

“FORMATIONS, REFORMATIONS, DEFORMATIONS”
TRACING ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE COMMUNAL ROOM
IN THE WORKS OF SOVIET NONCONFORMIST ARTISTS:
1975-1991

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

MARCH 2020

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ABSTRACT

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March 2020, 457 pages

This thesis traces the evolution of communal room from a collective to private space through practices of an underground art circle that emerged during the second half of the 1970s in Soviet Moscow, namely Soviet Nonconformist artists. The Soviet project of the communal apartment was a revolutionary experiment of collective living. Initiated with the ideal of designing "socialism in one building," it turned into an institution of social control, the base for establishing status-quo and a micro-cosmos where Soviet communal bodies were shaped between the 1920s and late 1950s. Following the transformation of communal apartments into private rooms during Khrushchev's Thaw in the late 1950s, these new private rooms were transformed into zones of freedom by newly flourishing underground culture in major cities of the Soviet Union. Starting from the 1960s, especially Moscow and Leningrad, witnessed private rooms to be appropriated as spaces for the underground activities of various intellectual fields. This thesis aims to decode the dynamics, aesthetics, and architecture of post-thaw Soviet communal rooms in between privacy-collectivity, and officiality-unofficiality by tracing "Moscow Nonconformists" through three generations that were formed, reformed, and deformed between the years

1975-1991. In two parallel analysis, on networks and artworks of Nonconformist artists, it is aimed to trace the architectural history of the communal room both in Moscow and through artists exhibitions in the West as the context, the muse and the object of their artistic genre, while documenting the room's intertwined journey with artists' biographies and networks.

Keywords: Soviet Nonconformist art(ist), Soviet communal room, room exhibitions, artists' room, underground museum and installation art

ÖZ

“OLUŞUMLAR, DÖNÜŞÜMLER, BOZUNUMLAR”
MOSKOVA NONKOFORMİST SANATÇILARI VE İŞLERİ PEŞİNDE KOMÜN
ODA VE MİMARİSİNİN İZİNİ SÜRMEK
1975-1991

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Bu tez, 1970lerin ikinci yarısında Sovyet Moskova’sı yeraltı kültüründe yeşeren Sovyet Nonkonfomist sanatçıların pratikleri üzerinden komün odanın kamusal mahreme uzanan evrimini takip etmektedir. Sovyet komün apartmanları kolektif yaşamın sınırdığı bir devrim deneyiydi. “Tek çatı altında sosyalizm”i tasarlamak idealiyle başlatılan komün apartman, 1920-1950 yılları arasındaki süreçte, toplumsal kontrolün sağlandığı, statükonun sağlamlaştırıldığı ve Sovyet kolektif bedenlerin şekillendiği bir kuruma dönüştü. 1950lerin sonunda, Kruşçev’in Çözülme dönemini takiben kamusal odanın mahremleştirilmesiyle, yeni mahrem oda, başlıca Sovyet kentlerinde yeni yeni yeşeren entellektüel yeraltı kültürü tarafından nefes alma alanlarına dönüştürülmeye başlandı. 1960lardan başlayarak, özellikle Moskova ve Leningrad, yeni dönüştürülen mahrem odaların çeşitli disiplinlerden entellektüeller tarafından yeraltı aktivitelerinin sürdürüldüğü mekanlar olarak yeniden örgütlenmesine tanıklık etti. Bu tez, Çözülme-sonrası komün odada evrilen dinamikleri ve komün odanın estetik ve mimarisini, mahrem ve kolektivite, resmiyet ve gayri-resmiyet ikileminde; yeraltında kurumsallaşan, ve 1975-1991 yılları arasında üç nesil boyunca ilişkileri, dinamikleri ve estetik kaygıları biçimlenen, dönüşen ve bozunan Moskova

Nonkonformistleri üzerinden takip eder. Nonkonformistlerin iliřki ađları ve sanat eserlerini iki paralel fakat birbirine bađlı analizde irdelerken, bir taraftan komün odanın sanatçı pratikleri, biyografileri ve iliřki ađlarıyla iç içe geçen yolculuđunu belgelemek, diđer taraftan Nonkonformistlerin bađlamı, ilhamı ve estetik üsluplarının temel nesnesi olan komün odanın mimarlık tarihini, hem Moskova'da hem de sanatçıların Batı'daki sergilerindeki yeniden üretimlerinde takip etmek amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sovyet Nonkonformist sanat(çılar)ı, Sovyet komün odası, oda sergileri, sanatçının odası, yeraltı müzesi ve enstalasyon sanatı

To those who seek 'home' elsewhere...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank first and foremost to my advisor, Prof. Dr. Belgin Turan Ozkaya, for her endless support, mentoring, guidance, as well as her warmest attitude and encouragement for all my crazy ideas. Without her, I would still be wandering around archives and searching my way out of this rambunctious project. I owe great gratitude to my co-advisor, Prof. Dr. Carmen Popescu, for her guidance, her brightest ideas, and the most stringent criticisms, all of which widened my perspective and guided me to become a better researcher and a more versatile scholar.

I want to thank my thesis monitoring committee. Firstly, to Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevil Enginsoy Ekinci, whom I own a lifelong of gratitude for having been mentoring and supporting me long before I had started my Ph.D. journey when I was a shy grad student, and this thesis would not have turned into this ambitious project without her inspirational affection. To, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Haluk Zelef, who had become a part of our architectural history circle and always offered the freshest and brightest perspective bringing the "architectural" aspect to otherwise would a more "history" project. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Marina Dmitrieva for her support and ambition for the project, for her guidance planning my future strategies as a scholar, for her most significant contribution, and for opening my eyes into the infinite world of "art history" as otherwise, I would have been drowning in an uncharted territory.

I would like to thank my dissertation jury members. To our jury chair Assist. Prof. Dr. Pelin Yoncaci Arslan, and to Prof. Dr. Nese Gurallar for their remarkable contributions and support for the project.

This thesis was a result of extensive archival research, and the materials used here were gathered together after years of international visits to various cities, and conversations with many respectable figures in their areas. The archival research of the thesis was performed in Moscow, New York, Berlin, and Warsaw. For most of the "official" documents from the Soviet period in art, architecture, and culture, I'd like to thank Rosarkhiv as I have had the chance to use materials from 6 different sub-sections, including RGAKFD, RGANTD, RGALI, TsGA Moskvi, RGIA, and RGAE. I want to thank Garage Museum of

Contemporary Art, which holds one of the most extensive archival material on Soviet Nonconformist art. In New York and New Brunswick, I had the chance to visit Columbia University, MoMA, and Zimmerli Art Museum. I want to thank the director of Columbia University Harriman Institute, Alexander Cooley, for the invaluable opportunity of a visiting scholarship at the Institute. I want to thank Elisabeth Thomas for guiding me through the comprehensive archives of MoMA. Also, I'd like to thank Nancy and Norton Dodge Collection of Zimmerli Art Museum for providing precious materials on Soviet Nonconformist Art, and especially to Prof. Jane Sharp and Christina Chalakova for their guidance and support for the project.

I want to thank my dearest friends Aylin Atacan, Elif Tektas, and Sena Gulbahar Tuncel for their endless supports, for all the endless days full of discussions, for putting up with all my complaints and sharing my enthusiasm. They became my greatest treasure, and I owe them the most enormous gratitude.

Lastly, I would like to thank my lovely husband, Tamer Evsen. Thank you for all the late nights and early mornings; for taking care of everything, even when I am on my long excursions and away from home. Thank you for calming teas, and late-night talks. He is the silent co-author and the biggest supporter of this project, and I would not have gotten through this rough journey without him.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When Soviet Communist Party and USSR Council of Ministers issued the Decree No. 1871 in Pravda, the most circulated newspaper of the Union, on November 10, 1955, titled "On the Elimination of Excesses in Design and Construction," the era of Classicism that had been associated with the Stalinist architecture ended. The decree was a follow-up by Khrushchev's speech to the Soviet Builders' Conference in December 1954, where the Soviet leader stated the immediate necessity of functionalist and typological architecture in the construction of new housing. The decree was accompanied by a broad campaign advertising the private house, an idea may be too mundane for the Western geographies, but a dream for Soviet geography. By the time the decree was issued, the communal living had been the norm and a part of everyday life for almost 40 years, since the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee "On Land" was issued on November 8, 1917, abolishing the private ownership of the land. Advertised as one-family apartments as opposed to crowded and communal Kommunalka, on the outskirts of major cities, systematic and fast construction of a new housing type began. This new building type was formed of prefabricated units, and it came to be known as Khrushchevka. Khrushchevka did not only brought a slow but systematic end to the communal living by alleviating the density of the existing Kommunalaki;¹ it also introduced a new terminology into Soviet domestic discourse on the concepts of what is private, domestic and collective. Since the early years of the socialist regime, the concepts of private and domestic had been deemed by the State to be bourgeois concepts and enemies of socialism.

Private space as the center of domestic life, and the nucleus of the bourgeois family, had to be demolished in order to achieve the collective being. Moreover, domestic space had to

¹ The plural form of the word "Kommunalka" had been used in Russian as "Kommunalaki", while the plural form of "Khrushchevka" is "Khrushchevki".

dissolve into a communal way of living. Communal apartments were dreamt of being the core structure to form the communal being. Communal apartments had been regarded as the manifestation of socialism in one building before Khrushchevka introduced the possibility of maintaining socialism and collective ideology within the norms of private family units.

The private domestic unit was one of the many promises of Khrushchev towards a less strict and more free Soviet Union. The changing domestic life from communal to private and the relative freedom under Thaw provided the necessary ground for the emergence of an extraordinary movement in the Soviet intellectual scene that had been referred to as "underground" or "dissident." Emerged in the late 1960s, these underground intellectuals formed groups of close-minded people who found an existence outside of the mainstream official narrative in different disciplines of arts. Immediately after the privatization of the room, the underground culture thrived in private rooms of the intellectuals firstly in the form of gatherings followed by happenings.

