt as if I were the hero of the whole "St Petersburg" of Russian literature. The Petersburg of Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Bely. Compared to the scale and the magnificence of the St Petersburg scenery, any human becomes small. At that moment I felt outside of time, both an inhabitant of the city and its prisoner and victim. And even if I had never read anything in my life I would have felt the same emotions. Palace Square imposes dismay, loneliness, and an almost masochistic feeling of one's own nothingness. I think only Eisenstein managed to picture Palace Square differently. While dramatising one of the most important events in Russian history, he also proceeded from the sensation of spaciousness. But Eisenstein was congenial both to the subject and to the place. His art was congenial to the October Revolution. The Storming of the Winter Palace has been filmed many times since then, but all attempts at repeating the staging of this production have been somewhat forgotten. Eisenstein, however, managed to match his strength with that of the demiurges who had created Petersburg, as he was one himself. But there is another great and terrifying event connected with Palace Square that has not been properly staged and filmed. Bloody Sunday. It is comparable in scale and terror to the storming of the Winter Palace. It too, was, in some sense, a collision of people with the geometry of the city and the geometry of the empire.

Mikhail Trofimenkov, film critic

1927

For the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution, Sergei Eisenstein and Grigori Aleksandrov film the famous shots of the storming of the Winter Palace for the film October in the square. These shots are so impressive and convincing that they are repeated in paintings and used in other film reels, even as documentary footage. In the film, the storming is shown as an assault on the palace by a crowd of several thousand people running through the square, forcing open the main gate with its imperial emblems, and sweeping past it. In reality, the events of the night of October 25 to 26 were of a much smaller scale. An armed group of people made their way into the Winter Palace during the night, opening the other entrances for anyone who wanted to use them. There was no organised storming of the Winter Palace, nor was there really any at all, as the doors were open. And moreover, even if they wanted to, the invaders could not have symbolically abased the royal eagles on the gate, as Kerensky had the imperial symbols removed in September 1917.

1932

The cobblestone paving in Palace Square is replaced with asphalt. The fencing around the column is dismantled and melted to make bullets. Every year parades are held in the square to celebrate November 7 and May 1. To get to the area with the tribune, one has to have a special pass. The angel statue on the Alexander column is draped in a red tarpaulin or covered in balloons during the festivities.

1941

As of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, the basements of the Winter Palace are used as bomb shelters. Anti-aircraft batteries are placed in the Alexander Garden, but not a single tree is cut for firewood during the Siege. Only two-thirds of the Alexander Column is covered; the angel and the monument are "wounded" by shells several times.

1944

The Winter Palace is partially opened to the public, and the square's historical name is restored. After the war, the buildings in Palace Square are repainted in bright colours.

1950s

Until the mid-1950s there are Chinese street vendors in Palace Square selling paper toys from small carts.

1977

In accordance with a redesign by Gennady Nikanorovich Buldakov, the square's cobblestones are restored, as are the lampposts around the Alexander Column.

1990

A huge anti-Communist rally is held in Palace Square. Protesters demand, among other things, that the city return to its historical name.

1991

A coup d'état is attempted on August 19. A self-proclaimed government authority – the GKChP (State Committee on the State of Emergency) – speaks out against Gorbachev's policy of Perestroika. On August 20, more than 100,000 people come to Palace Square to protest against the actions of the GKChP. It's possible that square has never before seen so many people at once.

1993

After the Russian Constitutional Crisis of October 1993, Palace Square holds several political rallies. But by the mid-1990s the space has mostly become part of the city's everyday activities. The State Hermitage takes over the eastern wing of the General Staff Building. During the shooting of the movie GoldenEye, a tank rides through the square, driven by James Bond. European artists hold art performances in front of the Winter Palace, and rollerskaters and skateboarders ride around the square.

2000s

In the first decade of the new century, entertainment promoters become aware of Palace Square's potential. Soon it becomes a venue for concerts and shows. Among the legendary artists who perform in Palace Square are Madonna, Paul McCartney, Elton John, and Roger Waters. In 2007 an ice-skating rink is constructed around the Alexander Column. Unfortunately, the impact of these events on the architectural and historical monuments is often lamentable.

2010s

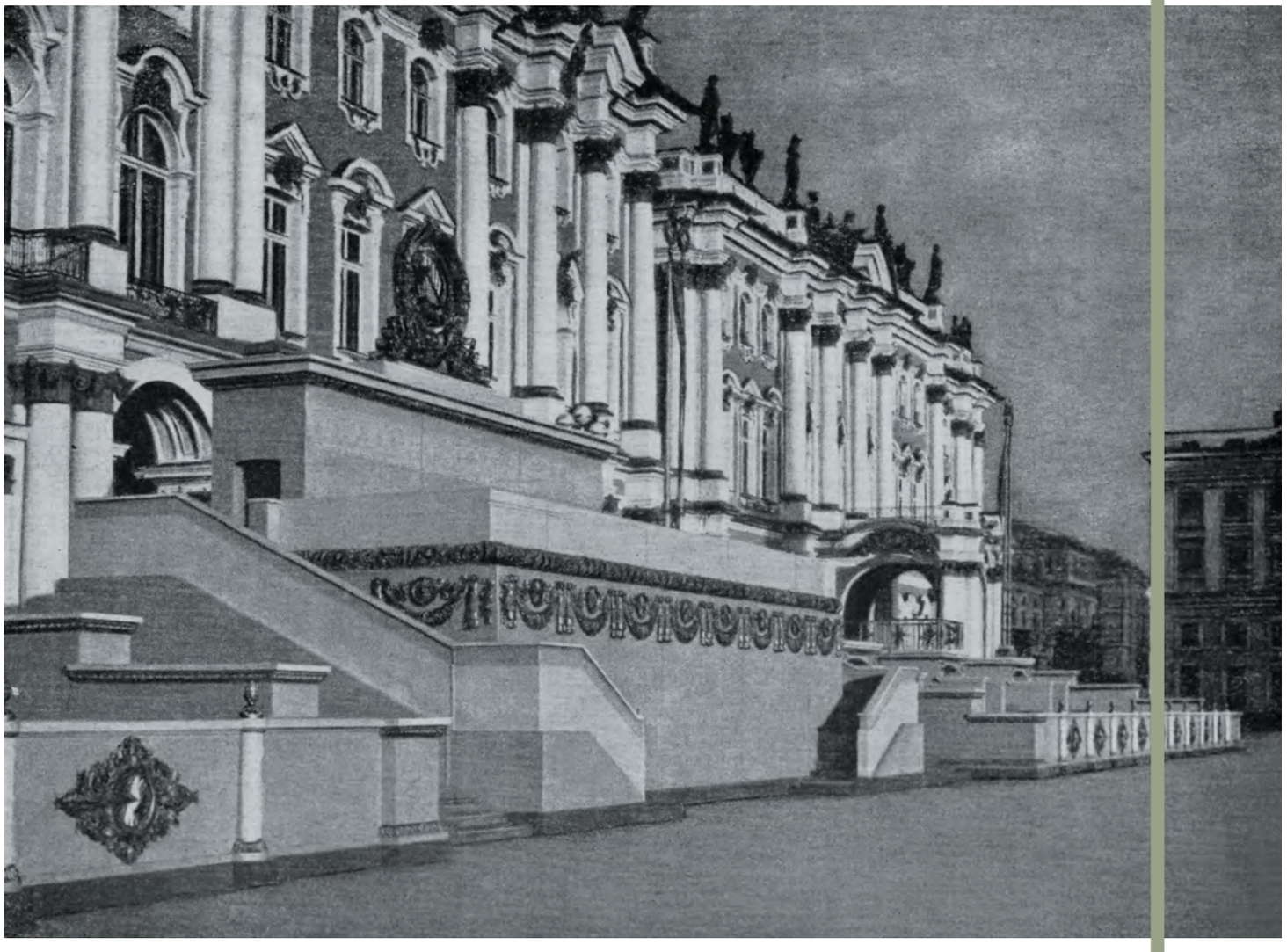
Reconstruction of the eastern wing of the General Staff Building is completed, and the Hermitage's collection of 19th- and 20th-century art moves to its new home. In 2016, the Shuvalov Passage – the walkway between the New and Small Hermitages – is opened for the first time.

Compiled by Ksenia Malich

Barbara Sergeyevna Speranskaya[1], is the daughter of famous Leningrad architect Sergei Speransky.
In the 1950s, Sergei Speransky designed a reviewing stand for events on Palace Square.

T H E T R I B U N E

Assembled tribunes on the Palace Square. 1952
Photo from the book "Yearbook of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects." L.-M.: State Publishing House on Construction and Architecture 1953

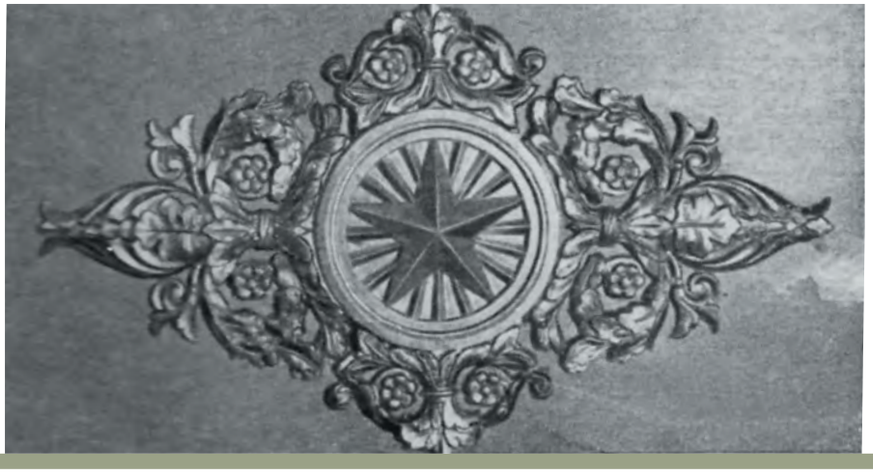


1 S. Speranskaya is an architectural historian with a PhD in art history. She has been named an Honoured Higher Education Worker of the Russian Federation, and is a member of the Artists' Union of Russia and the Association of Art Critics, as well as a professor in the Design Department of St Petersburg State University's Faculty of Arts. She is also the daughter of preeminent Leningrad architect Sergei Speransky, and the granddaughter of sculptor Victor Sinaisky.

2 Carl Rossi designed the General Staff Building. Francesco Rastrelli designed the Winter Palace. Andreyan Zakharov designed the Admiralty building across the street from Palace Square.

3 May 1 and 9 (International Workers' Day and Victory Day) and November 7 (the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution) were the main holidays in the USSR.

4 Fomin, Ivan Aleksandrovich (1872–1936) was a Russian and Soviet architect.



The detail of the tribune. 1952
Photo from the book "Yearbook of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects." L.-M.: State Publishing House on Construction and Architecture, 1953

"Dad always took part in the demonstrations. I didn't like demonstrations, but I joined them to be with my dad. My father, Sergei Borisovich Speransky, never took a special pass to the stands; we always went with the crowd. The only time we got a special pass was in 1952, when he designed the viewing stand for Palace Square. I felt overwhelmed with pride next to my father that day, that he had made the stand. It was one of his first major independent projects, and he was still very young at the time. The whole family was proud of this high-profile and significant achievement. I remember Dad drawing an array of versions. He would always draw the structures freehand rather than using a t-square or a ruling pen. He had tracing paper, sepia ink, and pencils. My father had a real passion for drawing. David Sargsyan called him an adherent of 'manual architecture'. My father carefully studied the stands at the Kremlin Mausoleum, in Yerevan, and the old ones in Leningrad. His aim was to create a structure which would blend in with the area, with Rossi in front, Rastrelli behind, and Zakharov across the street[2].
The tribune turned out solemn and imposing, with elaborately ornamental cast-bronze decor. These days it also seems to me that it was poised and balanced. The colour was ochre, echoing the yellow of the General Staff Building. As an adult, I often recalled Mandelstam's 'Above the yellow of administrative buildings...'.
The stand was assembled twice a year for the public holidays in May and November.[3] The difficulty was that the tribune had to be expertly engineered – simple to disassemble and reassemble – and at the same time evoke the feeling of a monument. The reviewing stand consisted of a steel structure with two sections on top. It was quick and easy to dismantle thanks to special wheels and guide rails for docking. The joints were hidden under decorated panels.
I believe that Speransky's tribune was used until the early 1960s, when the style became irrelevant and almost disturbing. In the years of Krushchev's thaw, I longed for the lost 1920s with their unfulfilled potential. The new reviewing stand was designed by architect Sergei Mikhailov, who had worked in father's studio for quite a long time.
I was a teenager at the time and, sadly, I never asked Dad how he felt about the tribune being replaced. As strange as it may sound, he was a classicist at heart, despite the fact that he is mostly associated with modern architecture. This explained his attachment to Ivan Fomin[4]. Dad loved our city."

The sculptural decoration of the assembled tribune. 1952
Photo from the book " Yearbook of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects." L.-M.: State Publishing House on Construction and Architecture,1953

The detail of the tribune. 1952
Photo from the book " Yearbook of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Soviet Architects." L.-M.: State Publishing House on Construction and Architecture, 1953

PHOTO: N.P. ERMAKOVA. FROM THE ARCHIVE OF K.P. RYAZANOV.
THE SOURCE: PASTVU.COM

The Palace square. 1 MAY 1956

Пропуск на площадь Урицкого
1 мая 1938
Из личного архива
В. М. Хлебниковой

"When I grew up, I began working at LenZNIIEP, in the Department of Scientific and Technical Information. The institute was located in the East Wing of the General Staff Building, where some of the Hermitage's collection is now housed. Our offices looked out on the Moyka River. We would leave the building for lunch and duck into the courtyard next door to a cafeteria we nicknamed 'the trash heap'. It was once a restaurant for a while. LenZNIIEP's premises, corridors, and workshops were purely bureaucratic, but the West Wing of the General Staff Building had a somewhat mystical, enigmatic air. One day I was granted a pass to have a look at some archival materials there. I remember Rossi's amazingly beautiful cast-iron staircases that were still there. The square itself was empty. Once I was on my way home very late, during the winter exam period, when our bus skidded and spun, ending up right next to the Alexander Column. The square was paved in asphalt at the time. The decorative paving of the central part of the square, designed by then chief architect of the city Gennady Buldakov, was done later."

Tribune at the Winter Palace.