This study's initial focus is a group of Moscow artists who had been referred to as "Moscow Nonconformists" and had been active in Moscow between 1975-1991 and formed three generations of artists networking in each and between generations. The concern for this study is to trace the Nonconformist artistic practices through underground actors. What is significant about that particular underground group is, firstly, their uses of the room as an alternative exhibition space, then their continuous experimentation and search for alternative spaces for exhibiting. Moreover, their unique aesthetic genre took the aesthetics of communal everyday life, communal domestic spaces, and everyday object as its subject of inquiry. The nucleus of these unique sets of practices has been the room itself, and this study traces the use of the once-communal Soviet room both as an alternative space of exhibition and the subject of the Nonconformist artwork. Nonconformist practice evolved into a form of context-dependent art, not only using objects from everyday life, which were recycled to be used as artworks. The Nonconformist genre also transformed the room itself into a work of art or used it as the subject of the artworks.

The case presents a significant phenomenon embedding a unique architectural typology - Soviet communal room- into a unique artistic movement -Moscow underground art-. Therefore, it sets a unique example for tracing the architectural history of Soviet house/Soviet architectural spaces through the works of these artists. Locating the interplay between art and architecture has been a significantly challenging task for scholars from both disciplines. However, the period concerning this study points out a vital intersection:

Firstly, regarding the room as the artist's space, the thesis looks at the examples where the new private room as the artist's space was transformed into both a meeting point and space of exhibition while maintaining its domestic character as the artist's living space, but non-traditionally, a semi-public private one.

Secondly, regarding the room as a Soviet ideological construct, and a Nonconformist artwork: The very architectural character of the Nonconformist's practice exhibited itself in its sensitivity towards the architecture and visuality of the Soviet context and their re-appropriation of the communal room as an artwork. Moreover, Nonconformist art presents a unique case of context-dependency, not only through re-appropriating the official Soviet visual terminology and tools into a style of mockery. What makes the Soviet Nonconformist art peculiarly context-dependent is the ability of the artists evolving into archivers and collectors of their own work as a consequence of being in existence outside of official channels, and also their obsession of adopting the role of chroniclers and documenters of their material/architectural surroundings. The room, therefore, for Nonconformist artists was not only an artist's space but a social, cultural, and ideological phenomenon of the context they were born. They worked in, exhibited in, made an artwork of, and documented the rooms.

These practices on context-dependency were born and baked in Moscow but relocated during the systematic wave of immigration of Nonconformist artists to various cities in the West. Furthermore, in the reenactments of Soviet room and Soviet visuality on art, architecture and ideology through allusive artworks exhibited side by side with documents of Nonconformists in Western exhibition spaces brings forth another level of discussion on decontextualization of Soviet typology of domestic space and its representations in art.

The aim here is to trace the evolution of typologies and history of the architecture of Soviet room while documenting its alternative uses/transformations by Moscow Nonconformist artists circle. While following the networks of the artists, and networks of their rooms will allow the study to determine how individual rooms transformed into meeting points and zones of unofficiality; tracing their footsteps between geographies will provide insight on how the communal rooms and communal domesticity were re-enacted as a part and representation, and a de-contextualized version of Soviet architectural history.

1.1 The Structure of the Thesis

Although the formation of Nonconformist artistic terminology and network of actors began to be formed immediately after the privatization of room/domestic space during the 1960s, these study sets the date of formation for Moscow Nonconformist art circle as a collective and established alternative institution having its internal fragments, networks and mentoring systems between three generations beginning in 1975 and end with the fall of the Union in 1991. To find the intersection of architectural/spatial formations and reformations, which caused shifts in Nonconformist practices, networks, and aesthetics, this study tags three distinctive points, which can be referred to as milestones. These milestones were intersecting both with the history of Soviet nonconformist artistic practice and, at the same time, architectural/social shifts in the Soviet context.

The study is organized around these so-called milestones which form, reform, and deform the Nonconformist practices, networks, and artworks. These milestones also intersect with significant developments in the social, political, and architectural history of the Soviet Union. Each milestone forms a different chapter in the general scheme/outline of the study.

The layout of the study is organized thematically rather than chronologically. Each chapter revolves around and takes a significant set of incidents as a starting point of discussion. The discussion, then, is extended for each chapter through flashbacks to the social, political, artistic and architectural history of the Soviet context to give a broader panorama of the events,

developments, and formations leading to that set of incidents; meanwhile tracing the spatial/artistic terminologies developed around that milestone.

The first chapter looks at the formation of the Nonconformist circle and art as an underground institution, between 1975-1985. The period also coincides with the stagnation period of the country, therefore, seemingly gave the artists to form and flourish their alternative practices in rooms. The main concern of the first chapter is the emergence of apartment exhibitions, as well as the emergence of using the communal domesticity, domestic space as an artwork. Although unofficial culture emerged immediately following the privatization of the room and in the semi-privacy of the Thaw, they were mostly in the form of room gatherings in intellectual apartments. For the artists' circles, the first examples of using the room space as an alternative place of producing and exhibiting art were mostly in the form of individual apartment showings throughout the 1960s. These scattered activities inevitably formed some nodes of interactions; therefore, specific "protagonist" artists' rooms became centers of underground culture. However, the randomness of the interactions between artists was transformed into an organized series of apartment exhibitions that marks a very significant turn in the artists' perception of their living space and the broader context surrounding them. The living space/ domestic space, as the artists discovered, presents the opportunity to be a meeting place/ forum/space of exhibit and a space of production of both the ideas and the artworks. In 1975, seven collective room exhibitions were planned to be held in seven different artist rooms. These series of events allowed artists to experience not only to produce works for curated exhibitions, but also to curate the exhibitions themselves. This curating experience provided the artists the necessary tools to analyze the spatial characteristics of the communal room as an exhibition space outside of its value of habitability, while they also experienced the practice of collective exhibitions in those rooms. The room as an ideological and social construct later became a subject of their aesthetic genre. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the emergence of what is referred to as "socialist art" as a movement² clashes with the dates of

² The term "socialist art" denotes to the aesthetic innuendo that was formed as a reaction to the norms and visuality of Socialist Realism and is sometimes used by the Nonconformist artists to define the aesthetic genre of the circle. Although the term is later replaced by "Moscow Conceptualism", the definition of context-aware art may generally be defined as "socialist art". For more discussion on the subject, see Chapter 1.

artists using their rooms as the base to produce/document and collectively exhibit underground art.

The first chapter, therefore, marks the first collective room exhibitions as the date of formation of Nonconformist networks. Moreover, parallel to the practice of curating exhibits in a once-communal room, it discusses the emergence of context-dependent artworks of Nonconformists. Although the artists of the 1960s Moscow were heavily influenced by practices of Russian avant-garde and was in search of preserving the 'language' of the founding fathers of the avant-garde; the generations that are the subject of this study significantly differs from their previous generation, the founders of unofficiality, in their concern to develop a 'context-dependent' terminology.

Throughout the chapter, the discussion jumps between different periods to correlate the Nonconformist experimentations on the room to the history and typology of Soviet housing by flash-backing to the history of communal living and the architectural history of communal housing starting from the first experiments on collective housing in the 1920s until the privatization of the room in 1955. Meanwhile, while discussing the formation of Nonconformist context-dependent aesthetics, it flashbacks to the history of Soviet official visuality to find references and correlations in between.

The second chapter concerns the reformations of the artists networks and artworks following the advent of Perestroika. Perestroika³ denotes a period of reformations and reconstructions in Soviet cultural, social, and political policy towards a more transparent and internationally engaged political stand, which has been regarded as the fall of Iron Curtain by scholars from various disciplines. In May 1987, then-leader of USSR Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a new policy that allowed for the creation of limited co-operative businesses within the Soviet Union, marks the first signs of free-market in the USSR since the short-lived New Economic Policy

³ Oxford dictionary translates the word “perestroika” as “restructuring” and “reforming”. The title of this chapter refer both to the period and to reformations in Nonconformist aesthetics and practices.

of Vladimir Lenin, instituted in 1922 after the Russian civil war.⁴ Parallel to the new policy, the restrictions on foreign trade also loosened, allowing international interactions to intensify.

Concerning unofficial artists, the advent of Perestroika usually had been declared by some of the artists as the end of unofficial art and a stagnation period for Nonconformist art since their position in the most simplified terms cannot be described as "unofficial" anymore. However, instead of suggesting the Perestroika as the end of unofficial art, this study evaluates it as a period of reformations in Nonconformist artistic practices, as Nonconformist artists' position in Perestroika was somewhat in-between "official" and "unofficial" in terms of the spaces they exhibit and the works they produce.

The first factor valid for setting a date when reformations began is the introduction of the statute "On Amateur Associations" in 1986 allowing the establishment of interest clubs "based on voluntary involvement, common creative interests and individual membership for the satisfaction of spiritual needs and interests of people."⁵ Like many other circles of underground, individual fragments within Nonconformists used this opportunity to register their previously unofficial associations officially. However, exhibiting under the title and within the spatial limitations of an attained social club is what exactly causes the reformation of the characteristics of the unofficial practice to involve somewhere in-between official and unofficial, and between room and museum.

The same year, a group of unofficial artists benefitted the relatively stretched rules and their active enrollment to the Union of Artists⁶ to find themselves a housing complex for squatting,

⁴Lenin characterized the NEP in 1922 as an economic system that would include "a free market and capitalism, both subject to state control," while socialized state enterprises would operate on "a profit basis". Lenin, V.I. "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy", LCW, 33, p. 184. Firstly published in Pravda, 12, 17 January 1922.

⁵ Anon., Regulation on amateur association, interest club of 13.05.1986, in *Kulturno-prosvetitel'skaia rabota* [Cultural and educational work], No. 5 (1986), p. 26-28.

⁶ The Union of Artists have been the main organization in official hierarchical scheme of practicing art in Soviet Union to which one must enroll to be able to acquire a workshop or get to exhibit in official exhibition spaces and State museums. For more information of the role of Union of Artists on the artistic practices of individuals in Soviet Union, see Chapter 2.

which they later turned into a center for Nonconformist art. However, the deal they received from the Housing Committee (ZhEK)⁷ was a permit to a semi-official squat in a housing block that was planned to be destroyed in 2 years.

On these two incidents, this study sets the second milestone to 1986, where the temporality of the squat, and semi-official status of artists will be analyzed concerning changing exhibition spaces and practices. A year before Perestroika, and two years before the infamous Sotheby's auction in Moscow where the "unofficial" art dive into the Western art market, the unofficial networks, their spaces, and practices had already been reforming. However, the set of incidents following the statute in 1986 was not the first time where the unofficial art was getting close to being recognized as official. In Chapter 2, the study, through flashbacks, traces the attempts of negotiations of Nonconformists with the State and the singular examples of State-sanctioned exhibitions of early unofficial artists starting to pinpoint the difference that came with the case of Perestroika.

The recognition of the Nonconformist art circle by the Western gaze happened long before their recognition by the State authorities. It is even safe to say that practicing conceptual art in the Soviet context became a mundane and ordinary activity only after Perestroika and right before the fall of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Nonconformist art, which was produced and exhibited in rooms, intrigued the Western collectors starting from the early 1970s. Although many collectors of Nonconformist art believed, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, that the accessibility to the Moscow Nonconformist artworks could only be possible after Sotheby's auction, two main events attracted Western attention long before Sotheby's which forms the milestones for this chapter.

The first was the "illegal" exhibition on a vacant lot in the Belyayevo forest in 1974, later to be known as the "Bulldozer Exhibition" since the officials destroyed the hanging works on the

⁷ ZhEK's, or the regional housing committees in Soviet Union, were established as intermediary agents between State and citizens on issues regarding housing and locating of individuals into houses. Since in the Soviet Union private property was abolished, the State controlled and determine the housing condition/situation/location for each citizen and ZhEKs were the regional operators and controllers regarding those issues. For more information, see Chapter 2.

trees with bulldozers giving the lack of a permit for exhibiting as a reason. Immediately following the Bulldozer incident, which echoed in Western press reaching beyond the boundaries of Moscow and the Soviet Union, the tradition of "room visits" by the Western aristocrats began. During the late 1970s, when the visas for foreign visitors were seemingly restricted, the central portion of Western visitors was aristocrats, and following the Bulldozer exhibitions certain aristocrats, later became leading collectors of Moscow Nonconformist Art, visited artist rooms and smuggled works outside of the Union to be exhibited. The strict controls on the borders required artists to produce artworks to be fitted in the suitcases of the collectors, hence referred to as "suitcase art." The second set of incidents is the wave of immigration of Nonconformist artists, which began in 1975 and slowly accumulated over the years. Since to get the necessary permission to leave the Union was tricky enough, the Western geography began to construct the idea of the unofficial art on the few and far between artworks produced by these few artists who emigrated early.

Therefore, Chapter 3 follows the footsteps of smuggled artworks without their artists in the West, on the one hand, and Nonconformist artists on the move and collectively participating and organizing Nonconformist exhibitions in the Western geographies on the other. The aim is to discuss the decontextualized artist and their decontextualized artworks through a selection of artworks and documents they produced either on Soviet spatiality/architectural elements or as reenactments of alternative/experimental exhibitions they once organized back home. While discussing the role and re-definition of "collective" and collective exhibitions in the conjuncture of the ideologically individualistic West and comparison to the ideal and practice of collectivity in the Soviet Union, this chapter dwells on the concept of deformation, in terms of artists, networks, practices, and architectural ensembles.

1.2 The Method of the Thesis

The scholarly research developed on the Moscow Nonconformist circle is very few in numbers. Although a detailed analysis of the sub-groups and fragments within the Nonconformist circle as well as singular events, performances, and exhibitions have been developed in recent years, they lack the necessary architectural analysis to associate the

Nonconformist activities or products with the Soviet architectural context they were formed in/concerned about. Moreover, there is a significant absence in the field interrelating either the artworks produced with the spaces they were produced in and with their broader context, or the spatial and architectural connotations in Moscow Nonconformist artworks. Therefore, this study aims to offer an alternative methodology to render the Moscow Nonconformist networks of actors to reveal their role/affect on forming networks of places. Methodologically, the main input to find the interplay between actors active within and through each generation and architectural spaces as Nonconformist playground is the individual biographies of the artists.

The biographies of artists are firstly used to generate a network of relationships spanning to three generations of Nonconformist circle, forming an intertwined collective association. Tracing three generations and 60 actors contributing to Nonconformist milieu, including the artists, critics, historians, and collectors of Moscow Nonconformist art, however, required a system of filtering on whom to focus.

While filtering individual artists of focus, this study uses a simple algorithm: the individual relationships between the artists, the sub-groups, and collectives were put on a graph showing the general network for each generation using a platform⁸ that allows one to map and analyze data-networks. This particular platform allows the transformation of single nodes of focus into a complex web of relationships. Individual nodes, which in our case, the artists, are connected to each other through links. These links are pre-defined in terms of relationship types between nodes. In our case, the relation type examples include 'closed circle,' 'roommate,' 'members of a certain sub-group,' 'mentor,' 'acquaintances,' etc. The node with the most link connected gets more apparent, dominant, and more abundant in size. The larger nodes in the graph, or the artists of focus, are used to form the discussion. For each generation of artists, a graph of networks is constructed. Upon the artists who have the most connection, the study forms a network of places. Therefore, the organization of each chapter firstly revolves around those artists and the spaces of those artists.

⁸ The platform mentioned here is Graph Commons, a website operating online allowing users to produce complex graphics for mapping, analyzing and publishing data-networks. The site is designed to transform individual data into interactive maps.

See: graphcommons.com

While the method for selection of actors is explained above, definitions of Nonconformist spaces change in each chapter.

- * the first chapter, formations of Nonconformist circle and practice, mainly focuses on artist rooms;
- * the second chapter, reformations in the circle and of Nonconformist practice, mainly analyzes artist squat instead of single rooms, and semi-official artist clubs as exhibition spaces; and
- * the third chapter, deformation in the circle and of Nonconformist practice, concerns the museum space in different cities in Western geography.

Therefore, the analysis requires a common denominator, which conceptually connects the typologically, functionally, and spatially different places. That common denominator is chosen to be artworks of the artists, and the spaces of concern mentioned above are categorized as the spaces that are hosting the artworks -rooms, squats/artist clubs, museums-. Therefore; each chapter is divided into two sections, the first is networks, and the second is artworks; the former giving the necessary framework to filter the focus, and the latter will form the connection to the spatial analogies and architectural history.

1.3 The Sources

1.3.1 Primary Sources

In terms of Nonconformist art history, artist networks, and artists' take on the architectural history of Moscow, three types of literary output formed the primary sources of this study: gosizdat - literature emanating from official Soviet publishing houses and thus having the approval of the state censor; samizdat - unapproved material produced or reproduced unofficially in the Soviet Union; and tamizdat - works also denied approval by the official censor but published abroad (either with or without their author's consent) and then smuggled back into the Soviet Union. The latter category includes the republication of pre-revolutionary works unobtainable in Soviet libraries as well as the printing of manuscripts written by Russian

émigrés or by Soviet authors denied an outlet in their homeland. While gosizdat, samizdat and tamizdat are not separate phenomena isolated from one another, they are also a significant part of Soviet culture during the period this study concerns and will help to achieve a broader panorama to conduct a similar story from both official and unofficial perspectives on the Nonconformist artistic discourse between 1975-1991. While Gosizdat materials are expected to give the understanding of "unofficial" art from an "official" point of view, the samizdat materials allow to have insight for the artistic milieu from within following artists documenting themselves and their architectural/social context, and the tamizdat offers a perspective from outside of the Soviet Union looking in worked as an intermediary between artists and the Western art world.

During the period between 1975-1991, a group of artists from the Nonconformist circle published two different samizdat series. The first one was titled as "MANI FOLDERS"⁹ which were published between 1981-1986 and mainly in the form of compiled artist books containing material on unofficial practice, new artworks produced by themselves, the exhibition and meeting locations, as well as theoretical texts, documents regarding unofficial exhibitions/happenings/meetings and also documents of Moscow city spaces, Moscow's housing conditions, and artist apartments. Following MANI Folders, as a one-person initiative, the artist Vadim Zakharov created a samizdat series titled "PASTOR"¹⁰– circulated among artists during the final year of the USSR. While all of these underground circulations were occurring within the borders of the Soviet Union, an emigre Nonconformist artist from Moscow, Igor Shelkovsky, started publishing the magazine A-YA, circulated between 1979-1985 and smuggled the tamizdat in Moscow.¹¹

⁹ The passages extracted and used from MANI Folders can be found in chapter 1.

¹⁰ The year PASTOR started circulating and its status in between a samizdat and an ordinary magazine forms an invaluable discussion for Chapter 2.

¹¹ A-YA, while worked as the “advertisement board” for Moscow Nonconformist art scene targeting Western art enthusiast and collectors, the tamizdat also significant in the sense that it publishes Western artworks side by side with Nonconformist ones, while Shelkovsky visited ‘hip’ artists of the 1970s in New York interviewing with them on their take Soviet unofficiality creates a significant case for the discussion of decontextualization for Chapter 3.

The study, in respect to the changing situations/relationships of Nonconformist artists with the official art world, relies on Gosizdat materials; most daily newspapers, as the leading news outlets for the Soviet Union, are frequently used in the thesis including Pravda,¹² Komsomolkaya Pravda,¹³ Literaturnaya Gazeta (Literary Newspaper),¹⁴ and Novyi Mir.¹⁵ Besides the daily reads, the study benefitted from the materials published in art journals of the State between 1970s-1991, including Isskustvo (Art)¹⁶ and Ogonyok.¹⁷

Besides the sources published during the period 1975-1991, the study uses artist memoirs, letters, logs, video, and sound recordings as primary sources. Among them is Ilya Kabakov's memoirs written on 1960s and 1970s: "60-e - 70-e: Zapiski o neofitsialnoi zhizni v Moskbe" (60s - 70s: Notes on underground life in Moscow) in which Kabakov as an observant/participant of the activities of all three generations of Moscow Nonconformists gives valuable insight to the formation of Nonconformist networks and early artworks;

¹² Pravda (1918-1991): the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous publications and Web sites continued under the Pravda name.

¹³ Komsomolskaya Pravda (1925-): During the Soviet era, Komsomolskaya Pravda was an all-union newspaper of the Soviet Union and an official organ of the Central Committee of the Komsomol. As the Soviet Union started to collapse, the paper shifted from serving as a Komsomol mouthpiece to become a Russian nationwide daily tabloid newspaper.

¹⁴ Literaturnaya Gazeta (1929-): the official organ of the Federation of Unions of Soviet Writers, it was a weekly cultural and political newspaper published in Russia and the Soviet Union. It was published for two periods in the 19th century and was revived in 1929. In 1990, with the end of the Soviet Union, the newspaper became an independent collective, and in 1997 formed itself into a publicly traded company.