The General Staff Building with the portraits of the leaders.
1956

PHOTO: N.P. ERMAKOVA. FROM THE ARCHIVE OF K.P. RYAZANOV. THE SOURCE: PASTVU.COM

PHOTO: N.P. ERMAKOVA. FROM THE ARCHIVE OF K.P. RYAZANOV. THE SOURCE: PASTVU.COM

NIKITA YELISEYEV,
HEAD BIBLIOGRAPHER AT THE RUSSIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY, LITERARY CRITIC, TRANSLATOR

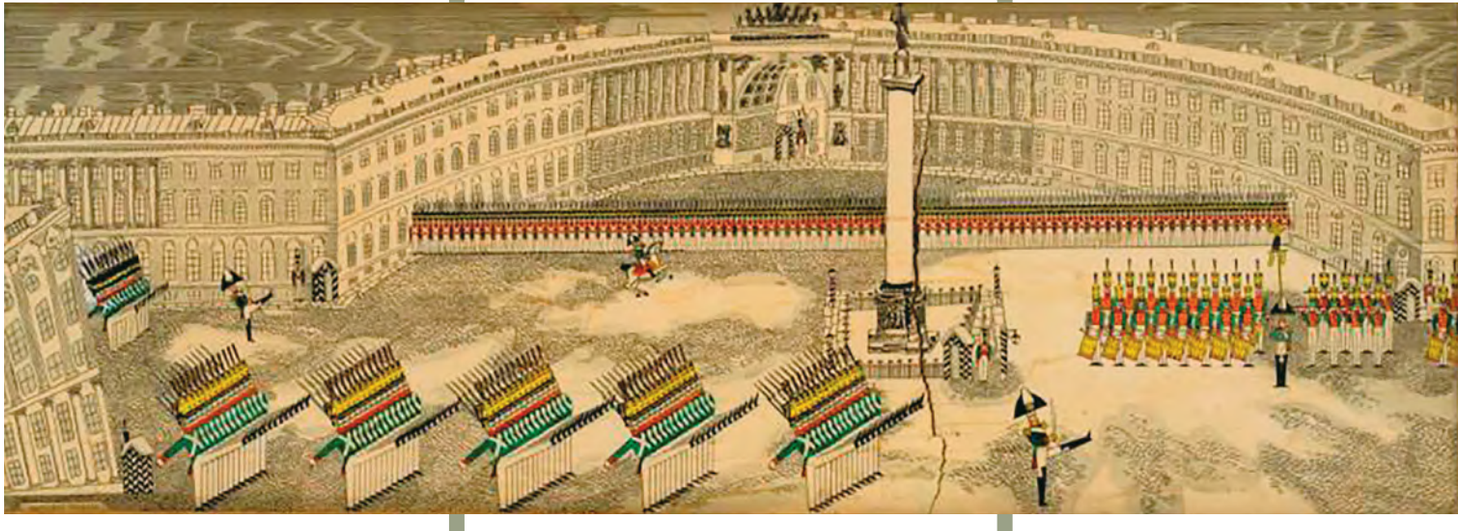
CENOTAPH

ONCE, WHEN I WAS A YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENT IN THE SOVIET UNION, I CAME ACROSS AN ARTICLE TITLED "LENIN ON ROMANIA" IN SOME ANTHOLOGY. THE BEGINNING OF THAT ARTICLE WAS PURE GENIUS. IT WENT: "NOT A SINGLE GENERAL WORK ON ROMANIA CAN BE FOUND IN LENIN'S ENTIRE BODY OF WORK". (WELL, I'LL BE! WHO COULD HAVE IMAGINED?) PALACE SQUARE, QUITE POSSIBLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOT IN ST PETERSBURG, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DILIGENTLY ESCHEWED BY THE ENTIRE BODY OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE. IT APPEARS AS IF RUSSIAN WRITERS AND POETS CONSISTENTLY STEER CLEAR OF PALACE SQUARE. BUT I WONDER WHY? THIS BOWTIE OF A SQUARE, PINNED TO THE CITY BY AN ANGEL-TOPPED COLUMN, MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN INVISIBLE FOR ALL THE ATTENTION IT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE RUSSIAN LITERATI. THE PETER AND PAUL FORTRESS, THE GOLDEN SHIP ATOP THE ADMIRALTY SPIRE, THE BRONZE HORSEMAN – THEY HAVE ALL MADE THEIR WAY INTO WORDS. BUT NOT THIS SQUARE.

And it is an amazing square. One of the best connoisseurs of architecture in general and St Petersburg architecture in particular, Alexei Leporc, once told me, "You know, contrary to popular belief, St Petersburg is not a classicist town. There are very few towns built in the classicist style in the world. Just picture a great big town, all classicist. How would you feel in a town like that?" I pictured one and I had to concur, "You're right. It would look eerie. De Chirico on dope…" "The only thoroughgoing classicist architectural complex in the world is one small and very green town by the name of Kassel, in the south of Germany," Leporc continued. "St Petersburg does have a magnificent classicist complex of its own. That is Ulitsa Rossi and its adjacent square. On the whole, however, St Petersburg is not even an art nouveau town. Its architectural style is eclecticism. In this lies St Petersburg's secret, or its architectural paradox, if you prefer: this town does not come across as an eclectic town, like Moscow, for instance. Don't you agree? Our city looks classy and stylistically consistent. And it has a style all its own. Anything different that finds itself amid this style somehow miraculously becomes this style. Either that, or it will look so out of place that it offends the eye. The eye gets accustomed to it later, though…"

Right then it occurred to me that Palace Square must be a token and symbol of that very architectural paradox. This square is eclecticism incarnate, and it's a militant brand of eclecticism. Here we have a baroque façade confronting Rossi's rigorous classical semicircle, with some nondescript building (definitely not an architectural chef d'oeuvre) on one side and the open green space of the Alexander Gardens on the other. When the municipal assembly decided to plant a park in front of the Admiralty it sparked an angry uproar. Many an opinion leader came to the defence of the existing architectural cityscape, led by the Mir Iskusstva artists, arguing that the trees would obscure Zakharov's great masterpiece and disrupt the harmonious ensemble of the long, broad vista connecting Palace Square and Senate Square. But young mothers needed a place to wheel their babies around in a pram. And the dusty, stone-clad city needed some air to breathe. So the park was planted, obscuring or disrupting exactly nothing. It fit right in with the overall architecture, though architectural harmony was not even the intention. The decision-makers had only mothers with prams and the stone-clad city's green lungs on their mind.

We're onto something here – the most surprising thing. The unity of a style made up of many different styles was in this case followed instinctively, just as the city's main square had once been instinctively moved away from the river, which is more like a fast-



flowing lake. St Petersburg has continually turned away from the element of water, in which Peter the Great had striven to soak the town and then the whole country. Like a nomad who, having reached a body of water and is unable to go any further, reclines with his back to it. The square's stylish elegance just happened of its own accord. And it happened at the precise moment when the column with the sorrowful downcast angel on top, inscribed "To Alexander the First from a grateful Russia" and celebrating the 1812 victory over Napoleon, pinned it to the city forever.

How do you miss something like this? Artists, draftsmen, photographers, and filmmakers didn't. Especially the filmmakers, particularly after Eisenstein and his scene with the storming of the Winter Palace. Black pea-coats running across the square! Never mind that no storming had ever actually happened. When they took Eisenstein to see the embankment-facing door which the black pea-coats had kicked down before arresting the Provisional Government ministers and the staircase the black pea-coats had used, he was disappointed. "There's no room for a crowd scene here," he complained. No matter. The footage really packs a punch. Fits ever so elegantly into an elegant square!

But the writers did. Miss it, I mean. Has nothing ever happened in this square? Pardon me, but the Decembrists were interrogated in the General Staff Building. Not impressed? Only Senate Square and Peter and Paul Fortress are true mementos of the Decembrist failure? How about this: a great Russian historian, creator of one of the very few holistic philosophies of Russian history, author of the satirical tale Animal Insurgency – about animals rising up against humans; the leaders of the insurgency, the pigs, end up building a rigidly hierarchical, authoritarian system with themselves at the top (no, Orwell was not aware, and could not have been aware of this satire) – was killed in Palace Square. Nikolai Kostomarov, who had views similar to the Narodnaya Volya anti-tsarist movement, was walking across Palace Square when a speeding horse-drawn carriage swerving out of the General Staff Building's archway knocked him over, killing him. The Petrograd Extraordinary Commission (the Cheka) was housed in the General Staff Building for a while after 1917. It was here that Leonid Kannegieser assassinated Cheka chairman Moses Uritsky, who was one of the few Bolsheviks (especially in the Cheka) who objected to mass persecutions. With no one left to hold it back, this assassination marked the beginning of the unbridled "Red Terror".

Illustrations to the novel
by A. Ivanov "Stereoscope"
Artist E. Smirnova-Ivanova
1918

←

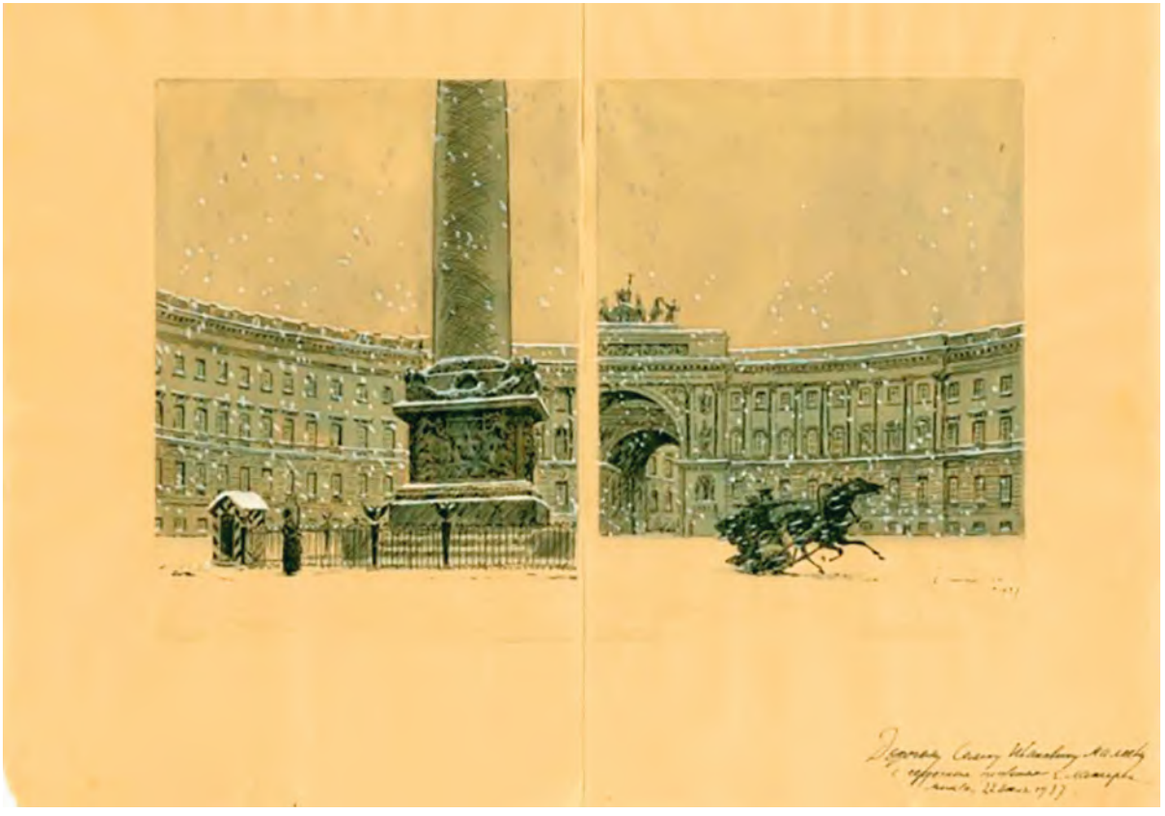
Arkadiy Tyurin
Sketch for the cartoon Left-Hander.
The Palace Square
1964
Paper, plywood, ink, pen
50 × 146 cm
From the collection of the State museum
exhibition centre "ROSIZO"

Palace Square is not just a fine, elegant plaza that positively begs to be portrayed in words and images. Many an important event unfolded here, most of them tragic. But protesters were not shot here on Bloody Sunday, 9 January 1905 – they were mowed down nearby, on Nevsky Prospekt and in the Alexander Gardens. In August 1914, Tsar Nicholas II spoke from the balcony of his palace, addressing a spontaneous patriotic rally that had gathered in Palace Square, naturally, without any prior notice or approval, unlike the march on January 9. Following the firebrand royal address, the crowd dispersed across the city, demolishing German-owned stores and stalls, of which there was no dearth in St Petersburg. So intense was the patriotic hoopla that the angry mob also attacked the German Embassy in Mariinsky Square. The stone chariot on the roof's pediment was pulled down and destroyed. What a romp! And it all started on Palace Square.

And yet great Russian literature turned a blind eye. Well, it grazed the surface. There was just one point of contact, but what a point! When the square's architectural mise en place was already complete, except for the ever-so-gentle touch – just a shade – of green from the future park, the engineering miracle of the Alexandrian Column went up. It was this ogival edifice that finally tore through the literary indifference, carving out for itself a somewhat iconic, and perhaps therefore less conspicuous, place in the flesh of Russian literature.

The countless graphomaniacal odes do not count, as they belong more in the domain of political propaganda than literature. This column has carved itself into Russian literature like it carved itself into the square. "I've reared myself a monument not built by human hands. The people's path to it cannot be overgrown. With insubmissive head far loftier it stands than Alexander's columned stone." How did the censors let this slide? They probably rationalised it in the same way a modern Pushkin scholar would. "What's the problem? This is just a loose translation of Horace's Ode 3.30… Horace says 'loftier than the pyramids,' and Pushkin – 'loftier than the Alexandrian Column'. It's in Alexandria, the town in Egypt". Sure. Egypt.

In this day and age, that would translate into some poet claiming he has built himself a monument standing loftier than… Mamai Hill. If you say something like this,



Eugene Lanceray
The Palace Square. Illustration to the novel by Leo Tolstoy Hadji Murat 1914
1937
Paper, lithography, white, graphite pencil, watercolor
Вертикальный размер листа: 26,9 см
Vertical sheet size: 26.9 cm
Horizontal sheet size: 34.2 cm
From the collection of the Yaroslavl Art Museum

prepare to be murdered on the spot. And they would not listen to pathetic excuses like "I was referring to the burial mound of Khan Mamai in Mongolia. You misunderstood!"

By the way, this was an important subject for Pushkin in his later creative period. With this statement, he put forward an objection to Derzhavin's saturnine ante-mortem ode wherein his old mentor lamented that everything would be "devoured by the maw of time" and nothing would escape the common destiny, not even those things that are "hallowed by the sounds of the lyre or the trumpet". Wrong, Pushkin was saying. The Majestic Word will abide. Pushkin crafted the finale of his Poltava the way he did for the same reason, adding certain lines and some bold commentary in prose. And again, the censors, who would normally walk all over what Pushkin produced, left the controversial bit untouched. "From time to time a blind Ukrainian singer, while he strums the Hetman's songs for people in the crowd, will let young Cossack women hear the story of the sinful maiden" – "the Hetman's reflections have value beyond a merely historical perspective". What is this about? Methinks the poet is telling us that everything is gone. "Swedes, Russians stabbing, slashing, cutting..." – all is gone. The glory of the nation, separatism, riots, assassinations, executions... all gone. What is left? The Hetman's songs. For he – enemy of the state, separatist, and insurgent, who rose up against the Tsar flying the "flag of gory freedom", old lecher and murderer of his father-in-law, with blood caked forever in his sumptuous moustache – is a poet. Time forgives Poets since Poets are equidimensional to Time. What else is left? The sinful, criminal love of a young maiden for this old enemy of the state. But it is love – even Christ would absolve them.