¹⁵ *Novy Mir* (1925-): monthly literary magazine published in Moscow. In the early 1960s, *Novy Mir* changed its political stance, leaning to a dissident position. At the beginning of perestroika, the magazine practiced increasingly bold criticism of the Soviet Government, including figures such as Mikhail Gorbachev.

¹⁶ Isskustvo(1933-): Founded in 1933, the magazine was the first periodical in the USSR in the visual arts and, over the years of its existence, has gained great authority both among domestic and foreign experts and art lovers. Even despite the strict ideological framework, articles published in the "Art" in the 30s and 70s, from an art history, "noble" point of view, always aroused great interest and were a role model.

¹⁷ Ogonyok (1899-): issued since 1899, Ogonyok was re-established in the Soviet Union in 1923 in Moscow. The colour magazine reached the pinnacle of its popularity in the Perestroika years, when its editor-in-chief "was guiding Ogonyok to a pro-American and pro-capitalist position". Kotz, D.M. & Weir, F. "Chapter 4: Glasnost and the intelligentsia", in *Revolution from Above: The Demise of the Soviet System*. London: Routledge, 1997, p. 65.

Nonconformist artist George Kiesewalter's two compilations of the memoirs of the artists active in 1970s in "Eti strannyye semidesyatyaye, ili Poterya nevinnosti" (Those Strange Seventies or Loss of Innocence (Moscow: NLO, 2010)), and those active in 1980s in "Perelomnyye vos' midesyatyaye v neofitsial' nom iskusstve SSSR" (Tipping the Eighties in the Unofficial Art of the USSR (Moscow: NLO, 2014)) as well as his compiled album on Moscow Nonconformist activities spanning to almost 20 years in the album "Insayder" (Insider (Moscow: NLO, 2016)); historian and a figure of Nonconformist circle Victor Tupitsyn's compilation of dialogues with the artists "Krug obshcheniya" (The Milieu (Moscow: NLO, 2013)); and art critic, also a figure of Nonconformist circle Joseph Backstein's compilation of dialogues "Vnutri kartiny. Stat' i dialogi o sovremennom iskusstve" (Inside the picture. Articles and dialogues about contemporary art (New Literary Review: 2015)).

The primary source of research in terms of architectural history, and the history of housing in general is the official printed media, namely the gosizdat. The obsession of the Soviet government documenting every 'achievement' in the area of construction through the agency of State makes the printed media an invaluable source and a significant archive. Throughout the long history of the Soviet Union, there were hundreds of State-officiated printed media, including newspapers, magazines, and journals published. However, architectural journals as a genre had a special place showcasing the merits of the Soviet State. Especially Moscow, as the Soviet capital had the most attention. Starting from the early 1920s, a series of architectural journals started being published, three of which composes the primary source for re-visiting the architectural history of the Union:

Sovremennaya Arkhitektura (Modern Architecture),¹⁸ to trace the earlier experimentation on housing typologies and collective living; Arkhitektura SSSR (Architecture of the USSR),¹⁹

¹⁸ Sovremennaya Arkhitektura (Modern Architecture) (1926-1930): a journal published by the Constructivists in OSA (Organization of Contemporary Architects). The first issues were edited by Moisei Ginzburg and the Vesnin brothers. It provided an outlet for architectural theory and design for both Soviet and Western European architects, pursuing a distinctly internationalist program of design. The journal shut down toward the beginning of 1931, replaced by the All-Union journal Soviet Architecture, which gradually shifted in the direction of neoclassicism.

¹⁹ Arkhitektura SSSR (Architecture of the USSR) (1933-1991): an illustrated monthly magazine. It was a publication of the Union of Architects of the USSR and also the State Committee for Civil Engineering and Architecture. It covered the issues of urban development.

SSSR na Stroike (USSR in Construction),²⁰ and Sovetskaia arkhitektura (Soviet Architecture),²¹ especially when tracing the architecture of Stalinist Architecture and architecture of the Thaw; and Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy (Architecture and construction of Moscow),²² the magazine specifically designed to archive and document the ideas, ideals, and projects developed for the reconstruction of Moscow as the Soviet capital.

Additionally, to trace changing architectural terminologies for the house and the city, the thesis also benefitted from State-sanctioned journals concerning the interior design and decorative arts, for which the thesis uses to form a comparable study of Nonconformist re-appropriation of the interiors with the socialist ideals of an interior. In this regard, the study often refers to the journal *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR* (Decorative Art of the USSR),²³ especially for the period following the privatization of communal room, and re-appropriation of the interior as a private sphere as well as the interior decoration became an emerging concern.

For the exhibitions of Moscow Nonconformist circle held in the Western geographies, the primary source was exhibition catalogs and exhibition holding in gallery and museum archives keeping photographs, the preliminary drawings of the artists as well as curatorial planning schemes. Also, this thesis uses post-exhibition critics and evaluations in various media,

²⁰ SSSR na Stroike (USSR in Construction) (1930-1941): was a journal which became an artistic gem and counter-current in the first year of socialist realism. With elements such as oversized pages and multi-page foldouts, each issue exists as an elaborate artistic creation. As was written in the preface of the first issue, the self-proclaimed purpose of the magazine was to "reflect in photography the whole scope and variety of the construction work now going on the USSR".

²¹ Sovetskaia arkhitektura (Soviet Architecture) (1931-1933): began publication when all architectural movements were being merged into VANO, an association of architectural organizations that existed between 1930 and 1932. As an interim publication that followed *SA* and preceded *Arkhitektura SSSR*, *Sovetskaia arkhitektura* covered activity in the Soviet architectural community during the crucial transition period of 1931-33.

²² Arkhitektura i stroitel'stvo Moskvy (Architecture and construction of Moscow): a monthly scientific, practical, cultural and educational magazine. It started publishing in 1952 to highlight issues of urban policy, describing architecture and the urban environment, housing problems, various restoration and design projects in domestic and foreign construction as an organ of the Moscow City Executive Committee.

²³ Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR (Decorative Art of the USSR) (1957-1971): the monthly journal of the Union of Artists in the USSR. Publication began in Moscow in 1957 with the appearance of one unnumbered issue. Its circulation was 20,700 in 1971. The journal deals with the current practice, theory, and history of monumental decorative art, decorative applied art (art industry and popular art), ornamental art, and design, as well as with questions of the synthesis of the arts.

including leading art journals like Flash Art, Artforum, and Art Journal, to get an insight on Western gaze towards Nonconformist art exhibiting in a new context.

The archival material plays a significant role for this study. The central portion of Nonconformist artworks, samizdat, and tamizdat folders, artists' albums, photographs, recordings, letters, logs, and texts are held in two different archives which were visited during the research for the thesis. The first belonged to one of the leading collectors of Nonconformist art, Norton Dodge, who donated his archive to Zimmerli Art Museum, a university-based museum working under Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1991 which has been kept under the name Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection. The second is a Moscow-based museum, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, which holds most of the artists' personal archives as well as some of the official documents published regarding the unofficial circle.

For official documents, including decrees and regulations Central State Archive of Moscow Oblast' (TSGAMO) in Moscow; for printed media, official journals of art and architecture, as well as daily newspapers Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI) and Tretyakov Gallery Archives in Moscow, are visited. On early Soviet visuality and for the artworks and designs of Soviet Constructivists Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Archives in New York was an invaluable contribution to the thesis.

Regarding Nonconformist exhibitions in the West, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Archives is visited for the files regarding the exhibitions "Dislocations" (1991) and "10+10: Contemporary Soviet and American Painters" (1988); Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and Kunstbibliothek in Berlin are visited regarding the exhibition "Isskunstvo" (1989). In addition, the exhibition catalogs of the exhibitions: "La nuova arte Sovietica" (NEW ART FROM SOVIET UNION) at La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy in 1977; Mosca - Terza Roma at Sala 1, Rome in 1989; The Green Show at Exit Art, New York in 1990; "Between Spring and Summer: Soviet Conceptual Art in the Era of Late Communism" at Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in 1991; and "MANI MUSEUM – 40 Moskauer Kuenstler. Karmelitenkloster" at Frankfurt am Main, Germany in 1991.

1.3.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources for the study include published material both in Russian and English. The books, booklets, and articles of primary figures in the fields of Nonconformist Art and practice, and history of Soviet visuality and architecture.

Regarding the Nonconformist art scene, the primary published sources include the books and articles of Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn, two actors who have been a part of the Moscow Nonconformist circle themselves. Among their publications, the thesis traces the experiments of Nonconformist artists with museological practices in "Museological Unconscious" (MIT, 2006) and "Moskva- Niu York, Niu York-Moskva ("Moscow-New York, New York-Moscow," WAM, 2006))." Moreover, the exhibition catalog "Sots Art" (The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986), and the book "Apt Art: Moscow Vanguard in the '80s" (Washington Project for the Arts, 1984) is significant to understand Tupitsyns' the curatorial experiences regarding the Nonconformist exhibits held in the United States.

The input from one the collectors of Nonconformist art, and an active figure among the Nonconformist artist during Perestroika, Leonid Talochkin editing two volumes on the history of unofficial art in Moscow in "Drugoe iskusstvo": Moskva, 1956-76; k khronike khudozhestvennoï zhizni. ("Other Art": Moscow 1956-76; The chronicles of the artists' life", (Interbuk , 1991)); the art historians Ella Rosenfeld's book "From Gulag to Glasnost: Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union" (Thames and Hudson, 1995); and Ekaterina Degot's book compiled with one of the nonconformist artists active during 1980s, Vadim Zakharov, "Moskovskii Konzeptualizm" ("Moscow Conceptualism," (WAM, 2005)) are valuable to look at the general atmosphere of the last 50 years of the Union from the unofficial eye. Additionally, the journalist Andrew Solomon's book on his journey to Moscow following the Sotheby's auction in 1988 and his developing relationship with the last generation of Nonconformist circle "The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost" (Knopf, 1991) is a significant insight of the Western eye into Nonconformist scene.

On the history of art and architecture of the Soviet Union, the sources used mainly consist of prominent figures in their fields.