Such was the needle with which the Alexandrian Column – the centrepiece and conceptual focus of Palace Square – pierced the body of Russian literature. After this, it is no wonder Russian litterateurs steered clear of it – for fear of a pinprick. It's literary instinct. A genius loci marked by a genius of poetry. Where Palace Square does make an appearance in Russian literature, it

comes without the column. One example is The Egyptian Stamp by Osip Mandelstam: "There is something about St Petersburg in May that reminds one of an inquiry bureau that will answer no inquiries, and this feeling is the strongest in the vicinity of Palace Square. Here, everything looks frighteningly prepared for the beginning of a historic meeting, complete with white sheets of paper, sharpened pencils, and a carafe of boiled water.

I repeat one more time: the grandeur of this place lies in the fact that no inquiries are ever answered, not for anyone.

At this time, a group of deaf and mute people were walking across the square, spinning their quick yarn with their hands. They were talking. The oldest one was steering the dinghy, but he had help. Every now and then a boy would run up to him, splaying his fingers in such a manner as if asking to have some diagonally woven thread lifted off of them carefully without disturbing the weave. There were four of them, and they were evidently entitled to five skeins. There was one skein to spare. They were talking in the language of swallows and beggars. Incessantly sewing up the air with large stitches, they were making a shirt out of it.

The elder, in his fury, mixed up the entire yarn.

As the deaf and mute disappeared in the archway of the General Staff Building, they continued to spin their yarn, but now much calmer, as if sending out homing pigeons in different directions".

The arch of the General Staff Building is registered, but not the column. And what a strange metaphor: "An inquiry bureau that will answer no inquiries". And it is reiterated: "The grandeur of this place lies in the fact that no inquiries are ever answered, not for anyone". And reiterated again with the deaf and mute walking across the square. Deafness and muteness. This inquiry bureau is supposed to give information on request, but, for some reason, it will not.

Palace Square was featured in the 1909 short story Stereoscope by Alexander Ivanov, which is one of the most amazing short stories ever written in Russian. Alexander Blok writes about it: "Stereoscope is really growing on me… I think that, alongside Bryusov's prose writings, it belongs among Russian literature's pioneering 'scientific' experiments in letters. Of all our writers in the past, only Pushkin had foreshadowed these methods and this kind of language". Another poet, Maximilian Voloshin, gave the short story a rave review. An attentive reader will discover inspiration from Stereoscope in a certain Mikhail Kuzmin poem from his later years, in Nabokov's short story The Visit to the Museum, and in Kharms' novella The Old Woman.

This is despite the fact that the plot of Stereoscope is rather unremarkable. Its fighting stance is superb, but the strike disappoints… like a hammer on the magic stereoscope. The same attentive reader could not help noticing that both Nabokov and Kharms correct the mistakes, matching the good fighting stance with an equally good and genuine strike. In the short story, a man purchases a stereoscope only to discover that the device is sealed tight. There is only one picture inside, and no other pictures can be inserted. He is supposed to stare at this one photograph – a room in the Hermitage – forever. The man stares at the room and suddenly remembers: this is the room his father had taken him to when he was four years old. More surprisingly, the photo had been taken on that very day. So he keeps staring at the picture, unable to take his eyes off of it, and suddenly finds himself back there, in the past. Except that this is some kind of dead, petrified past. He strolls along the rooms filled with petrified visitors and walks out into the street. "I saw a lane going off to my left, a familiar lane yet alien and frightening the way familiar places sometimes appear in our dreams. A vast square with a column in the middle opened up on the right. I have seen it so many times, but now it looked distorted by slumberous imaginings. Everything I saw was in deathly brown hues: the pavement, the sidewalks, the long rows of buildings, the misty cathedral in the distance, and the bleak sky above. I walked down the porch steps: the pavement looked dry, yet there were puddles here and there, some with frozen ripples, others smooth as mirrors; these latter ones reflected the buildings in ghostly images. The air around me was motionless, but it was much colder than inside… As I walked I saw other people, frozen in their tracks in strange poses: one leg extended forward, the tip of the foot pointed up, the other leg pushed back. When I looked closer, I realized that a strong wind had incomprehensibly frozen in the deadly quiet of the air, for their overcoats flew behind them and billowed motionlessly, and some were leaning forward and holding their hats in place. It was the wind of the past".

The protagonist had found himself in the land of the dead. Or a dead land. A place long gone but forever frozen by the miracle of the magic stereoscope. A deaf and mute place that will answer no inquiries. His progress across this dead city began in a vast square with a column in the middle. Why there? Accidentally or coincidentally? I do not think so. Rather, I do not feel so. I was walking down Palace Embankment once; I looked up and shivered involuntarily when I noticed a headstone on the rooftop. A graveyard sculpture. An angel with its head inclined, holding a cross. This angel was such a typical gravestone angel that it gave me the creeps. A gravestone on the roof? This can't be real. I stood there, flabbergasted, for some seconds or a minute, before it struck me: this is the Alexandrian Column angel!

And something else struck me some time later: this column with the mournful angel on the top really is a gravestone on a non-existent grave – a cenotaph. The younger brother (Nicholas) had this monument erected for his older brother (Alexander) upon his passing. The inscription also fits the common run of epitaphs: "From grateful co-workers", "From grieving pupils", "From the loving widow and children" – "To Alexander the First from a grateful Russia". Pushkin's other bold and all but sacrilegious message dawned on me then as well. Alexander I had sent him into exile for what today would probably amount to a "like" or a "share". All Pushkin did was write "Lesson for the Tsars" on a portrait of Louvel, the assassin of Charles Ferdinand d'Artois, Duke of Berry, the younger son of the future Charles X of France, and passed it from person to person across the rows in a theatre. That's extremism. Terrorist propaganda. Two years! Oops, wait… Off you go into exile!

Pushkin's Exegi Monumentum is an epitaph, Pushkin's own post-mortem written when he was still alive. The message is: "My tombstone will be taller than yours, for it is not made by human hands…" And now we get to the "inquiry bureau that will not answer any inquiries": they do not answer inquiries in a graveyard, by a cenotaph. The grave is deaf, deaf and mute. Now we know why Ivanov's protagonist begins his tour of the city of the dead in the vast square with a column in the middle. And we know why people have feared to touch this square or this column with the written word. The genius loci, the sorrowful angel atop the cenotaph, will not allow it. Unless it will. But not for everyone.

A RESIDENT OF THE SQUARE

DAZIARO

YULIA DEMIDENKO,
HISTORIAN AND ART CRITIC

IT IS CUSTOMARY TO REFER TO ST PETERSBURG AS THE "IMPERIAL CAPITAL", AND IT IS CONVENIENT TO EMBRACE THE STEREOTYPE THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE WINTER PALACE ONCE WAS INHABITED EXCLUSIVELY BY MEMBERS OF SOCIETY'S ARISTOCRATIC ELITE. IN REALITY, ST PETERSBURG WAS ALWAYS AN EGALITARIAN CITY, IN ITS OWN WAY. THE ARCHITECT IVAN KVASOV, WHO DESIGNED THE EARLIEST LAYOUT OF PALACE SQUARE, HAD HIS OWN HOUSE BUILT RIGHT IN THE SQUARE, INSIDE THE BLOCK FACING THE MOIKA RIVER. FOREIGN VISITORS IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT EVEN A REGULAR CRAFTSMAN, WITH SOME LUCK, COULD ACHIEVE PROSPERITY AND MOVE TO THE CENTRE OF THE CAPITAL. THE ITALIAN ÉMIGRÉ GIUSEPPE DAZIARO WAS ONE OF SUCH SUCCESS STORIES.

"What denizen of the capital does not know this name? Who has not stopped before the mirrored windows of the art shop with its magnificent prints, paintings, and drawings?" This was what contemporaries wrote about "Daziaro", the most famous art shop in old Petersburg, named after its owner and located at 1 Nevsky Prospekt.

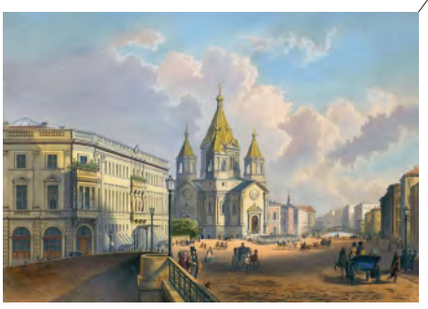
Beautiful scenic views played an important part in the career of this Russified Italian who was a subject of Austria. Giuseppe Daziaro was from a renowned family, which, though it could not boast a noble lineage or wealth, was distinguished by its excellent health and strong legs. These qualities got Giuseppe a position with the Remondini publishing house as a seller and deliverer, travelling from place to place with boxes full of books, maps, playing cards, and most importantly, prints. Beautiful views of cities, old and new, western and eastern, were especially popular.

The book trade was a profitable business in those days, and Daziaro saved up enough money to open his own shop in Moscow selling books, maps, and prints. Three years later, he was registered as a Moscow merchant of the 3rd guild, which required a certain amount of capital. He changed his name from Giuseppe to the more Russian-sounding Iosif Khristoforovich. The astute Daziaro soon realised that to expand his business he had to move to the capital, and in 1845–1846 he opened a shop in Petersburg.

Daziaro was such a tireless worker that a complete list of his prints has yet to be made. He published portraits of theatre actors, royalty and clergy, writers and musicians, pictures of national costumes and carriages of Russia and Poland, scenes from everyday life, and battle scenes, not to mention collections with "racy" subjects... But most important were his scenic views, mainly of the two Russian capitals of Moscow and Petersburg; they were eagerly sought after both at home and abroad.

Daziaro proved to be a true entrepreneurial genius, tirelessly trying out one business model after another. He sold his views in sets and separately, painted and unpainted, collected in albums with lavish binding and in thin paper booklets; the same view was reproduced in different sizes; he began to use city views in the design of letter paper, anticipating the invention of scenic postcards. This was a product tailored to suit any wallet, something by no means unimportant in the era of the universal fashion for lithographic prints. When photography was

The Daziaro shop. Kuznetsky Most, Moscow
EARLY XX CENTURY



Views of St Petersburg. The Daziaro publishing house

invented, Daziaro also began ordering photo prints of portraits, national costumes, and of course with scenic views. Foreign artists painted views of Petersburg with French flair for foreign customers, while Russian artists worked for the local market. Critics called the efforts of the Russians "the equal of the finest foreign ones".

At the end of the 1840s, the publishing house moved to 1 Nevsky Prospekt, the house of the bookseller Greff, and opened a shop named "Daziaro". Nevsky was where the Russian Empire put on a display for Europe, and where Europe was displayed for the Empire. Daziaro embodied this rhetorical formula in visible form: in 1854, he commissioned the architect Joseph Charlemagne to design enormous windows for the building, in which not a centimetre was wasted – even the partitions between the windows were used to display prints and small photographs.

The window displays proved to be a great success – from 1854 to the 1910s, crowds unfailingly gathered to gawk at the latest novelties from abroad, ogle portraits of celebrities, and learn about the latest fashions in the arts capital of the world – Paris. Art lovers turned their backs to the imperial palace in the most disrespectful manner. But the palace residents did not take offence, as they were among the firm's most devoted clients, and were also known to do the same from time to time.

Many preferred Daziaro's window displays to exhibitions at the Academy of Arts; it became a fashionable place for strolls and rendezvous. The Italian's staff turned the displays into a sort of city newspaper, featuring views and portraits relevant to goings-on in the city, and thus city residents were able to find out about weddings and funerals, official appointments, and concerts and anniversary celebrations at a print shop.

Views of St Petersburg.
The Daziaro publishing house

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Fan. China, *1830–1870s*
Screen: paper, silver, painting by colour wash.
Fan guards: mother-of-pearl, carving.

PALACE SQUARE –

Winy Maas

architect:

Palace Square is a space of infinity

PHOTO: © CHRISTIAAN KROUWELS

— MONUMENT OR STAGE?

Grandiosity

Palace Square is grand. It is exceedingly beautiful as a space. It is one of the most iconic and remarkable spaces in the world. Its drama and its existence alone are already impressive.

Silence

In the centre of St Petersburg all the streets are generally lively and full. And yet there is one empty place: Palace Square. I would advocate that all the streets surrounding it remain somehow busy, and then when you got to Palace Square there would be a sense of relief. Or maybe people would come here to protest…

I love Palace Square at night, or on quiet days, when you can hear the voices of the other people. It must be the most silent square in the world. A real breath of fresh air. So much better than Times Square in New York! There's something poetic about the time after the first snowfall, when you can hear it crunching under the feet of the other passers-by. That's my biggest association with Palace Square. Maybe we could make even the stone and asphalt softer here somehow, make little holes in it, and then the square would be the best sound absorber on the planet.

Sky

The only thing about this place that bothers me is the Alexandrian Column. I am not sure if Alexander I is the man whose monument should be here. Was he really such an outstanding political leader? One might argue that the most important place in St Petersburg should have a monument to its most important person – Peter the Great.

Let's imagine some other monument here. Maybe it should be a thin column, more than 200 metres high, which rises up into the clouds but is almost invisible, as it is covered in mirrors. There could be a statue of Peter the Great on top, and a lift could take people to an observation deck up there. It could be a metaphor for harmony between Heaven and Earth, joined together by Peter in the beauty of St Petersburg. Such a monument would be more poetic, elegant, and dramatic; it would indeed do justice to the scale and significance of this place.

Infinity

If something like that were to be done, I would suggest a new pavement for the square to replace the current rather unsuccessful one of stone and asphalt… There could be atomisers, both to keep the square clean and to create a fog around the column to give the landscape a dramatic effect. They would also help keep it cool. It would be a playful element, causing people to contemplate the square, the sky, infinity, and Peter as part of this infinity…

Art

With such a monument the square itself would become a work of art – and a part of the Hermitage. Visiting the Hermitage with its vast collections hidden in the thousands of rooms of the buildings surrounding the square is an emotional and somewhat tiring experience. Entering an open space brings relief. We can think about what we just saw in the museum in peace. Maybe Palace Square can be made into a place where people can come to psychologically and intellectually evaluate their experience after visiting the Hermitage. It could be a place of contrast to the busy and crowded museum, a place of peace.