Regarding Soviet official art and its history, Christina Kiaer's book "Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism" (MIT, 2005), Christina Lodder's book "Russian Constructivism" (Yale: 1985), and John Bowlt's book "Russian Art of the Avant-Garde: Theory and Criticism 1902-1934" (Thames & Hudson, 2017) give valuable analysis on Constructivist movement and visuality in early years of Soviet Union; while on the history of Stalinist art and architecture Igor Golomstock's "Totalitarian Art: In the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People's Republic of China. New York" (Icon Editions, 1990), and Boris Groys' book "The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond" (Princeton, 1992) is used as primary sources.

On the history of architecture, the study refers to Selim Khan-Magomedvedov's book "Pioneers of Soviet Architecture" (Rizzoli, 1987) and Matthew Cullerne Bown's book "Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-party State, 1917 -1992" (MUP, 1993) are used to give a general idea on Soviet projects and ideals on architecture on all scale. For a more detailed analysis on Stalinist architecture Vladimir Paperny's book "Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two" (CUP, 2002), Susan Reid's "Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc" (Oxford, 2002) is more detailed on the architecture of the Thaw. Especially on Soviet experimentation on collective living on domestic sphere and as a general introduction to Soviet housing, William Brumfield's book "Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History (Cambridge, 1993); on experimentation on housing during early Revolutionary years, Richard Stites' book "Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution" (Oxford, 1989); on the communal living and communal apartments of Stalin period, Sheila Fitzpatrick's book "Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times-Soviet Russia in the 1930s" (Oxford, 1999), and Stephen Kotkin's book "Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization" (Berkeley, 1995) is used.

CHAPTER 2

FORMATIONS

When Ilya Kabakov started working in the Moscow Publishing House “Znanie” (Knowledge)²⁴ in 1962, he met Ulo Sooster, another graduate of Surikov Institute, like Kabakov. Through Sooster, Kabakov meets Ernst Neizvestny and Lianozovo group, all belonged to the generation of artists, according to Kabakov, who "invented unofficial art."²⁵ During the 1960s, unofficial art existed in a relatively small circle under conditions of relative secrecy. When unofficial artist circles were barely assembling around certain figures, the tiny group came to be known as Lianozovo was getting together around the artist Oscar Rabin and Alexander Glezer. Lianozovo was an antiestablishment built 'in spite of' official establishment, unlike the Nonconformists between 1975-1991, who were practicing 'against' the official establishment.

Meanwhile, another group was relying on the mentorship of the sculptor Ernst Neizvestny, an official sculptor during the 1950s, whose dispute with the Soviet leader during the semi-official Manege exhibition became legendary among the unofficial circle of Moscow that costed Neizvestny his official title as an artist.²⁶

²⁴ “Znanie” (“Knowledge”): a publishing house in Moscow, in Soviet times - the publishing house of the All-Union Society “Knowledge”. It was founded in 1951. The publishing house published various non-fiction books and brochures that were approved by State Committee of the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade of the USSR, to be Gosizdat material in the 1980s.

²⁵ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. [‘60s - ‘70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.3

²⁶ The dispute occurred during one of the high-profile events of the Khrushchev era, the visit by the Soviet leader of the exhibition of avant-garde artists in the Moscow Manege on December 1, 1962. During his visit, Khrushchev castigated the works as being anti-Socialist mostly belonged to the official artists that had been working on abstract art during their “free time”. The event became a turning point for underground artists who would had no opportunity to exhibit in official exhibition spaces following Khrushchev’s rebuke, therefore, the Manege exhibition was one of the key events for Nonconformists to own their underground situation and their non-exhibition spaces. For more information on Manege Exhibition, see Chapter 2.



Figure 2.1. Yekaterina Furtseva, Ernst Neizvestny, Leonid Brezhnev, Aleksey Kosygin, Nikita Khrushchev and others at the exhibition “30 Years of MOSKh” in Manege, Moscow, 1962.

Archive of Istoriya Rossii v fotografiyakh

Like Neizvestny, most of the artists were living "double lives", working in official institutions like publishing houses drawing mainly illustration for children's books during the day. They met in each others' apartments for talks and sharing ideas, exchanging coffee table books on Western modernism and producing artworks outside of the official genre of Socialist Realism during the night.

However, there are two reasons why the first unofficial artists are not used as a case study in the thesis, although the culture they formed operating outside of the official framework laid a solid foundation that made the flourishing of three generations of unofficial art possible between 1975-1991. The generation of unofficial artists of the 1960s, according to Victor

After the event Neizvestny often commented on the dispute during meetings in his room as: “My first impression of Khrushchev? In life, perhaps, I did not meet a person more uncultured, but at the same time I felt in him biological power and psychobiological grip.”

Tupitsyn, a historian spending two decades within the Nonconformist art circle and a scholar of significant works on the issue, "...lived and worked in denial of their communal psyche." Unlike their predecessors, artists active during the late 1970s and through the 1980s came to terms with what (or who) they really were.²⁷ By 'what' and 'who' they are, Tupitsyn refers to the subject of artworks produced, and spaces of those works are exhibited.

The generation 1960s differentiate from later generations of Nonconformists, firstly on their take on the exhibition space. The first generation of post-War Nonconformists, unable for various reasons to exhibit in official museums, showed their works in their apartments and arrange apartment gatherings. These mostly individual showings were far from organized exhibitions, partly because the first generation of artists were still dreaming of exhibiting in 'proper' museums. As Tupitsyn would put it, they did not come to terms with the fact that their artistic genre was outside of official one. The other reason for artists to "organize wild showings in private apartments" is the need to avoid "direct clashes with the authorities" as Oscar Rabin states during an interview with Leonid Talochkin.²⁸ The first of these showings was in the unofficial artist Alexander Ginzburg and his mother Lyudmila Ilyinichna Ginzburg's room on the second floor of a massive apartment on Bolshaya Pollyanna, 11/14, apt. 25 where previously 17 families lived. Oscar Rabin describes the room as: "They had almost no furniture, but the walls were hung with paintings by Lianozovo artists. You could come here without warning at any time of the day. Guests, poets, and dissident writers keen on talking about politics and art, the hostess made coffee in the room."²⁹

Meanwhile, Oscar Rabin was arranging showings in his apartment with the participation of Lianozovo artist circles, the name of which comes from the industrial area at the outskirts of Moscow, where the barracks of the former women's camp stationed by Lianozovo station which became the center of unofficial Soviet culture from 1958 to 1964. One of the barracks

²⁷ Tupitsyn, V. *Museological Unconscious*. MIT Press: Cambridge, 2009, p. 89.

²⁸ Talochkin, L. & Palmin, I. "Drugoe iskusstvo": Moskva, 1956-76; k khronike khudozhestvennoĭ zhizni. ["Other Art": Moscow 1956-76; The chronicles of the artists' life.], Moscow: Interbuk, 1991, op. cit, p.116.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.126.

lived the artist Oscar Rabin who hosted open weekends for viewing pictures and reading poetry.



Figure 2.2. Oscar Rabin in his room at Lianozovo Savelovskaya railway, barrack No. 2, apt. 2, 1969
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art Archive, Igor Palmin Collection, Moscow

The nature of lack of organization, or lack of context-dependency, since the artworks were not produced for apartments but for museum spaces is apparent in the atmosphere of the showings and meetings occurred. The artist Francisco Infante describes evenings at the mezzanine of Ernst Neizvestny as such:

I would recall the apartment of Ernst Neizvestny. It can be described like this: Neizvestny works on the mezzanine -he talks and draws illustrations for Dante while he makes it clear that he has little time and that he is forced (and can) simultaneously do several things. Below, some people watch his sculptures. We

sat on chairs, and he began to talk about his noisy and epic fight with Khrushchev. I was amazed that he did not let anyone open his mouth. Full and voluminous, his figure displacing the space, he spoke clearly and clearly, without a shadow of a doubt.³⁰

Taken from Infante's account, it is apparent that the artists who participated in meetings were more of gazers, visitors of one-person shows rather than members of a circle or a community. Meanwhile, starting in 1975, the networks of artists formed a coherent and collective network.

2.1 Formation of Networks: 1975-1986

...at least two remarkable and well-known paradigms of coverage of the facts and events of that decade [the '70s]: a) the culture was strictly divided into official and unofficial; and b) nonconformists in their opposition to the system acted as a united front.³¹

The time frame this thesis concern coincides with the Soviet Union's "stagnation period." The underground as a parasitic establishment flourished apart from "a grey Brezhnev world" reigning outside but still parallel to its material ethics and communist aesthetics. The writer Vladimir Sorokin once described the 1970s Moscow in an interview: "...[while] televisions reported increased milk yield and the intrigues of American imperialism, Soviet relations boiled in the institutions and Soviet borscht and saltworts were boiling on the plates. Inside [in unofficial circle], it was completely different: ... [there was this] realization that you are an inner emigrant in this vast, cruel country, a gray iceberg floating in an unknowingly

³⁰Infane, F. "Talk about the seventies with George Kiesewalter", in Kiesewalter, G. (eds.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.49.

³¹ Tupitsyn, V. "Introduction", in "Krug obshcheniya" [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.34.

unattainable communist future."³² One of Moscow Nonconformist artists, Victor Skersis, who was active during the 1980s, describes the 1970s Moscow as:

On Soviet holidays, half-dead leaders stood on the mausoleum and, hardly moving their arms, greeted the huge phalluses of ballistic missiles creeping along Red Square. Then a demonstration took place, shouting greetings to the "party, the government, and personally Leonid Ilich" in the mouthpiece. It seemed that Brezhnev would live forever. Everything was designed for eternity. On the files of sentences stood: "keep forever."³³

On the outside in the official world "socialism with a Soviet face" reared up, posters and slogans like "Party - Immortality Of Our Business!" or more mundane "Glory to the Trade of Soviet Union!" were posted on Kommunalki, Khrushchevki and was hanging from every governmental building. On the inside, the cultural underground became a method of both surviving and later internalizing in the draft of ideology and multi-faceted state control.

The underground artists of Moscow were shut in kitchens or the apartments of themselves and the circle of close-minded people. They wrote or drew for themselves and their alternative collective. As Sorokin observes, they "hid from communist radiation and paranoia by photocopying forbidden books, Western plates Kami, albums of "ideologically harmful" artists, bodies of beloved women, family, their texts."³⁴

³² Sorokin, V. "Oh, the seventies!", in Kiesewalter, G. (eds.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.]* Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.159.