Thousands of doors

There is of course a risk that Palace Square could become like St Mark's square in Venice, with its endless queues. But the Hermitage could likely avoid all of that by opening more of its doors to visitors. The flow of people would be broken up and there would be more conceptual focal points. Each entrance could be a starting point for a different part of the collection, and the museum, in both a literal and figurative sense, would become more open. Modern technology can allow us to accomplish this.

A space for reflection

All of these elements would enhance the square's role as an empty space, a space for reflection. They give a modern, or maybe even timeless answer to the question of Palace Square's role in the city. The design of the square would at the same time be a piece of contemporary art, and these days that is the best role art can play. Palace Square would become the largest room in the Hermitage.

P. S. The area needs a comprehensive vision, but in the meantime, small improvements such as new trash receptacles and streetlights would certainly not hurt. It would be the best "emptiness" in the world. I think Russians would love that.

Santiago Calatrava

architect:

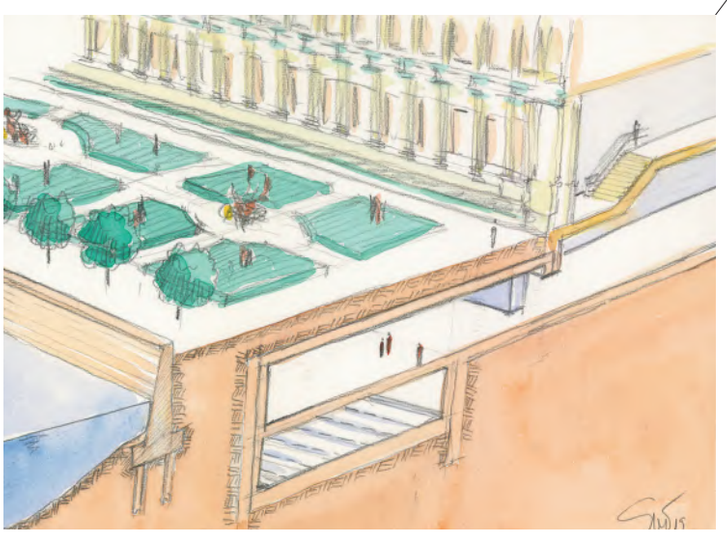
The embankment could merge into the square

PHOTO: © SANTIAGO CALATRAVA, 2019

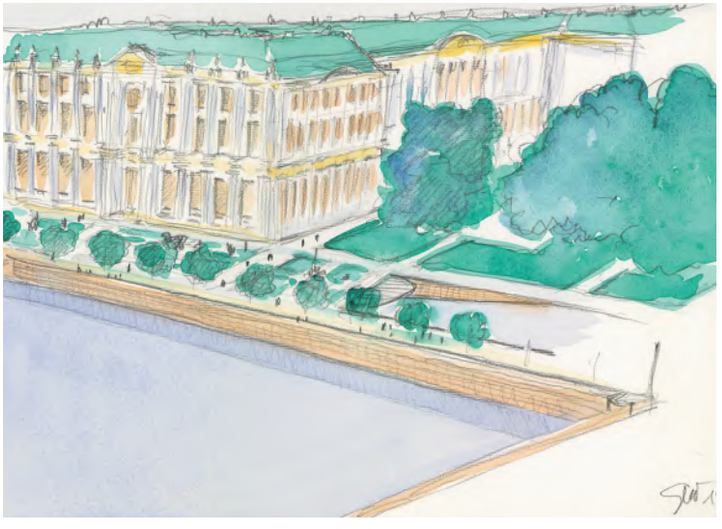
Palace Square in St Petersburg is one of the most beautiful squares in the world. It is no coincidence that the Winter Palace is located here either: it is a very advantageous location along the Neva River. While Palace Square is supplemented in an urban sense by the Winter Palace, the Neva River provides a natural counterpoint. Together, the square and the river frame the palace. From an urban planning point of view, the square (and specifically the square – not the column) is the central piece. In order to "cure" this urban centre of its excess weight, there must be a connection between the palace and the river. Palace Square also has the more serious role of being the "city vestibule" of the Winter Palace. It is the atrium of the impressive buildings that surround it, as well as the forum of the entire city of St Petersburg. I made a few sketches where I picture the square as a "virtual carpet" extending through the courtyard of the palace to the river, linking the Neva and the city. This connection could be key to the development of both the Hermitage and the city. The idea is to connect the façade of the Winter Palace along the river and embankment as much as possible. The new embankment and gardens could advantageously highlight the Winter Palace, just as the square does today. Right now, the space between the Neva and the palace is occupied by buses and a loud street. They can be moved underground. Certain museum infrastructure (such as parking and driveways) can fit on this lower level as well. Instead of a divisive street, there will be unifying gardens through which the embankment will merge into the square.

As for the use of other modern technologies, the colouring of the building, the design of the paving stones, and the column in the centre of the square tell us that if we want to imagine something new, "light art" might be an answer. The square could from time to time be transformed through artistic light installations, especially stunning during St Petersburg's long winter nights.

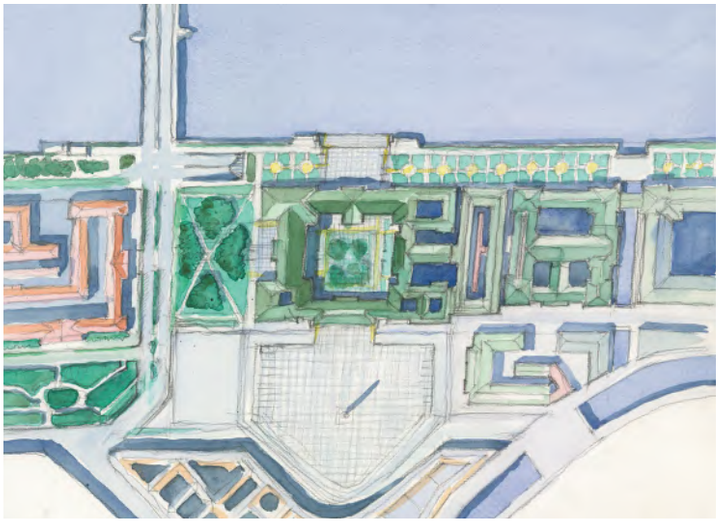
Tunnel section showing the traffic at the lower level and the connections between the museum and the upper tunnel. The sculpture garden on the surface and the steps of the pier are also shown



Sectioned axonometry showing the retaining wall, sculpture exhibition gardens on the street level, the underground link to the museum and the traffic tunnel

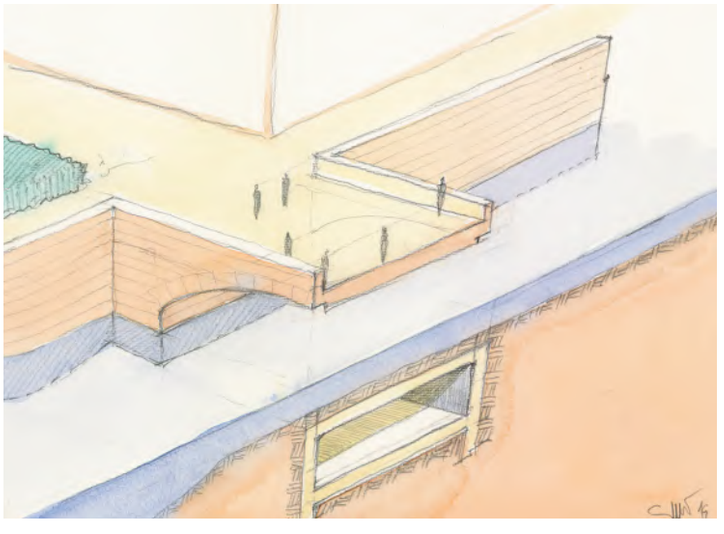


Aerial view of the Palace corner showing the edge of the Palace Bridge, the tunnels access ramp, the western gardens and partially the gardens in front of the River façade of the Palace



General urban plan

Plan and section showing the tunnel access close to the Palace Bridge



Tunnel section in which some local connection ramps between both levels can be seen

Maria Makogonova

architectural historian, Honoured Cultural of the Russian Federation:

Palace Square is practically part of the Hermitage

PHOTO: © JURI MOLODKOVETS

I see that St Petersburg is now beginning to look at development in too pointed a manner, too closely. We can see this, for example, in the construction of new residential complexes next to significant constructivist landmarks like Erich Mendelsohn's substations at the Red Banner (Krasnoe Znamya) Textile Factory, the Levashovsky Bread Factory, and Yakov Chernikhov's water tower at the Red Nailmaker (Krasny Gvozdilshchik) Factory. The same principle comes through in the bike lanes along the Fontanka River Embankment. There was no additional parking provided for in the city and now there are three lanes of cars on the neighbouring streets instead of the two they were built to accommodate. The same sin has been committed by even the best urban projects in St Petersburg, such as Sevkabel Port – nobody thought about how people would get there.

All urban development projects require an integrated and comprehensive approach. First of all, then, I am firmly against the idea of discussing Palace Square as a separate space within which something can be changed. The main urban planning problem is not the square itself, but what goes on nearby, on Millionnaya Street and the Moika Embankment, which have become one big parking lot. But this is the price we pay for the imperial emptiness of the square. Although paid street parking and the construction of new underground parking lots in the city centre will not touch Palace Square directly, it will noticeably improve its atmosphere.

Palace Square was never a medieval marketplace. It was always an architectural masterpiece, which is its primary function. It is empty, and it should stay that way. Any intrusion (and I concede that it is hypothetically possible) must underscore this. At the same time, if we're going to change something, we should not be guided by a flight of fancy, but by people's needs. The discipline of urban studies has advanced enough to determine the difference. But I don't know if there is an architect who would be able to solve such a paradoxical task.

Finally, we should never forget that in the situation that has unfolded today, Palace Square is practically a part of the Hermitage. And we should only attempt to look at its future through the prism of strategies for improving one of the most majestic museums in the world, visited by 4.5 million people per year. Maybe the Hermitage would benefit, like the Louvre, from an underground entrance zone. We have learned a lot from earlier examples of reconstruction of major museums. It would be interesting to see how the Hermitage might use this knowledge to its benefit.

PHOTO: © STELLA OJALA / AMOS REX

Kai Kartio

Director of the Amos Rex Museum in Helsinki:

Historical events could be reconstructed virtually

Palace Square is, of course, an extraordinary place. It is incredibly large, and was designed in the 18th and 19th centuries to demonstrate the power of the empire and to serve as a setting for the Winter Palace and the General Staff Building. The square is changeless and immense. This can be seen either as an advantage or a disadvantage. We cannot physically, permanently, change the square. That is out of the question. But temporary modifications are another matter entirely. Maybe, in the future, it might be possible to virtually reconstruct some of the important historical events that have taken place on the square, such as the October Revolution. I would also venture to say that Palace Square is, first of all, a historical location, and can't be altered. St Petersburg has more appropriate locations for modern encroachments as it was like, for example, with the Amos Rex Museum building in Helsinki.

PHOTO: © ILYA ROVNIY

N. Polyakova
(Nadezhda Mikhailovna Polyakova)
City by the Bay
Verses
Artist V. Smirnov
(Vadim Vyacheslavovich Smirnov)
LENINGRAD, "CHILDREN'S LITERATURE", 1983

Pokras Lampas

artist:

The design code for mass celebrations doesn't harmonise with the imperial atmosphere of Palace Square

PHOTO: © ILYA ROVNIY

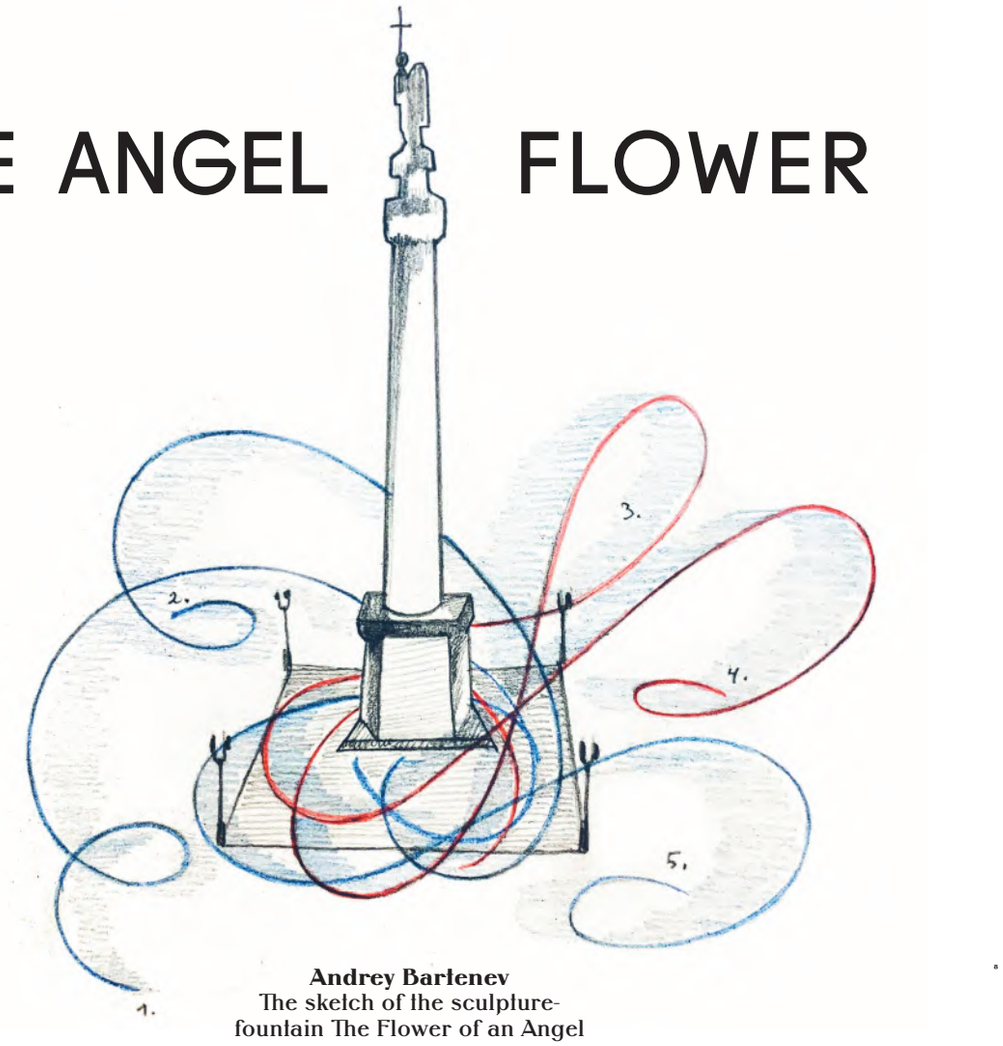
Palace Square is an important symbol of the city, and thus its vast open space appears quite harmonious, especially in the context of its historical significance and the architectural ensemble that surrounds it. For me personally, it is absolutely breathtaking.

Palace Square undoubtedly functions as the city's main spot for gatherings, but it is important to carefully choose the format for and visual design of these occurrences. I try to avoid mass events held on Palace Square. They are rarely related directly to art. They are typically large-scale city celebrations or social events of a different nature, and unfortunately, the design code for almost all of these events, including the stages and various pavilions that are erected from time to time, is in utter disharmony with the imperial, incredibly beautiful, and centuries-old atmosphere.

One of the best experiments with a new urban significance for the square that I remember was the mapping festival, where all the façades of the building were lit with holographic projections. It was interesting to watch how the square functioned depending on the time of the day. It is a rare example of a stunning project on the square. It should happen more often.

THE ANGEL FLOWER

OLGA BUZINA,
PH.D., DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNICATIONS, LAKHTA CENTER



Andrey Barlenev
The skelch of lhe sculplure-
founlain The Flower of an Angel
2019

A place of history and power, a military parade ground, a space for skating and festivities, a meadow for grazing goats, an open-air square for playing chess [1], a hub for gaping tourists and concert crowds... But is it a place for Petersburg residents or for long lines of tourists shifting their feet while waiting to get into the country's foremost museum?

Palace Square. A place of action. A setting for a stage. Not for a military march, or an exhibition of equipment that services the city's needs, not parking for carriages and other decorative horse-drawn vehicles. For people. For people to admire it like the audience on the steps of an amphitheatre facing façades and a garden, as if they were backstage, instead of in the backyard, in the centre of a theatre of life, with its backbone an amphitheatre, a tribune, a promenade, a stairway (a stairway to the Petersburg heavens, which are almost within arm's reach). Or maybe just to take a walk not on paving stones but on a lawn with no "keep off the grass" signs, with the feeling that they are allowed to be there, that the area was made for them, with no more "keep off" or "for the tourists". And people will walk on the grass, and history will happen – without the caterpillars of heavy military equipment.

Palace Square. A space for people, at their height and in their rhythm. An environment that begins to take on meaning, to be important, to cease being only a place of beauty. Where a person will be able to walk, stand, or wait for their friends, even on a snowy or rainy day, because they are covered by a rainbow [2]. A pathway under a curtain of warm light, where you are protected as you aspire to soak up the beauty, between the General Staff Building, the Alexandrian Column, the Winter Palace, and the Atlases at the New Hermitage. The white, yellow, green, and ochre-red will not only be colourful filters on gloomy days with no warmth, summer, or clear sky, but will also represent the historical palette of the façades on Palace Square.

Or a fairy tale from some artist with a vivid imagination, Thumbelina appearing from a tulip bud? The open space of a meadow, the stem of a flower and petals surrounding it, with an angel in the middle... Andrey Bartenev's Flower of an Angel [3] is a sculpture with open, dynamic, swirling lines that can be turned into a colourful fountain. The streams of water form the petals, and on the top of the sparkling splashes floats an angel, wreathing together water, skies, stone, and light.

Or an installation of polished steel, or matte steel, which is perhaps more suitable for St Petersburg's diffused light. A new visual language of eternal images in a setting that you want to discover again and again. A dynamic present: a deciphering of the classic urban space, of the baroque Rastrelli – places where we should never cease speaking, in order to maintain our personhood while striving towards beauty.

Let St Petersburg – beautiful in its essence, and therefore able to do without human interference – give people a space where they can understand the city, and where it can accept them.

1 On July 20, 1924, a human chess match between the Red Army (black) and the Red Navy (white) was held in Leningrad on Palace Square (then known as Uritsky Square).

2 The image is based on Your Rainbow Panorama, a glass panoramic installation on the roof of the Museum of Modern Art in Aarhus, Denmark by Olafur Eliasson.

3 The author has used colours in the sketch to emphasise the dynamics of the sculpture's lines.

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE

OR WHY NOT CHANGING ANYTHING IS DETRIMENTAL

MARIA ELKINA,
ARCHITECTURE CRITIC

PALACE SQUARE IS NOT REALLY A SQUARE AT ALL. AN EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL SQUARE IN CLASSICAL EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE IS CAMPO DE' FIORI, WITH ITS MORNING MARKETS, FLOWERS, LONG LINES AT THE CHEAP PIZZERIA ON THE CORNER, STREET VENDORS SELLING SHINY CHINESE TRINKETS, AND TRATTORIA TABLES THAT OWNERS PUT ON THE STREETS EVERY EVENING. AN EMPTY PLAZA MAINLY INHABITED BY AUSTERE ARCHITECTURAL MONUMENTS IS AN INVENTION OF NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE.

It's quite strange that an era that we were told in school was humanist created the concept of space that prefers being uninhabited. Yes, space is the focus here, and it determines what is of use to it and what needs to be got rid of as soon as possible. Near places like the Bernini Colonnade in Rome, the Basilica of San Francesco di Paola in Naples, or the Winter Palace and the General Staff Building in St Petersburg, people are either part of a crowd or ceremonial procession or they are a hindrance to the landscape. An alternative human role is that of lonely silhouette. In that case, the surrounding architecture acts as a deity or a sphinx, something clearly greater than a human in terms of the power it has over the world. Only people strong in spirit can handle this confrontation and sustain no losses. But, of course, there is no conflict with humanistic ideals. The new age has placed the human at the heart of everything, but it is a human that does not require constant care, who searches for freedom and dreams of exceeding his or her own abilities.

In the past, grand architectural ideas were often unrealisable, both because of the lack of computer-aided design and because it was simply not prudent.

During the time of Catherine the Great, before the General Staff Building was constructed, there were several houses right across from the Winter Palace in a semicircular formation. The former meadow that was now the space between the houses and the palace was turned into a square with a pavilion where coachmen could wait near the campfire for their passengers after their meetings had ended. It was a necessity that ran counter to the initial plan for the square. "The changing of the guards happens on this square, and during special festivities the public is treated to roasted beef and fountains flowing with wine," said Johann Gotllieb Georgi in his "Description of the Russian Imperial Capital City of St Petersburg".

Unknown lithographer
Author of the drawing:
Grigory Chernetsov. 1802-1865
Part of the Panorama of Palace Square from the Scaffolding of the Alexander Column
Russia, St Petersburg
1836
Thierry Brothers' Printmaking House
Paper, lithography
63,5x110,8 cm
Inv. № ЭРГ-27225

Anonymous printmaker
Author of the drawing:
Grigory Chernetsov. 1802-1865
Part of the Panorama of Palace Square from the Scaffolding of the Alexander Column
Russia, St Petersburg
1836
Thierry Brothers' Printmaking House
Paper, lithography
63,8x84 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭРГ-27223

Unknown lithographer
Author of the drawing:
Grigory Chernetsov. 1802-1865
Part of the Panorama of Palace Square from the Scaffolding of the Alexander Column
Russia, St Petersburg
1836
Thierry Brothers' Printmaking House
Paper, lithography
64x83,5 cm
The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Inv. № ЭРГ-27224

PHOTO: © THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST PETERSBURG, 2019

This formula, incorporating both ceremonialism and simple entertainment for "commoners", is still in effect. The entire Hermitage complex has long been turned into a museum, and now part of the General Staff Building has as well, but the relationship between people and the space has in essence remained the same. There are no more bonfires, but now the concessions made to human needs include small trucks from which passers-by can buy a 100-ruble cup of coffee. The coachmen have been replaced by tour-bus drivers. The wind is as strong as ever. What is different is the intensity: traffic has increased, and the celebrations have become more crowded.

About a year and a half ago, my colleagues and I were working on an exhibition dedicated to urban development in St Petersburg. It was an incredible piece of luck that one of the projects was done by The Why Factory think-tank and the MVRDV architectural bureau, led by one of today's leading architectural visionaries, Winy Maas. They made styrofoam models of five areas in St Petersburg, each approximately one kilometre in diameter, to experiment with. In the city centre, Palace Square was chosen to undergo some unbelievable alterations, as it is the biggest open space in the centre of the city (after the Neva River, of course) and is a significant place – the future's biggest hopes and gravest fears lie with Palace Square. It may look immutable, but it impossible to ignore the pressure that the present day, with its millions of tourists and automobiles, put on the seemingly eternal Hermitage.

Students participating in this masterclass had a model of the square – at a scale of 1:500 – and orange styrofoam they could use to demonstrate what the area might look like at the beginning of the 22nd century. The first reaction, almost instinctive and rather predictable, was to replace the Alexandrian Column with a skyscraper. But, just as predictably, it was a different option that made it to the exhibition – a model of the square, landscaped and green, with fancy observation decks. Nonetheless, it is the radical, or possibly barbarian, or maybe just absurd, "skyscraper project" with which we should logically start our discussion about the present and future of Palace Square. It demonstrates vividly that St Petersburg is no longer the Petersburg of Pushkin. In order to shake the established paradigm of the "imperial square", we need something challenging, something that forces us to doubt. Is Palace Square truly immutable? The feeling that it is imperishable and unalterable is relatively new, and, as yet, unproven.

When making predictions, one can be guided by either the past or the future. One can look either at famous urban ensembles that have been successfully reconstructed or focus on the inevitable challenges of tomorrow and the future environment to which we will have to adapt.

There is the classic example of the Louvre Pyramid, designed by Ieoh Ming Pei. It stands across from the museum as if it had been there all along, having assimilated perhaps even better than the Alexandrian Column into Palace Square. The pyramid was created mainly to help the museum deal with the large number of visitors, but ended up filling a more significant role as part of the Louvre's architectural landscape. The Hermitage might have its own "pyramid", some construction that would be both useful and appropriate, but nowadays this idea seems more archaic than revolutionary.

A more popular way to transform a famous square is to convert it into a public space. Norman Foster, who was justifiably seen as a man from the future, reconstructed Trafalgar Square at the turn of the 20th century, using only authentic materials for the benches and lamps. But the innovation was not in the materials used. It was rather in his mission – to make the square convenient for pedestrians. Times Square in New York was reconstructed with the same purpose in mind, with this reconstruction wrecking the "tradition" of sitting in traffic in front of the big, colourful advertisements. The square outside Paris' City Hall has not been formally redone, but is instead evolving naturally. In winter it turns into a skating rink, and in summer it is covered with beach chairs. It seems the French feel quite relaxed in the face of the authorities.

Though Palace Square is a pedestrian zone, it is not very comfortable. You might see skateboarders on the square, but you won't see benches, as if benches go against the idea of the "imperial harmony" associated with this place. After all, skaters are guests and ready to move along at any moment. But if there were benches or any other simple, people-friendly improvements of that kind, it might let people get too comfortable, let them breathe freely.

Perhaps such resistance to change more than anything else indicates the desire to preserve the imperial atmosphere. And it is not really change that is unacceptable; it is anything reminiscent of casual, daily routines. The price paid for this unwillingness to accommodate the everyday is high. It is all those comic figures dressed like Peter the Great one can see on the square, the portable toilets in the corner – things common in places that are popular, but not inhabited.

The fear of even talking about changes for Palace Square, the desire to placate the majority, whose opinion is most often taken to be the same as that of old academics, is rooted in the idea of empire too. Encroaching on sacred symbols is not permitted; all criticism is of the devil, and all new proposals are sedition. The possibility of consciously influencing the development of events is taboo.

Society on the island of Bali is organised in a caste system. The caste you belong to determines your way of life and what you do. When the island was officially a kingdom, the ruler could transfer a person from one caste to another. Everyone had a chance, at least hypothetically, to move up the social ladder. Though the odds were very small, people had some hope of becoming free of oppressive predestination. But there are no more kings. Nowadays Bali is a part of the majority-Muslim country of Indonesia, and the president of the Republic does not move people between castes. There is nobody from whom to expect either justice or a miracle. It is the same for St Petersburg. In the 21st century, there is no longer a monarch who might reasonably determine the limits within which transformations to its architecture are permitted.

The phrase "nothing should change", however, is not quite accurate. In real life, it means that nothing should be changed purposefully, but transformations that happen haphazardly, on their own, are usually accepted, as they don't require much official sanction. The portable toilets, for example, were not introduced to the Palace Square space intentionally. It's just that such a popular tourist attraction simply can't function

MVRDV/The Why Factory. Petersburg 2103 The top four are working layouts, the bottom layout is for the exhibition project

2018

without restrooms, and the blue plastic booths just happened to be the easiest way to solve the problem.

The imperial spirit is strong, and it is unlikely to disappear any time soon. That means, among other things, that the coming decades only will bring us more chaos in the form of refreshing beverage festivals, "trashy" small architectural forms, costumed characters, and bus parking on all sides. It is possible that something nearby will be paved with granite since that has lately become very popular.

No matter how harmful it may be to follow traditions, it is also dangerous and maybe even impossible to abandon them. The best way is to rethink and reinterpret them. We don't have to associate the imperial idea with something conservative and prudish – in fact, the Russian Empire was always striving for progress, which is what kept it alive. The sweep of Palace Square can also be seen as a challenge to designers and architects. Is the artist's talent as great as the great square? Can he or she work something into a context that is almost impossible to break into? In other words, if fifteen benches appear on Palace Square, they should be fifteen benches created by fifteen of the world's best designers. If we see a lawn there it should not be just a simple lawn, it would have to be a piece of art. The same goes for everything: pavilions, art objects, and even restrooms. Roughly speaking, Palace Square could become a museum of contemporary uses of urban space. The proposed approach is actually rather conservative, as it is far from ideals of equality and from the attempt to conform to the desires of the average person. However, the suggested solution would accomplish two things that might at first seem contradictory. The square would become more friendly, comfortable, and interesting, while maintaining its special status. At the same time, banal tourist activities like taking pictures with Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, purchasing ushanka hats and matryoshka dolls, and riding on exhausted horses, would surely become less popular. After all, these primitive ways in which people interact with the city happen not because the average visitor is fundamentally corrupt, but due to the absence of a more meaningful agenda.

And here is one more important argument for future moderate and elegant changes to Palace Square. A strategy of inflexible preservation is doomed to failure. Time destroys everything. It is thus written in the laws of mathematics and physics, and artists might only raise an objection in a figurative sense. So, in order to avoid undesirable changes, we need to constantly transform it.

PHOTO FROM THE ARCHIVE: © THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM XXI CENTURY FOUNDATION, 2014

P. S.

As a matter of fact, Palace Square has undergone transformations consistently throughout its history, and continues to change. The last significant reconstruction was in the 1950s, and that means that some people still remember what it looked like before. Even relatively young people remember the square as different to what it is today, taking into account that the city too is always subtly changing, to the extent that even a photograph of it from twenty years ago will often evoke some surprise. The main disadvantage of the concept of total conservation of an urban space is its utopian outlook. Palace Square is evolving, regardless of anyone's wishes and sometimes against them.