³³ Victor Skersis quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Introduction", in "Krug obshcheniya" [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.34.

³⁴ Sorokin, V. "Oh, the seventies!", in Kiesewalter, G. (eds.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.]* Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.159.



Figure 2.3. Moscow, 1970s
“Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

The type of artists is the focus of inquiry belonged to the generation of "creative workers"³⁵ as once the unofficial artists Lev Rubinstein mentioned, who always focused solely on the official existence of their creative efforts. For these types of artists, non-printing or non-presentation of at least part of their products was then perceived and is now qualified as a personal drama. That fact alone self-determined the artists in the 1970s as "unofficial" or "second," culture. Creative workers who had been active through the 1960s, and some who had been engaged in the art scene of the 1970s, wished for official existence of their creative efforts. However, at the turn of the 1980s Moscow, the unofficial art circle became an established 'institution' that has its dynamics and networks. Methodologically, to find the interplay of actors active within and through each generation with each other, individual biographies of artists are traced. In this chapter, the study focuses on two generations of Nonconformist artists, and through their networks, the formation of Nonconformist milieu.

³⁵ Lev Rubinstein quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Introduction", in "Krug obshcheniya" [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.95.

The term generation here, therefore, both refers to a difference of age and the changes/shifts of dominant actors between a specified period. Between the first and second generation, the generational shifts tied to a wave of emigration. Emigration to West for Moscow Nonconformist artists had always been an object of desire, since practicing in the West would have presented them to exhibit at more mundane spaces like museums. Although the immigration of artists of generation-one did not occur at once, the chronology shows a pattern of a wave that happened between 1975-1979.³⁶ When artists from first-generation emigrated, it caused a re-clustering of the remaining artists, also a new generation of artists to emerge and start networking with the older generation.

Therefore, the first generation of Moscow Nonconformist artists includes the ones practicing between 1975-1979. And the second generation includes artists practicing between 1980-1986 until the period of reformation.

2.1.1 Generation One: Children of the Room and a Half

Upon that inquiry, the scheme developed over those relationships reveals two facts regarding the first generation of the unofficial circle which will be referred to in this story as the "children of a room and a half"³⁷:

1. Upon tracing backgrounds of the artists and their education within the Soviet system, the graph firstly reveals that the earlier networks were formed around and from the art institutes artists graduated from.
2. Secondly, these sub-groups built around institutes had all developed their own aesthetic terminology and sub-genre. The works all in a way adopted a version of an artistic perspective concerning Soviet innuendo during the 1970s. However, as a result of this sub-grouping two

³⁶ The dates of first wave of emigration coincide with the second wave of immigration from Soviet Union between 1970-1979.

³⁷ The term is derived from the poet Joseph Brodsky's auto-biographical poem on his life in the communal apartment, "A Room and A Half". A characteristic of the Stalin era, the communal apartment here issued to symbolize the period following the World War II, hence the artists which were active during 1970s is the generation born following the war.

parallel [underground] schools of thought emerged: Moscow Conceptualism and SotsArt, each having its take on the Soviet paradigms and eventually, their own interpretations of Soviet spatiality, and alternative spaces of exhibition.

Two layers of graphs is formed for the first generation of artists. In the first graph, the artists' educational backgrounds are shown, and in the second graph, the sub-groups developed within the first generation of Nonconformists are traced. It should be noted that the networks between artists were not stable between the period 1975-1986 due to some artists immigrating to the West. However, these accounts of leaving artists are singular and did not affect the networking until it accumulated to a point in 1979 when major actors left Moscow.

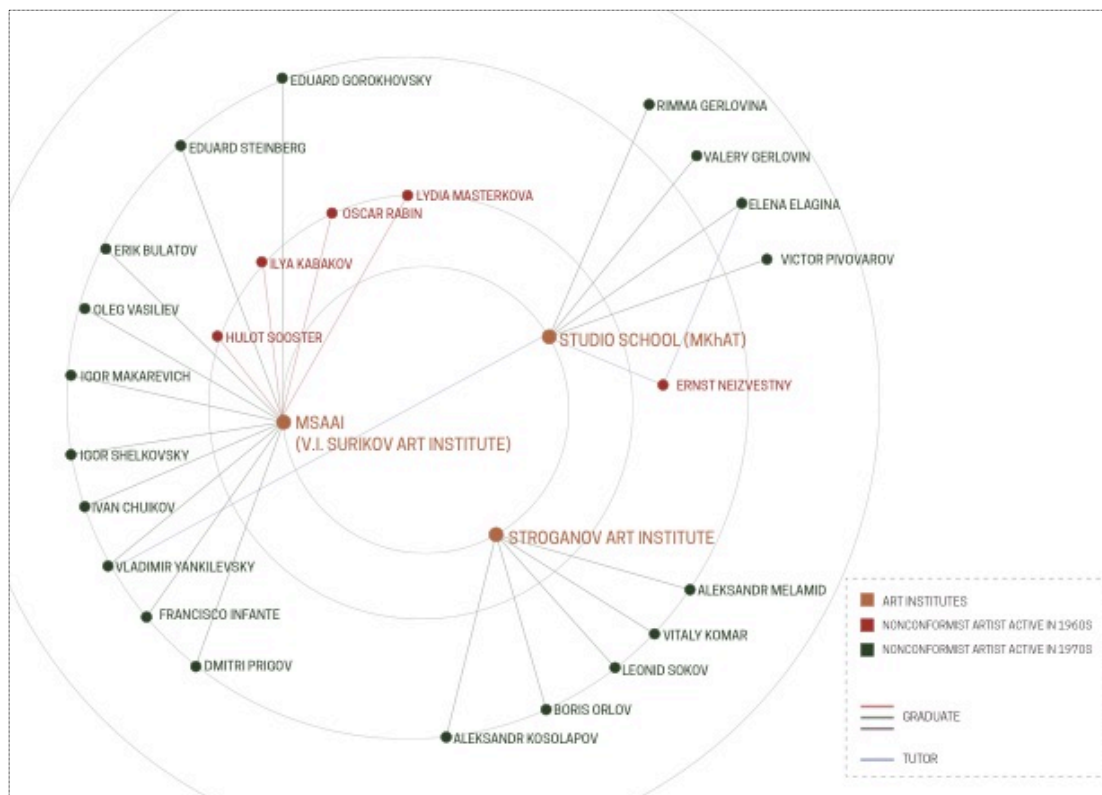


Figure 2.4. Artists of first generation Nonconformists and Art Institutes
Figure by the author

2.1.1.1 Art Institutes of Moscow

In the 1970s, there were three major art institutes in Moscow, the Moscow State Academic Art Institute, commonly known as MSAAI (V.I. Surikov Art Institute); Stroganov Art Institute; and Moscow Studio School.

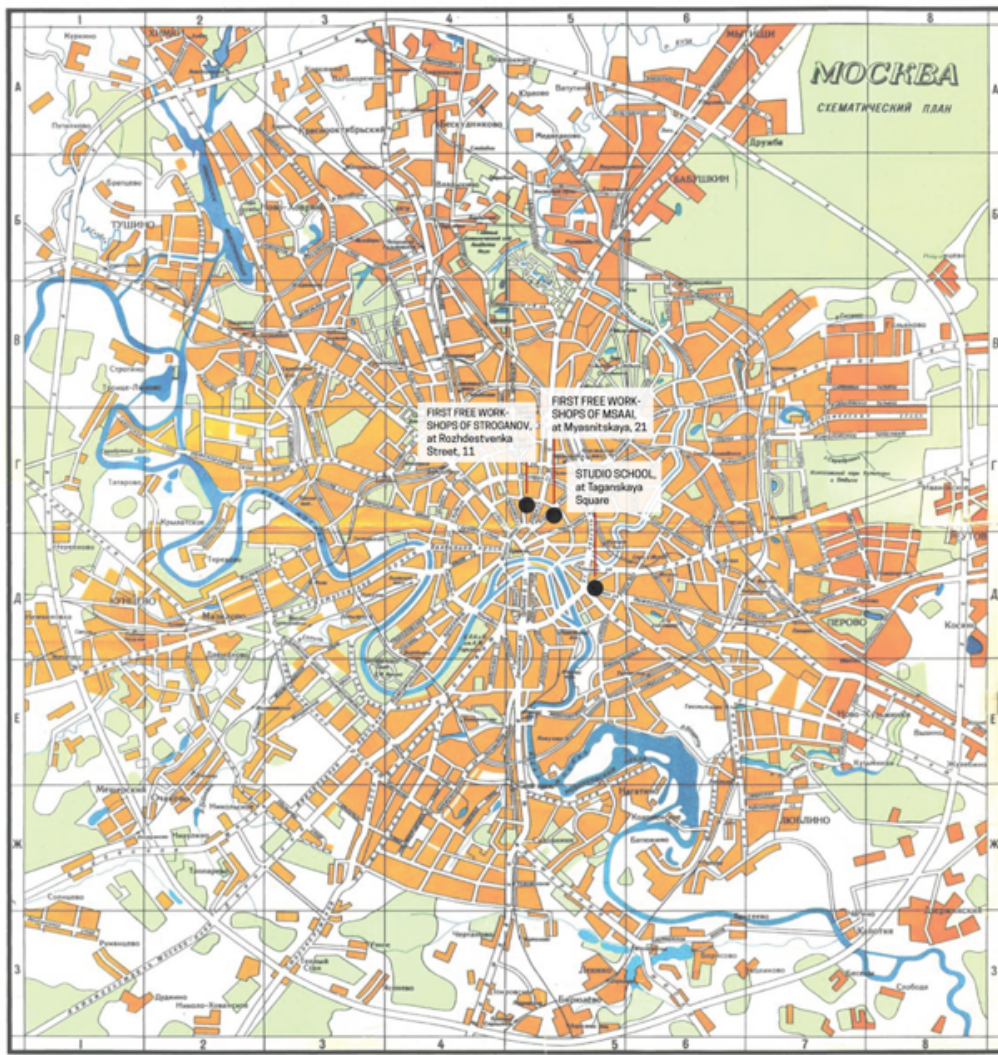


Figure 2.5. Locations of Art Institutes, Moscow 1970s
1966 General Map of Moscow, “Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

MSAAI (V.I. Surikov Art Institute) was established in 1832. After the October Revolution in 1917, it was renamed as The Moscow State Academic Art Institute, and together with Stroganov School of Art, the first Free Workshops³⁸ were created based on the former Stroganov School at Rozhdestvenka, 11. The second Free Workshops were located at Myasnitskaya, 21. In 1920, September 29, the workshops merged under VKhUTEMAS- (Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops).³⁹ After the disbanding of VKhuTEIN in 1930, the Institute was decided to have joint classes with Moscow Polygraphic Institute, which tended towards Realism at the time. This ideological reconstruction of the Institute towards Socialist Realism continued until the Great Patriotic War, until in 1943, then Dean S.T. Gerasimov spoke about the tasks of MSAAI Graduates guiding them to Socialist Realism.⁴⁰ Five years later, their efforts paid up, and in 1948, following the Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 16237 of 15.10. MSAAI received its autonomy and permanently placed at Myasnitskaya, 21 until the present day.