Nevertheless, the authors of this article did not intend to find a way to conceptually remodel the most important space in St Petersburg. The historical background, biographies, memoirs, and reflections on the future were an attempt to imbue the perception of Palace Square with a fullness, with details, and even with contradictions, and also to rid it of triteness, which is a must for a symbolic monument. Then, based on this altered, more complicated understanding, to attempt to see the shape of the future. As often happens, the most important things turned out to be obvious only at first, and not necessarily generally accepted. In order to rectify this, we decided to summarise our findings in a short "Palace Square Manifesto", consisting of just four points:

1. Palace Square is a silent and empty space. These two characteristics should be preserved and, if possible, improved.

2. Palace Square has become part of the Hermitage. Any future development must, at the very least, keep this in mind.

3. The atmosphere of Palace Square is inextricably connected with what is occurring around it, both in the Hermitage buildings and out on the streets nearby. Maintaining the square's beauty depends, therefore, in large part, on solving the problem of long museum lines and parking in the center of St Petersburg.

4. Palace Square, although it has come into being somewhat haphazardly, is a work of art. Every change that is made to it, down to the trashcans, should have artistic value.

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Tribune at the Alexander column, according to the sketch of N.I. Altman. Photography. Central State Archive of Film and Photo Documents of St Petersburg

K. SCHIPPERS

A Hint of a Garden

FERNS OF DIFFERENT HEIGHT, SWINGING SHADOWS OF LEAVES. THE YET-TO-VANISH TRAIL OF THE CHILD AT PLAY, NO NEED TO SEARCH FOR ANYTHING HERE. YOU ARE THERE, WITH NO AIM, WHERE THE STAIRS WIND DOWN TO THE RIVER. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS BE THERE.

ILLUSTRATIONS: © PAOLA PIGLIA

1 K. Schippers is a Dutch poet. He was born in Amsterdam on November 6, 1936. Credited with having introduced the readymade as a poetic form, the whole of his work is dedicated to looking at everyday objects and events in a new way.

K. Schippers at the Rozhdestveno Memorial Estate (Leningrad Region)
SUMMER 2019

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA, 2019

"Your poetry is simple", says Alexandra. "You gave poetry back to me". Alexandra is a student of Dutch at the University of St Petersburg – the one where Mendeleev's periodic table takes pride of place, where the spaces stretch for hundreds of metres, where Gogol and Lenin used to stroll around. The University is on the bank of the Neva, a river that looks a lot like the Amstel, but is perhaps a little wider. At the request of Lionel Veer, Consul General of the Netherlands in St Petersburg, twenty SPbGU students have translated my poetry into Russian, and are now speaking to me in very clear Dutch. Out of their mouths it sounds fresh, as though just unpacked, as though I am being introduced to my native tongue for the first time.

One evening a few days later we get together at the Dutch Consulate. I say something about one of my poems and I recite it for my audience. Then a Russian girl recites my poetry in Dutch, followed by her own Russian translation. "I have changed something." Yamina Alik is referring to my poem 'Ja'.

This is how it begins:

Ik heb je lief zoals je soms
gelijk een gouden zomerdag bent
nee nee nee

[I love you like you are sometimes
like a golden summer day
no no no]

But Yamina has changed "golden summer day" to "dark night". No one has done this before.

We talk about the sister cities: St Petersburg and Amsterdam. Peter the Great. The War. Some of the students have been to Amsterdam. Houses along the canals. They have seen it all right here, in their hometown.

I tell them I went to the historical Vladimir Nabokov house this morning at 47 Bolshaya Morskaya, which is a quiet street not far from the consulate. It is a museum now. Some of the floors are undergoing repair, but the museum is still open. Suddenly I see Nabokov himself come up on the screen, talking, in this 19th-century panelled room. He is back in his birth house.

I tried to find Nabokov everywhere, took photographs from Biarritz to Putnam. I take photographs of that beach in Biarritz where the young Vladimir had fallen in love with his age. Lolita makes herself heard. Years later I try to track him down at Menton, the refugee mecca, where he completed his novel The Gift in 1937, published only decades later – in 1963 byin Putnam, New York.

This is not the first time these students have heard that Nabokov's popularity really took off in the West in the late 1950s and early 1960s. His 1961 novel Pale Fire had quite an effect on me at one point. It is about the thirst to fill everything with meaning. Nothing is clear, but as soon as you understand, you are destroyed.

He wrote Pale Fire in Nice in the early 1960s. A view from the boulevard shows a white apartment building with palm trees in the garden out front, a fence with gilded features, and wrought-iron balconies. Which flat did he move into? One with a sea view.

Nabokov used to write in many of the places he fled to. His works bear the light, space and architecture of each surrounding. I plan to expound on this later in a mixture of essay, travel notes and perhaps even a novel. Berlin has many more landmarks I ought to visit.

Standing on the balcony in the Nabokovs' last suite in the Palace Hotel the summer of 2006 in Montreux, Switzerland, you could divine light of the gentlest texture over Lake Geneva. This light barely dared to fully exist. Nabokov and his wife Vera stayed here until Vladimir had to go to the hospital and died in Lausanne on July 2, 1977.

On May 29, 2019, the day after the poetry reading, a small group of people rode a large car to Vyra, the heart of Nabokov's youth. Vyra is a village an hour's drive south of St Petersburg. The Nabokovs' second home, their dacha, was in Vyra. Vladimir used to take a horse-drawn carriage there.

His uncle's house is still there, right next to Vyra, but Vladimir rarely visited him. The dacha of the Nabokovs s long gone, but we could likely get to where it stood if we cross this field. Remnants of some stables, a hint of a garden... We nearly lose our way amid the verdant thickets. One woman from our group suddenly comes across a few stones from some old foundation hidden by the grass. Just some dull wreckage. The house that once was here is gone. I don't feel sad. The scenery around me is all that matters.

ILLUSTRATIONS: © PAOLA PIGLIA

Poems recited in Dutch and Russian together with the young translators in St Petersburg in the spring of 2019.[2]

2_____ In the Dutch and Russian languages. Translated from the Dutch by SPbGU students Yamina Alik, Elizaveta Slukanova, Nina Belova, and Zhenya Ovchinnikova. The K. Schippers poetry reading took place in St Petersburg in May 2019.

ILLUSTRATIONS: © PAOLA PIGLIA

Да

Я люблю тебя словно ты
золотой летний день
нет нет нет
я люблю тебя словно ты
нет нет
я люблю тебя словно
нет
я люблю тебя

Влияние детей и дорожного движения на возраст школьных учительниц

Красивые школьные учительницы
22 лет из первого класса
всегда выглядят на 27
из-за детей вокруг.

И на 17, если вдруг увидеть
их на велосипеде перед светофором.

Маскарад

Одинаковы все дни но в разном одеяньи
ведь это тот же самый день что вновь и вновь

из-за оттенков разных от взора ускользает
чутко подобран свет и одеянье и вуаль

и воедино слиты холод солнце дождь и ветер
всё то что этот день от нас скрывает

что вновь мы упускаем
чего мы попросту не видим

Влияние умеренного ветра на одежду

Ты идешь на пляж? Можно мне
когда ты вернешься взять
песок из твоих ботинок
для дна моего аквариума?

Ja

Ik heb je lief zoals je soms
gelijk een gouden zomerdag bent
nee nee nee
ik heb je lief zoals je bent
nee nee
ik heb je lief zoals
nee
ik heb je lief

De invloed van kinderen en het verkeer op de leeftijd van schooljuffrouwen

Mooie schooljuffrouwen van
een jaar of 22, uit de eerste
klas, lijken altijd 27 door
al die kinderen om hen heen.

En 17 als je ze ineens op de fiets
voor het stoplicht ziet wachten.

Bal masqué

Alle dagen zijn hetzelfde maar anders gekleed
't is een en dezelfde dag die zich steeds weer

aan onze ogen onttrekt door andere tinten
een slim gekozen lichtval gewaden sluiers

kou zonneschijn regen en wind allemaal
afleidingen van die ene dag die ons

steeds weer ontgaat
die we net niet zien

De invloed van matige wind op kleren

Ga je naar het strand? Mag ik
als je terugkomt het zand
uit je schoenen voor de
bodem van mijn aquarium?

FYODOR DVINYATIN[1]

NABOKOV'S PROSE WRITINGS CANNOT BE COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD WITHOUT INVOKING THE LAWS OF POETRY. NABOKOV STARTED OUT AS A POET. MANY OF HIS MOST IMPORTANT NOVELS ARE UNTHINKABLE WITHOUT THE ORGANIC INCLUSIONS OF POETRY, BE IT THE 999-LINE (OR 1,000-LINE) LONG POEM OF PALE FIRE, OR THE MULTIPLE VERSES AND QUASI-VERSES IN THE GIFT. THE FABRIC OF NABOKOV'S PROSE IS SATURATED WITH POETIC STRUCTURES AND SUBTEXTS. THE LAST 118 SYLLABLES OF THE GIFT, EMULATING THE STANZAS OF EUGENE ONEGIN, TRACE AND EXPLORE THE BORDER BETWEEN POETRY AND PROSE.

1 Fyodor Dvinyatin is Director of the Center for Vladimir Nabokov Studies at St Petersburg State University.

PHOTO: © MIKHAIL ROZANOV, 2019 FROM THE SKY SERIES, 2019

THE TEXTURE OF UNLOCKING THE GIFT'S LAST

PHOTO © MIKHAIL ROZANOV, 2019 FROM THE SKY SERIES, 2019

118 SYLLABLES

Good-by, my book! Like mortal eyes, imagined ones must close some day. Onegin from his knees will rise – but his creator strolls away. And yet the ear cannot right now part with the music and allow the tale to fade; the chords of fate itself continue to vibrate; and no obstruction for the sage exists where I have put The End: the shadows of my world extend beyond the skyline of the page, blue as tomorrow's morning haze – nor does this terminate the phrase.[2]

It is anything but rare for Russian poets to borrow the "Onegin stanza". It is also typical for poets, whenever they use this verse structure, to borrow – knowingly or unwittingly – the vocabulary and stylistic and structural nuances of Pushkin's novel in verse, as well as its measures and rhymes. This is the case, for example, with Lermontov's long poem The Tambov Treasurer's Wife, as well as with the roguish opus Debogoriy-Mokrievich by late 19th-century Narodnik revolutionary Vladimir Debogoriy-Mokrievich.

But The Gift's final lines are tied to Eugene Onegin not solely by virtue of the reproduction of Pushkin's stanza (in prose's graphic disguise), with its iambic tetrameter and its AbAbCCddEffEgg rhyme structure, or even by the use of the name Onegin. The key link here is the word rasstAtsya (to part), also used in the penultimate line of the final chapter of Pushkin's novel: I vdrUg umEl rasstAtsya s nIm, / Kak yA s OnEginym moyIm (EO, 7, LI) (And all at once could part with it / As I with my Onegin). This subtext is plain, but perhaps there is another subtext, less meaningful and less conspicuous.

As the excerpt progresses, the aural imagery – sloukh… s mUzykoi… zvenIt (the ear… with the music… chords of fate) – clearly gives way to the visual. Nothing juxtaposes the audible and the visible as straightforwardly as the core verbs used in the present tense: the chords of fate vibrate (in the Russian, soudbA zvenIt – fate rings), and the extending shadows of my world being blue (prodlyOnnyi prIzrak bytiyAsinEyet, which is the verb derived from the adjective sIniy, and it means, literally, "to turn blue"). The ringing and the blueing in the finale are, quite possibly, an allusion to Gogol's famous lines from Diary of a Madman: strunA zvenIt v tumAnye… DOm li to mOi sinEyet vdalI? ("…a musical string twangs in the mist… Is that my home looming blue in the distance?" – in Nabokov's own translation). Nabokov had previously played on the first part of this quote, and Dostoevsky once also invoked it ironically: "smoke, a mistiness, and a chord vibrating in the mist" in Crime and Punishment).

But the verb sinEyet (to turn blue) in the final lines of The Gift pulls in the novel's internal contexts as well as external subtexts, weaving associations of motif. This verb occurs in poems written by both of the novel's central fictional poets: sinEyet, sInego sinEi (turning blue, bluer than blue), by Godunov-Cherdyntsev (in his poem about the morning sky glimpsed through a crack in the window shutter), and izvayAnya v allEyakh sinEli (statues in the alleys were turning blue) by Koncheyev (in the Koncheyev quote, the word that follows it – nebesA (skies) – no longer pertains to blueness directly, but due to the contiguousness of these words, it is as though the skies had lent their colour to the statues; moreover, the words allEi sinEli (alleys blueing) evoke the archaic word for sirEn' (lilac) – sinEl' (very aptly used by Tyutchev). Nabokov, or SIrin (an old pen name), kept the word sinEl' on hand as one of his many secondary tokens of his authorly presence in his novels.

There is another link between the ending and the preceding body of the novel, but it may be more difficult to discern, requiring more sophisticated "reader optics". It is the nuanced rhythmic organisation of The Gift's final 118 syllables. In one retrospective moment, the protagonist, in first person, reminisces about his poetic adolescence: "Andrey Bely's monumental study on 'half stresses'… hypnotized me… I tried to write with the aim of producing

2_____ Vladimir Nabokov. The Gift. 1938.

PHOTO: © MIKHAIL ROZANOV, 2019 FROM THE SKY SERIES, 2019

the most complicated and rich scud-scheme possible…" By the time The Gift was written – indeed, by the time in which the novel is set – Russian prosody had further elaborated on Bely's observations and slightly shifted his main focus, but the framework of Bely's approach remained intact. Reproduced in the final lines of The Gift, the Russian iambic tetrameter (I4), which was Bely's interest, can take any of eight basic rhythmic forms, of which only six are usable. These six can be categorised by whether or not the real word stress falls on the positions where the stressed parts follow the I4 pattern, that is, the line's second, fourth, and sixth syllables, which are also called the first, second and third icti, respectively (the eighth syllable, or fourth ictus, always takes the word stress in the Russian I4, with the exception of radical experiments with line endings and rhymes). In the excerpt we are parsing, the line or quasi-line otsrOchki smErtnoi tOzhe nEt (imagined ones must close some day, (lit.: there is also no respite from death)) exemplifies what is called the first (I), or fully stressed, I4 rhythmic form (all icti stressed); the line dat zamerEt… soudbA samA (allow the tale to fade; the chords of fate (lit. allow to fade… fate itself)) conforms to form II (first ictus unstressed); sinEyet za chertOi stranItsy (the shadows of my world extend (lit.: turns blue beyond the edge of the page)) is form III (second ictus unstressed); prodlyOnnyi prIzrak bytiyA (beyond the skyline of the page (lit.: the elongated spectre of being)) represents form IV (third ictus unstressed); no udalyAyetsya poEht (but his creator strolls away (lit.: but the poet withdraws)) is form VI (first and third icti unstressed); and kak zAvtrashniye oblakA (blue as tomorrow's morning haze (lit.: like tomorrow's clouds)) is form V according to Taranovsky's classification or VII according to Shengeli (second and third icti unstressed). This whimsical rhythmic diversity betrays the sophistication of Andrey Bely's younger contemporary, delivering a peculiar combination of the "classical" and the "modern" that lends an Onegin stanza such as this one a more fanciful rhythmical sound (which, in itself, is neither a merit nor a demerit) than the stanzas of Pushkin's original Onegin.