³⁸ The creation of Free Workshops belongs to the second stage of the post-revolutionary reform of art education, parallel to the unification of art institutes throughout the Union. The main reasons of the emergence of Free Workshops is firstly to reform the programs to include a joint and common training, while the workshops were planned to create an environment of collective productivity in arts as opposed to the idea of the individual's absolute creative freedom. The Free Workshops running under VKhUTEMAS were planned to be the main organ creating artistic personnel for industry. According to the decision of the Council of People's Commissars, Vhutemas [and Free Workshops] was "a special higher technical and industrial educational institution with the aim of preparing highly skilled artists and masters for industry, as well as instructors and leaders for vocational education." Source: Encyclopedia of the Russian Avant-Garde

³⁹ Vhutemas (Higher Artistic and Technical Workshops) was organized in Moscow as a result of the merger of the State Agricultural Art Museum I and II and was located in the buildings they previously occupied - on Rozhdestvenka, 11 (now MARCHI) and Myasnitskaya, 21 (now the Russian Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture). Vhutemas began working in the fall of 1920 (the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on his education was published only on December 25). In 1927, VKhUTEMAS was renamed VKhuTEIN (The Higher Art and Technical Institute), which was disbanded in 1930.

⁴⁰ Excerpt from the talk of S.T. Gerasimov is as follows: "First: the wide gates of your personal journey of art are now opening up to you ... Second: you need to constantly replenish the general culture, because an artist can only exist in their culture... One of the basic principles that we have been pursuing, I convey to you as a wish, is to distinguish genuine art from non-genuine. Only genuine art is valuable and for the sake of it, you must work with clear and pure realists. Your art must have complete indispensable and completely exhaustive sincerity."



Figure 2.6. MSAAI (V.I. Surikov Art Institute), Class of 1974
V.I. Surikov Art Institute, Institutional Archive

Ilya Kabakov, who graduated from MSAAI in 1957, met with Vladimir Yankilevsky in the late 1960s through Ülo Sooster, who was mentoring him at the time and was also a graduate of V.I. Surikov Art Institute's sculpture division like Kabakov. Meanwhile Vladimir Yankilevsky was a graduate of the Moscow Middle School for Art (MSKhSh), part of the Surikov Institute, and had a close circle with Eduard Steinberg. Through Yankilevsky, he met with Eduard Steinberg in the beginning of 1970s. At the same time Kabakov had developed close ties with Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev, both studying at the painting division of Surikov Institute and graduated in 1958. Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev were sharing the same apartment at that time, where Kabakov and Sooster were frequent visitors. During early 1970s, Kabakov, Bulatov and Vasilyev was getting close to Eduard Gorokhovsky through Victor Pivovarov. And the circle slowly came together, later to be known as "Sretensky

Boulevard" because of the proximity of the location of their apartments,⁴¹ and included Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Oleg Vasilyev, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Eduard Steinberg, Eduard Gorkohovsky, and Victor Pivovarov. In 1969, Ivan Chuikov came back from Vladivostok where he had been working for 2 years after graduating from Surikov Institute, and firstly got acquainted with Victor Pivovarov in early 1970s. Then through Pivovarov, he got close to the circle of Kabakov-Bulatov-Vasilyev on one hand, and through Igor Shelkovsky, he developed ties to a group of graduates of Moscow Studio School, who began to form a different circle around Rimma and Valery Gerlovin. In parallel, Igor Makarevich who graduated from MSKhSh in 1962 was acquainted with Francisco Infante whom he studies in a parallel class at the Institute, and to Yankilevsky. Infante and Makarevich got to know the circle of Kabakov-Bulatov-Vasilyev through Yankilevsky. Although Infante got closed to the Sretensky artists; Makarevich through his wife Elena Elagina, got close to the circle of Rimma and Valery Gerlovin. Remembering the 1970s, Makarevich states: "...we must remember that the MSAAI in which I studied was also a place of liberal freethinking, while my family was the repository of official ideology...So there, the first sprouts of our dissent were born. And this School was finished by many members of the generals of our nonconformist community: Yankilevsky, Kabakov, Bulatov, Vasiliev."⁴² Throughout the 1970s, the dynamics changed within this group, so-called "Sretensky Boulevard," and two orbits appeared with Kabakov in the center. There appeared a narrower circle of fellow students in the Surikov school (Kabakov, Bulatov, Vasiliev), and a wider circle of like-minded people, which included his teacher and neighbor at the workshop Hulot Sooster, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Eduard Shteinberg, Victor Pivovarov, and Eduard Gorokhovsky. Even though almost all artists of this group worked in publishing houses (mainly in children's), and many were members of the Moscow Union of Artists, their main work belonged to the underground.

⁴¹ See: 2.1.1.3 Apartment Networks

⁴² Makarevich, I. & Elagina, E. "Dialogue/Monologue: "About This""", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.43.



Figure 2.7. Oleg Vasiliev, Eric Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov and Eduard Gorokhovskiy in the apartment of I. Kabakov. Moscow, 1979. Photo by Igor Makarevich
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Makarevich Archive



Figure 2.8. Victor Pivovarov, and Ilya Kabakov, Gorkom Grafikov, Moscow 1978.
Photo by Eduard Steinberg
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Archive



Figure 2.9. Eduard Steinberg, Victor Pivovarov and Vladimir Yankilevsky in front of the house of Steinberg on Pushkinskaya street. Moscow, 1978
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Archive



Figure 2.10. Ilya Kabakov and Ulo Sooster in their apartment studying the monograph of P. Waldberg on Surrealism. Moscow 1970
Personal Archive of Ulo Sooster

The Studio School (MKhAT) was opened at the Moscow Art Theater in 1943. The initiator of its creation was Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko,⁴³ one of the founders of the Moscow Art Theater. The educational program of the School followed the footsteps of Stanislavsky. Among the leaders of the courses and teachers of the Studio School were well-known actors and directors, art historians, leading theater specialists in the Soviet Union in the field of stage movement, stage design, and production. In the depths of the Art Theater, the Sovremennik Theater was born in 1956. The first performances of which the Theater were rehearsed in the classrooms of the Studio School. Its creators - students and recent graduates of the School - were inspired by their teachers who dreamed of returning to the original idea of the Art Theater, which had been an avant-garde school of thought in performance arts. In 1954, the School was renamed as "Studio School for the Improvement of Qualifications at the Moscow School of Printing," and started operating under the direction of Eli Belyutin.⁴⁴ In 1958, the School was linked to the Committee of Graphic Designers and studios for graphic and stage design began to be organized in the School. In his speech at the opening of the first Studio for Advanced Studies at the City Committee of Artists of Books, Graphics, and Posters, Belyutin had criticized the "wingless realism" of official art. Instead, he called for a breakthrough in arts. He formulated the objectives of his course as follows: "We will go through the whole world history of human culture and art, and all the countries of our time. We will analyze the most diverse methods, principles of visualization and expression, and the

⁴³ Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko, (born December 23 1858, died April 25, 1943, Moscow, Russia, U.S.S.R.): Russian playwright, novelist, producer, and cofounder of the famous Moscow Art Theatre. Both as producer and as literary adviser, he was chiefly responsible for the reading and selection of new plays, and he instructed Stanislavsky on matters of interpretation and staging as well. Nemirovich-Danchenko encouraged both Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorky to write for the theatre, and he is credited with the successful revival of Chekhov's *Seagull*.

⁴⁴ Eli Mikhailovich Belyutin, an artist and teacher, is probably one of the most controversial figures of the "Thaw." Together with his wife, art historian Nina Moleva, Belyutin wrote several monographs on the history of art education in Soviet Union in the 1950s. Since 1954 he worked as a teacher at the Polygraphic Institute, but in 1958 he was fired and moved to Studio School. Belyutin is usually referred to as the founder of the first alternative to the official method of education. The essence of his method was revolutionary at that time. Students painted on any surface with almost all possible tools, including mops and nails. In publications of the early 1990s, Belyutin is listed as "the patriarch of the largest underground school." The artist was caught to the wrath of Secretary General Nikita Khrushchev, who visited the exhibition "30 Years of MOSSX" in Manege in 1962, where the works of Belyutin's studio were presented, and was very dissatisfied with what he saw. It is generally accepted in the literature that it was this scandal that became the catalyst for the birth of critical, semi-underground Soviet Nonconformism. For a broader discussion on Manege Exhibition, see Chapter 2.

best; we will select for service. The keyword in this text is best, rather than necessary."⁴⁵ Following Belyutin's footsteps, by 1959, Studio School became the first "free-spirited", semi-State-sanctioned educational institution in the history of Soviet art. In addition, the Studio School found a home on Taganskaia Street. Among the teachers at the time, there was Ernst Niezvestny who influenced the upcoming generation of Nonconformist artists.