One salient feature about the grammar of the excerpt is its diverse and fractional verb forms: the only imperative is proshchAi (good-by), the only one in past tense, postAvil (put; next to the only first-person pronoun), and the only one in future tense is podnImetsya (will rise). Only the infinitive and the present tense occur in multiple instances, and several notable symmetries and consonances are found there: udalyAyetsya – (ne) konchAyetsya (strolls away – (nor) does this terminate), zvenIt – sinEyet (vibrate – turn blue). The vast field of vision, the continuation and extension, which are stated expressly, are subtly underpinned, in the verbal grammar, by the extensive palette of word-forms and the dominance of the present tense.

One may be so bold as to surmise (as long as one exercises the proper measure of prudence) that these two grammatically identical structures, occurring in two neighbouring lines containing crucial imagery, also stylistically allude to Pushkin's literary style: prIzrak bytiyA (the shadows of my world) and (za) chertOi stranItsy (beyond the skyline of the page). The frequency of use of phrases with the adnominal non-prepositional genitive varies steeply and strikingly between eras and authors (more perspicacious poets of later eras can hear this well and use it to selectively imitate the style of poets from the past). In classic Russian poetry, the use of phrases with the genitive case had its heyday in the poetry of Batyushkov. Pushkin used this phrase structure differently for different genres, but his use of it was, overall, more sparing, averaging at about two phrases per stanza, which is exactly the typical "Onegin frequency".

And here is one more hallmark of Onegin and of Pushkin's poetic style generally: several enjambments (mismatches between poetic and syntactic divisions) follow one another in succession in the middle of the excerpt: i vsyO zhe slOUkh ne mOzhet srAzu / rasstAtsya s mUzykoi, rasskAzhu / dat zamerEt… soudbA samA / yeshchO zvenIt, – i dlya umA / vnimAtelnovo nEt granItsi… (And yet the ear cannot right now / part with the music and allow / the tale to fade; the chords of fate / itself continue to vibrate; / and no obstruction for the sage / exists…). There can be no doubt that this "division crisis" serves to highlight the theme of "nEt granItsi" (no obstruction (lit.: no border)).

On the lexical plane, the semantic correlations stand out in particular. The key internal themes of The Gift's ending are highlighted repeatedly, and so that series of words belonging in the same meaning-domain are apt to form graded progressions, such as, for instance, this one: knIga – stranItsa – strokA (book – page – line). This is echoed by another triple series: tOchka – chertA – granItsa (end (lit.: point) – line – obstruction). And the word knIga (book) also enters into another series: knIga – vidEniye – rasskAz (book – imagined ones – tale), while stranItsa (page), along with tOchka, chertA, and granItsa, contributes to the semantic of "(transcendable) boundaries". This – broader and more central – domain of "end/not end," "end/continuation" also involves such words and phrases as proshchAi, otsrOchki… nEt (good-by, must close some day), udalyAyetsya (strolls away), rasstAtsya (part), zamerEt (fade), nEt granItsi (no obstruction), prodlyOnnyi (extended), za chertOi (beyond the skyline), and ne konchAyetsya (nor does this terminate). The duality of the assertion and denial of "the end" is highlighted at least twice by grammatical parallelisms filled with contradictory meaning. The first one is the opposition of (1) otsrOchki… nEt (must close some day) (the end) and (2) nEt granItsi (no obstruction) (the end is rescinded). The second parallelism – an even more obvious one, underscored by both the grammar and the rhythm – is this: (1) no udalyAyetsya poEht (but his creator strolls away) (the end) – (2) i ne konchAyetsya strokA (nor does this terminate the phrase) (the end is rescinded). The beginning of the closing excerpt of the novel declares the impending end of the novel. However, the ending of this same excerpt, that is, the ultimate ending of the novel, conversely, at the very least calls the impending finale into question.

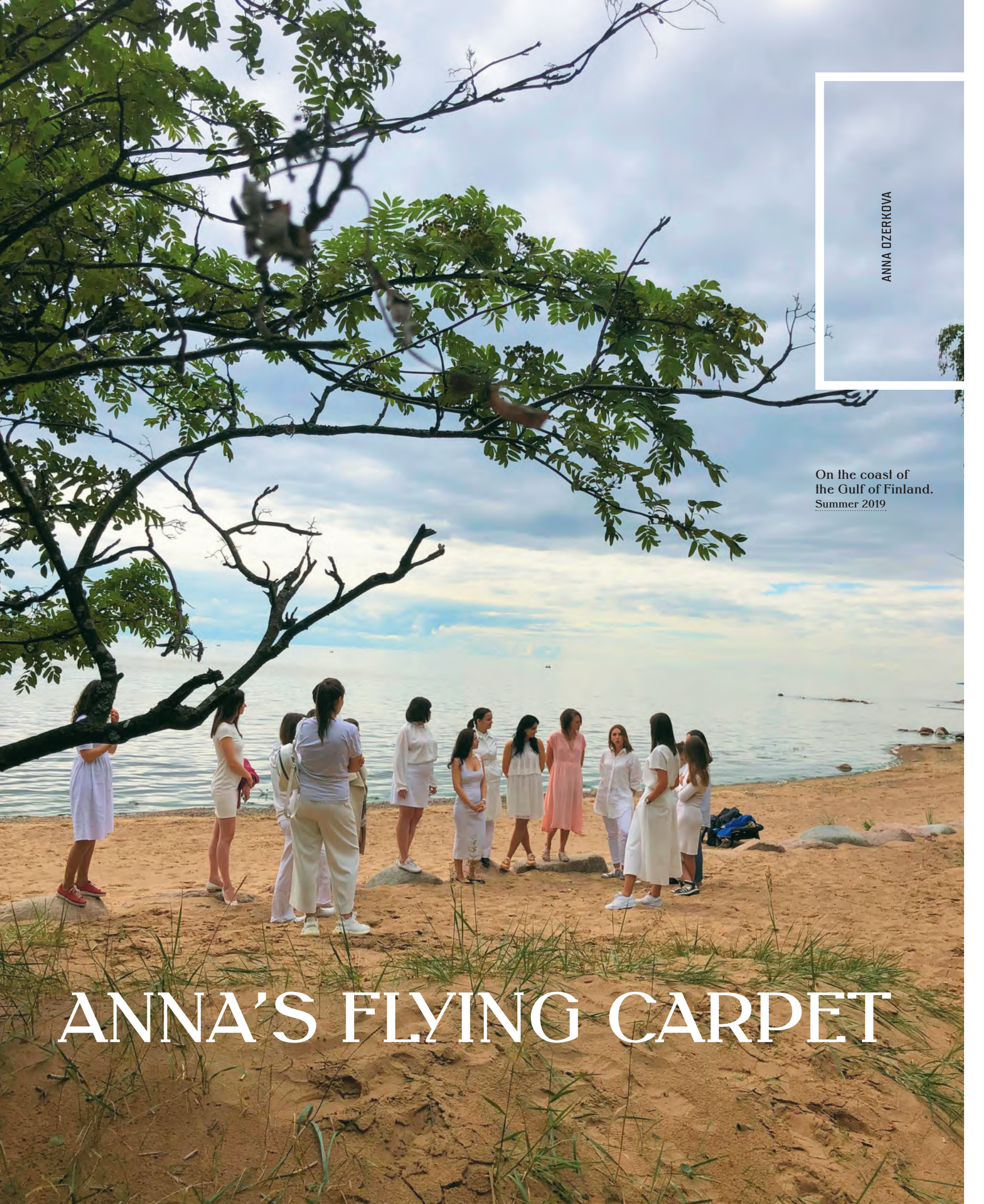
As aural and visual metaphors dovetail and somewhat compete (the sound is given flesh by the very sonic fabric of the lines; it might seem a little meagre for Nabokov, a consummate virtuoso of sound consonances, but this succession of four stressed A's in the finale – kak zAvtrashniye oblakA, – i ne konchAyetsya strokA – is certainly not coincidence), so the semantics and imagery of space and time also interact in the excerpt. At first, time reigns supreme, signified, as it were, by srAzu (right now) and yeshchO (continue, (lit.: still)), and the frame of the text appears similar to the boundaries of a musical or theatrical performance: the final sounds fade, and (afterwards) the actor, or some character likened to an actor, caught in this genuflected posture at the novel's abrupt end – something akin to metaphorical "curtains" – rises from his knees. And here something spatial intervenes: the figure of the poet strolling away. From this point on, space dominates over time – granItsa, tOchka, prIzrak za chertOi – but time still has a say amid this spatial domination: the morning haze is tomorrow's. Space and time, sound and vision merge to the point of becoming indistinguishable in the last line – the line about the line (strokA). The line is spatial and visible when it is written, and it exists in time and is audible when it is uttered, when it sounds.

In this general context of duality, it is probably no accident that the distinction between Eugene and his creator is underscored (I regularly take much pleasure / in showing how to tell apart / myself and Eugene… (EO, I, LVI)). Indeed, many scholars have pointed out that the persona of the narrator appears to be dual in Pushkin's novel in verse as well – sometimes the narrator will appear congruent with the real Pushkin, and sometimes he will emerge almost as a conventional narrator-cum-character figure); the narrative enigma of The Gift rests upon an ambiguous equilibrium between the first and the third person: Is it me writing about myself occasionally? Is that his monologue reproduced without quotation marks?

It is important to read Nabokov slowly and attentively, and this applies to The Gift in full measure. The Gift's prosaic narrative fabric is haunted by the laws of poetry, complete with the sweeping engagement of language, the metrics, and the intricate interplay of cross-textual connections. One of Nabokov's favourite authors, Leo Tolstoy, wrote that the fabric of a novel is an endless labyrinth of connections (of thoughts, characters with their interrelations, statuses and shifts of the plot, of narrative, meaningful and symbolic motifs). Nabokov was certainly aware of all this and was adept at putting it into practice, but he would frequently augment and cement his prosaic complexity with a poetic one, drawing amply on his experience as a poet, albeit an unrecognised one.

PHOTO: © MIKHAIL ROZANOV, 2019 FROM THE SKY SERIES, 2019

The Vladimir Nabokov Museum on Bolshaya Morskaya St in St Petersburg, the writer's only memorial museum in the world, was opened by the Nabokov Foundation in 1999 to mark the 100th anniversary of the writer's birth. Vladimir Nabokov would describe this house, where he was born and raised, as his "only home in the world". Never again during his long life would Nabokov have a permanent home. Since it became part of St Petersburg State University on November 30, 2007, the museum's collection has grown significantly and some historical interiors have been restored. On display in the museum are Nabokov's personal belongings, photos from his family archive, editions of his books published while he was alive (some of them autographed), and his famous butterfly collection. A division of the university's Department of Exhibitions and Collecting, the Vladimir Nabokov Museum boasts some of the highest visitor numbers in St Petersburg. Earlier this year, St Petersburg State University established the Centre for Vladimir Nabokov Legacy Studies, appointing renowned writer, literary critic, and St Petersburg State University professor Andrei Astvatsaturov as its director.



ANNA OZERKOVA

On the coast of
the Gulf of Finland.
Summer 2019

ANNA'S FLYING CARPET

THE IDEA FOR THE BOOK CLUB, #I_SEE_SPB_LITERATURE, WHICH IS NOW NEARLY THREE YEARS OLD, WAS INSPIRED BY A PERFORMANCE OF MADAME BOVARY, A PLAY DIRECTED BY ZHOLDAK. WE HAD ENVISIONED A TEA PARTY WITH GIRLFRIENDS, BUT ENDED UP WITH A PROJECT. ONLY SIX PEOPLE SHOWED UP FOR THE FIRST MEETING, AND NOW THE GROUP HAS 40 MEMBERS. IDEALLY, A DISCUSSION SHOULD INVOLVE NO MORE THAN A DOZEN PARTICIPANTS. BUT FROM TIME TO TIME THE TURNOUT WILL BE ABOUT DOUBLE THAT NUMBER. THE CLUB HAS ITS PERMANENT MEMBERS, RESIDENTS, AND GUESTS WHO ONLY ATTEND DISCUSSIONS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN. AND OF COURSE WE HAVE HAD A FEW WHO ONLY CAME ONCE OR TWICE AND NEVER RETURNED.

'Artificial edelweiss... with a note from Aqua, saying...'[1]

The book club is my inner empire. Intuitively and at my complete discretion I slate books for discussion, set meeting places, and sometimes stipulate a dress code. I also decide whether the gathering would benefit from the attendance of a competent outside presenter. In most cases I remain faithful to the library overlooking the Summer Garden, but occasionally I will "shake up" the club's members with new locations. When we were to discuss a certain novel about American comic books, I elected to "lock" the participants up in a hotel room, and invited two artists to illustrate the discussion with sketches instead of the usual photographs. Every now and then I arrange "field meetings", and sometimes I may partner up with some trendy health resort or sports project and have some bookstore host our Christmas meeting.
In my mind's eye, St Petersburg is divided into neighborhoods associated with the novels I have in mind for future discussions. But the project's destiny is more expansive than that. Nowadays no journey is without a new literary location that I would someday like to imbue with the atmosphere of a powerful, literary Terra.

The first twenty pages were adorned with a number of little plants collected at random, in August, 1869, on the grassy slopes above the chalet, or in the park of the Hotel Flory, or in the garden of the sanatorium near it ('my nusshouse,' as poor Aqua dubbed it, or 'the Home,' as Marina more demurely identified it in her locality notes). Those introductory pages did not present much botanical or psychological interest; and the fifty last pages or so remained blank; but the middle part, with a conspicuous decrease in number of specimens, proved to be a regular little melodrama acted out by the ghosts of dead flowers. The specimens were on one side of the folio, with Marina Dourmanoff (sic)'s notes en regard.

'...Terra the Fair and thither she trusted she would fly on libellula long wings when she died'

When we get together to talk books, people can come as they are, or dress up to impersonate anyone they wish, ask or ponder any question about the book, or perhaps about something bigger that they feel deeply about, and do so in the friendly climate of a collective literary experience.
These "literary tea parties", as I might as well dub them, are a monthly ritual. And every time we meet our participants look better than before, shining with inner and outer beauty, as if they have grown more aware of themselves, and as if suddenly they have the stamina to do things they had previously lacked the energy to do.

'I can add,' said the girl, 'that the petal belongs to the common Butterfly Orchis; that my mother was even crazier than her sister; and that the paper flower so cavalierly dismissed is a perfectly recognizable reproduction of an early-spring sanicle that I saw in profusion on hills in coastal California last February.

'If we want life's sundial to show its hand... we must...'

Our literary get-togethers have seen a number of formats over the three years. For some discussions, I invite an expert to give a lecture, or a professor to offer knowledgeable commentary. A few meetings have focused on matters that were on my mind a lot, but most of our meetings run with hardly any intervention on my part. Members of the club jump right in, sparking informal dialogue on the parts or scenes in the novel they deem essential, sharing their thoughts and ideas. People share their impressions, discoveries, and associations in a lively, sincere manner.

...he found nothing so depressing as the collected works of unrecollected authors, although he did not mind an occasional visitor's admiring the place's tall bookcases and short cabinets, its dark pictures and pale busts, its ten chairs of carved walnut, and two noble tables inlaid with ebony. In a slant of scholarly sunlight a botanical atlas upon a reading desk lay open on a colored plate of orchids.

'I used to love history. I loved to identify myself with famous women. (There's a ladybird on your plate, Ivan.) Especially with famous beauties – Lincoln's second wife or Queen Josephine.'

It just so happens that our club is mostly attended by women. Only occasionally do our meetings flare up with a male presence. I think this is logical. I often feel that my personal, highly irrational experience of a literary work can only be seconded by another similar – subtle and a little exalted – but different "mechanism". All the more precious, then, are the moments of communion, when one literary image or another becomes the subject of discussion on a family's own "flying carpet", be it a bed or an easy chair.
I used to identify myself either with the book's main character or some other character I empathised with. Now I tend to view a text from the

1_____ Here and below, the quotes are from Vladimir Nabokov's novel Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle (1969).

PHOTO: © NATALIA CHASOVITINA, 2019

author's vantage point, anticipating and analysing the different aspects of personal discoveries or exercises in word play.

"Keep moving, reader" (as Turgenev once wrote)

'Dostoevski liked it [his tea] with raspberry syrup'

Ever since I was little, every time I read a book I would always relish the descriptions of the characters' appearance, of the hotels they stayed in and drinks they ordered. I always yearned to try the drinks and visit the places that were described in the book. In my club, I try to pay tribute to the external accoutrements of the book we are discussing, dressing up as the main character or the author, treating my guests to some of the beverages occurring in the book, like chacha, prosecco, sherry, or some specially tea. I may ask my group to wear some unusual earrings, or to aim for a "total white look". I discovered fairly early on that minor details like these, despite their naïveté, conjure up a positive mood. The club members do their homework for the meeting. In addition to reading the novel and some critique of it, they have to assume personal responsibility for the atmosphere we want at our meeting.

'By the way, do fireflies burn one when they fly into you?'

It is an important part of the club's mission to fill people's reading gaps, driven by their inner compulsion to catch up on works of literature they had missed out on for whatever reason. We are currently flying towards Joyce's Ulysses. It is the kind of novel everyone had once started to read, then became too engrossed in the footnotes, eventually giving it up never to return to it. Our bookish sorority dictates: thou durst not bail on a book that everyone else in the club is reading (this is our "motivational stick").
It has been exactly a year since we met to discuss Nabokov's Ada. As conscious readers, we have quite obviously come of age during this year. I am now rereading Ada, or Ardor, and I am able to appreciate its artful word-wisdom in a whole new light.

"The 'D' in the name of Aqua's husband..."

Relaxed, homelike intellectual sharing is the basis of interaction between the members of my club. Once I showed my husband the novel The Black Prince by Iris Murdoch that I was reading. He started reading too, and was so captivated by the book that we had to read in shifts. Since we are both nighttime readers, we had to take turns sleeping. We would make marks and comments in the margins, each of us using our own "signature" style of notes and symbols. When it was his turn, my husband introduced me to the novel The Man Without Qualities by Robert Musil. It turned out that even literary works that seem very distant from one another have things in common. Our Land of Oz has taught us that the "Book Road" can be paved with bricks of different sizes, coming from different places and eras.

'I could show him a copy, perhaps,' said Ada, turning to Van, 'of an absolutely fantastically lovely nature morte by Juan de Labrador of Extremadura – golden grapes and a strange rose against a black background. Dan sold it to Demon, and Demon has promised to give it to me on my fifteenth birthday.
'We also have some Zurbarán fruit,' said Van smugly. 'Tangerines, I believe, and a fig of sorts, with a wasp upon it. Oh, we'll dazzle the old boy with shop talk!'

"'Playing croquet with you... should be rather like using flamingoes and hedgehogs' 'Our reading lists do not match...'"

Arguments certainly do happen. But they proceed tactfully, without any fights.

The shadows of leaves on the sand were variously interrupted by roundlets of live light. The player chose his roundlet – the best, the brightest he could find – and firmly outlined it with the point of his stick; whereupon the yellow round light would appear to grow convex like the brimming surface of some golden dye. Then the player delicately scooped out the earth with his stick or fingers within the roundlet. The level of that gleaming infusion de lilleul would magically sink in its goblet of earth and finally dwindle to one precious drop. That player won who made the most goblets in, say, twenty minutes.

'Ladore, with its ruinous black castle on a crag, and its gay multicolored roofs further downstream were glimpsed – to be seen again many times...'

Our plans for the near future are to talk about the short stories of Borges and Sorokin, and to end the year with a Christmas meeting devoted to A Midsummer Night's Dream.
I long for some Greenaway-inspired themes, but also for theatre. We are planning a club outing to go see the Shakespeare play at the Mariinsky Theatre. Early next year, in 2020, we will be marking our book club's third anniversary with a discussion of Ulysses, which we all will have read by then. Then we plan to revisit all the authors of the past three years and discuss their other books. We already have a schedule covering all of next year.
I am hoping to come up with a book club concept for Kolyma before the year is out, with the same name. We have also added a fun "extracurricular" activity to our monthly book conferences, which we christened "Bookrunium", with an ornamental bull's head for an emblem. These are weekly five-kilometre "book runs" on Yelagin Island, with book in hand – we discuss the books on the run. The activity, it turns out, is really good for you, making you feel better emotionally and flushing out the lungs with air, kind of like reading poetry while walking. Our summer retreat – the "reading holiday" – is now a family affair for many of our members. We have dubbed it "Litreat".
When your conversation partner gets your literary joke or your allusion to some not-so-obvious book character or episode, it makes for a happy moment. In part, at least, our book club exists to make these moments happen all more often.

16+

Kentron Boutique Hotel

Saint-Petersburg, Nevsky prospect 111/3

The interior of the Kentron Boutique Hotel resembles a loft, and is designed by the architecture bureau of @Studia-54. Kentron Boutique Hotel presents a mix of different, contrasting architectural styles- a combination of soft velvet and cold metal within its rustic brick walls. It is a place of creativity in the historical city center.

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We could say that the Kentron Boutique Hotel is a very cozy place in Saint-Petersburg. Positioned away from all the bustle and noise, its unique interiors, pleasant background music and attentive staff will make your accommodation comfortable and as convenient as possible.

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BOOKS

Treasures of the Red River. Archaeological Collections from the Museums of Vietnam: exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage, St Petersburg:

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 232 pp., illustrated.

This publication includes materials from the exhibition Treasures of the Red River. Archaeological Collections from the Museums of Vietnam. The catalogue includes more than 250 ancient artefacts that have either been obtained from archaeological excavations or found at random. It introduces readers to the history of the eastern part of the Indochinese Peninsula, which from the second half of the 1st millennium BCE to the beginning of the 1st millennium CE was home to many vivid cultures: Đông Son, Sa Huỳnh, Đong Nai, and Óc Eo. The objects reflect the major aspects of life of the people who inhabited the territory of Northern Vietnam, the coastland of Central Vietnam, and the delta of the Mekong River in the South. The articles also contain a more in-depth description of one of the civilisations, known as the Đông Son culture. The early states of Văn Lang and u Lạt, Lâm ạp (Linyi in Chinese) and Chăm Pa, and PhùNam (Funan in Chinese), known from Chinese written sources, were formed on the basis of the archaeological cultures of Ancient Vietnam, as well as influences from India and China. Special focus is placed on the history of archaeological exploration in Vietnam and the contemporary state of its cultural heritage.

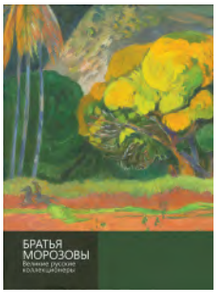
The catalogue is intended for both specialists and those interested in the archaeology and history of Southeast Asia.

A Forgotten Russian Patron. The Collection of Count Pavel Sergeevich Stroganov: exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage, St Petersburg:

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 236 pp., illustrated.

The collection of Pavel Sergeevich Stroganov, gathered during the second half of the 19th century, has been unduly forgotten, even though its owner not only reflected the tastes of his time, but also donated a number of remarkable paintings, sculptures, and rare publications to the Hermitage. The collection was kept in Pavel Stroganov's mansion on Sergievskaya Street in St Petersburg. Later, some of the paintings were transferred to his family estate Znamenskoye-Karian, and then to the Tambov Oblast picture gallery. In 1919 the rest of the artworks were moved to the Stroganov Palace on Nevsky Prospekt. The exhibition might therefore be said to mark the 100th anniversary of the transfer of the collection to the Stroganov Palace.

The catalogue presents works of Russian and European fine and applied arts, as well as Chinese ceramics from the collections of the State Hermitage, the Tambov Regional Painting Gallery, the State Russian Museum, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, and others. A large section of the catalogue is devoted to the unique book collection that now makes its home in the State Hermitage and the Russian National Library.



The Morozov Brothers. Great Russian Collectors: exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 368 pp., illustrated.

The catalogue for the exhibition The Morozov Brothers. Great Russian Collectors gathers together for the first time the fruits of the remarkable art collecting activity of two Moscow entrepreneurs of the late 19th and early 20th century: brothers Mikhail and Ivan Morozov. Together they managed to bring some of the greatest French masters of the time – Gauguin, Van Gogh, Bonnard, and Picasso – to a Russian audience. The exhibition includes almost all of the paintings from the Morozov collection that currently reside within the State Hermitage, as well as the most prominent ones from the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.

Gods, Men, Heroes. From the Naples National Archaeological Museum and the Archaeological Park of Pompeii / The State Hermitage, St Petersburg.

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 296 pp., illustrated.

The exhibition Gods, Men, Heroes is an ambitious project of the State Hermitage, the Museo Nazionale Archeologico in Naples, and the Parco Archeologico di Pompei. It features more than 200 masterpieces of ancient art, including items from the Hermitage's "Pompeian" collection. The exhibition presents frescoes, mosaics, sculptures, works of decorative and applied art, and items for everyday use that reflect the high level of socio-economic development of the society of the time.

Pieces of glassware, bronzes, ceramic vessels, furniture, and details of interiors help us to vividly reconstruct the habits, daily routines, leisure pastimes, and lifestyle of Romans living 2,000 years ago.

The publication is intended for specialists, art lovers, and all readers interested in the history of the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii, Herculanum, Stabiae, and Oplontis, all of which perished in the year 79 as a result of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Concesti. A Princely Grave from the Great Migration Period / Aleksey Furasiev, Yekaterina Shablavina; The State Hermitage, St Petersburg.

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 244 pp., illustrated.

This book publishes for the first time the complete collection of materials related to an archaeological monument of the Great Migration Period – the princely grave near the village of Concesti.

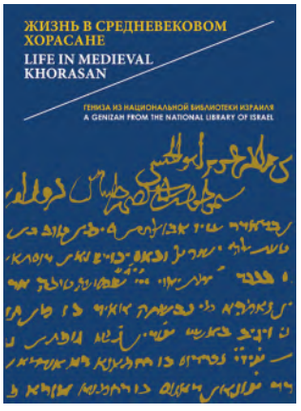
The collection of artefacts, part of the State Hermitage's collection, has become the object of comprehensive research for the first time, more than 200 years after the beginning of the excavations. New data revealed by the authors allow us to propose that the site is the grave of a notorious barbarian military leader who had served in the Roman forces for a rather long time. An East-Germanic tribesman from the Northern Black sea coast and a contemporary of Er-

manaric and Ammianus Marcellinus, he took part in battles of the Roman Empire with the Huns and Persians in the 360s–380s. The grave goods (jewellery, a horse harness, and ceremonial silver vessels) and epigraphic data reflect the career path of this man, which was set against the background of the historic collisions of the second half of the 4th century in Central Europe.

The book is aimed at specialists: historians, archaeologists, professors, and students, and also at a larger audience of readers interested in history.

Life in Medieval Khorasan. A Genizah from the National Library of Israel: каталог выставки /exhibition catalogue / The State Hermitage, St Petersburg.

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 136 pp., illustrated.



This book presents readers with a unique ensemble of written artefacts from the 9th to the 13th centuries – manuscript fragments acquired several years ago by the National Library of Israel. They comprise the so-called Afghan Geniza, a collection of hundreds of manuscript fragments from the medieval town of Bāmiyān in Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan); the most interesting specimens are featured in the book. Among the documents are Jewish and Muslim literary texts, part of a Jewish family archive, and part of a Muslim administrative archive. These fragments show the high education level of the Muslim population and their close contact with the Jewish community of the region.

The book also presents unique works of applied art from the Hermitage collection that come from this territory in the same period. Together with the written artefacts, they help us understand the historical and cultural context of everyday life in the thriving region, later to be destroyed by Genghis Khan's army.

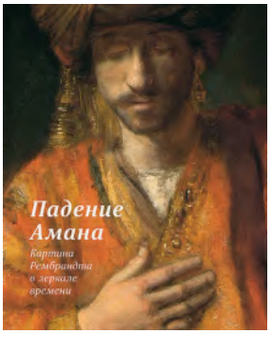
The book is intended for specialists, as well as the larger audience of readers interested in the culture and arts of the East in the Middle Ages.

The Fall of Haman: Rembrandt's Painting in the Mirror of Time / The State Hermitage, St Petersburg.

— The State Hermitage Publishers, 2019.
— 100 pp., illustrated.

This book tells the story of the Hermitage collection's famous and mysterious masterpiece – Rembrandt van Rijn's painting The Fall of Haman (Haman Learns His Fate). The catalogue accompanies the exhibition, which marks the 350th anniversary of the death of the great Dutch master on October 4, 2019. It aims, in part, to assess the artwork in the context of the oeuvre of the extraordinary painter and his interest in exotic motifs.

The book reveals to us Rembrandt's ancient oriental world – a combination of the rich, creative imagination of the painter and the impressions he took in from numerous sources: books about travels to the East, engravings, Mongolian miniatures, and textiles, all of which the painter either collected himself or saw in cosmopolitan Amsterdam. Photographs taken after a recent restoration, which freed the painting's surface from thick layers of yellowish varnish and retouching, in addi-



tion to a detailed description of the progress of the work, allow us to explore the specifics of the artist's painting technique, rich in subtle colour nuances and textured brushstrokes. The book shows how painting techniques that might seem random are in fact deliberately chosen in order to reveal the internal plight of Biblical characters and their psychological relationships with one another.

The book is geared towards specialists, and also towards a larger audience of art lovers.

Butterfly nets
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