Figure 2.11. The Studio School (MKhAT) during late 1950s
Arzamas Academy archive

Valery Gerlovin graduated as a stage designer from the School-Studio of the Moscow Art Theater of Stanislavsky (MKhAT) in 1967 and soon after in 1970 married to and started working with Rimma Gerlovina. They have been arranging reading sessions parallel to the

⁴⁵ Boris Zhutovsky, student of the first studio quoted in "Kursy povysheniya kvalifikatsii pri Gorkome khudozhnikov knigi, grafiki i plakata", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) "A time of hope, a time of illusion. Problems of the history of Soviet unofficial art. 1950-1960" [Vremya nadezhd, vremya illyuziy. Problemy istorii sovetskogo neofitsial'nogo iskusstva. 1950–1960 gody], Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2018, p.15.

meetings held at artist Aleksandr Yulikov's apartment. Aleksandr Yulikov who graduated from Moscow Polygraphic Institute, where Aleksandr Melamid and Vitaly Komar teaches at, acquainted with them. Through Komar and Melamid, Yulikov had access to foreign art magazines, mostly issues of Artforum which Komar and Melamid got smuggled into Soviet Union. Later on in 1974, Yulikov met with Gerlovins and shared the reading materials with them. While feeding him with the Western art history, Komar and Melamid also introduced Yulikov to the sculptor Leonid Sokov, another graduate of Stroganov Art Institute same year as Komar and Melamid. Through Yulikov, Sokov became a part of Gerlovin circle.

Meanwhile Vladimir Yankilevsky, who graduated from MSAAI started tutoring at Studio School and met with Gerlovins, whom with Yulikov, around the same time looking for an English-speaking underground artist. Since the foreign magazines shared during meetings and English, and there were not many artists who could speak at the time, so Yulikov invited Ivan Chuikov to the meetings, as in the artist's word, "as a translator."⁴⁶ Around the same time, Gerlovins discovered another artist, Sergei Shablavin, who often visits Studio School, and as they describe a "natural born conceptualist"⁴⁷ and invited him to the meetings. Shablavin introduced his close friend, the artist Igor Shelkovsky to the circle. Finally, Elena Elagina who graduated from MKhAT and started working with his tutor from the Institute, Ernst Neizvestny got acquainted with Valery Gerlovin. She then brings her husband, Igor Makarevich to the group. With that last addition, the circle around Gerlovins had been formed. Later in 1975, the group started organizing events in each other's apartments and referred to themselves in Zhelkovsky's words, "Creative Circle of 7."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Chuikov, I. "Probably, we were also dissidents", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.187.

⁴⁷ Gerlovina, R. & Gerlovin, V. "Retrospective", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.36.

⁴⁸ Shelkovsky, I. "In Memory," in Tupitsyn, V. "Introduction", in "Krug obshcheniya" [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.126.



Figure 2.12. Alexander Yulikov, Sergey Shablavin, Rimma Gerlovina, Valery Gerlovin, Igor Shelkovsky, Ivan Chuikov, Leonid Sokov, April 1976. Photo by Igor Makarevich
Rimma and Valery Gerlovin Personal Archive



Figure 2.13. Igor Makarevich, Alik Sidorov, Valery Gerlovin, Elena Elagina, Rimma Gerlovina in the apartment of Gerlovins, Moscow 1979
Rimma and Valery Gerlovin Personal Archive

The Stroganov Art Institute was founded as The University of Art and Industry by Count S.G. Stroganov in 1825 in Moscow. In 1892, the School moved to a building specially rebuilt for its needs at Rozhdestvenka Street, 11, which now is used by the Moscow Architectural Institute. The building at Rozhdestvenka Street, 11 has been a symbol of Russian Neoclassicism and received two Grand Prix at the international exhibition in Paris in 1900. After the October Revolution in 1918, The Stroganov Institute was transformed into the "First Free State Art Workshops" under Vhutemas and continued to operate at the same building. In 1928, when Vhutemas was reorganized as the Higher Art and Technical Institute - VKhUTEIN, The Stroganov Art Institute started running a joint program on Free Workshops with MSAAI. In 1945, the Institute was renamed as Moscow Higher School of Industrial Art, and in 1957 it moved to a new building that is still occupied designed by architect I.V. Zholtovsky and G.G. Lebedev along Volokolamskoye Highway, 9.

In the 1970s, "free swimming" began. We formed a small circle of those with whom I studied at Stroganov. Maybe, our spirit migrated from Stroganov Institute, where everyone [of us] skipped classes to chase the hobby of ours that is alternative art.

Aleksandr Kosolapov

Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamine both graduated from Stroganov Art Institute in 1967 and immediately working together within a shared apartment in Leninsky Prospekt. Aleksandr Kosolapov, who took a course together during their training in the Institute, started visiting their apartment during the early 1970s. Kosolapov had been sharing the same apartment with Boris Orlov and Leonid Sokov since their student years and introduced them to Komar and Melamid. Later, Sokov got closer to Gerlovin circle, however, through Orlov, Dmitri Prigov whom he met in House of Pioneers,⁴⁹ joined the circle. In 1974, Komar and Melamine decided to write a manifesto that would signify the common aesthetic language of the circle, on so-

⁴⁹ House of Pioneers was one of the meeting points of Nonconformist artists during 1970s. Occasionally, one-day shows exhibiting Nonconformist works were held, of course illegally.

called "Sots Art" (short for Socialist art), and the artists in the circle came to be known as Sots-Artists.



Figure 2.14. Aleksandr Melamid and Vitaly Komar in the common kitchen of their apartment at Leninsky Prospekt, Moscow 1972
Materials from the exhibition “Fragments from Life”, 2015, Moscow Museum Archive, Archive No: 1557

Although three distinctive sub-groups were practicing and meeting rather frequently, it should be noted that all artists individually came across one another at some point. Kabakov invited Gerlovins to his studio meetings. Meanwhile, Shelkovsky had been visiting Komar and Melamid in their apartment. Kosolapov, Orlov, and Sokov had been living on the Rogova Street, and later Orlov moved to Prigov's apartment near to Sretensky Boulevard in 1976 and got acquainted with Kabakov, Bulatov, and Vasilyev. Meanwhile, the graduates of Surikov Institute still had their ties during the 1970s, which was formed during school days.

All these networks summed up above is put on a graph of networks.⁵⁰ The graph mainly works on a simple algorithm: individual nodes representing the artists are linked via 'types of relationships' to other nodes. Each color in links represents a relationship type. For the first generation, the relationship types include:

1. the sub-circles: “Sretensky Boulevard”, “Sots Art”, and “Creative Circle:7”
2. individual relationships: “close circle”, “roommates”, “mentors” and “acquaintances”

The node with the most link connected gets more apparent, dominant, and larger in size. The larger nodes in the graph, the artist of focus, are used to discuss in the next section regarding networks of places. The graph reveals the artists who are more effective in their close circle and the general scheme. Since the scale of effectiveness is measured here on the artist's role for arranging and hosting meetings, their domestic space/apartments will be discussed as centers of attention.

Regarding the first generation, the graph reveals that the sub-circles are formed around three key figures: Kabakov, Gerlovins, and Komar-Melamid.

In addition, for Sretensky Boulevard, Bulatov-Vasilyev, and Yankilevsky's apartments were centers of meeting. For "Creative Circle:7", after Sokov was invited to the circle, the sessions started taken place between Sokov's, Gerlovins' and Chuikov's apartment, which became centers of focus. In Sots Art circle, Komar and Melamid's apartment of Leninsky Prospect had always been the main center of attraction. However, when Prigov and Orlov got an apartment on Sretensky Boulevard, and Kosolapov emigrated for New York in 1975, while Komar and Melamid emigrated in 1978, the center of focus shifted towards the apartment of Orlov-Prigov.

⁵⁰ The platform mentioned here is Graph Commons, a website operating online allowing users to produce complex graphics for mapping, analyzing and publishing data-networks. The site is designed to transform individual data into interactive maps.

See: graphcommons.com

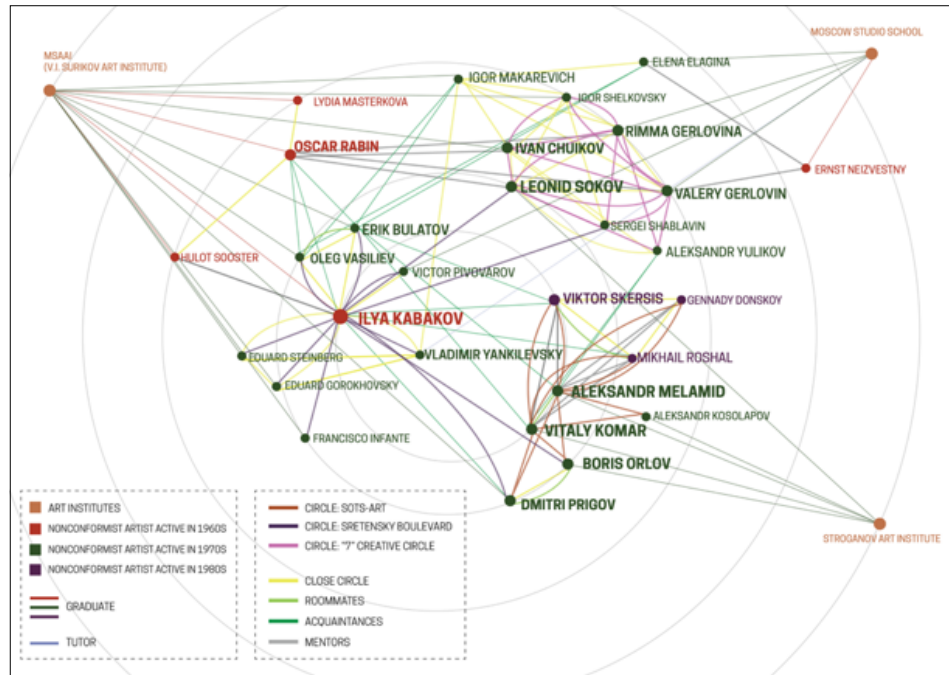


Figure 2.15. Graph of Artists of first generation Nonconformists and their networks
Figure by the Author

The art Institutes in which Nonconformist artists were educated in and workshops they attended were the first places and foundations of networks. However, these three art institutes were especially the centers of relative free-thinking. MSAAI and Stroganov had been founded on the idea of free workshops, and Studio School still depended on its vanguard roots, especially after the involvement of Belyutin. This very tradition of "free workshops" was the first of many cultures indigenous to Soviet history that had been adopted by Moscow Nonconformist artists. The idea behind the State Free Art Workshops ("SVOMAS") was to form a collective pedagogical system fueling the creativity of the artists by interacting students of different institutes with each other. In 1918, first free workshops of the Soviet Union were formed by students of Art Institutes of MSAAI and Stroganov. With the idea of reforms merging institutions should develop as a network, they applied to VSNKH (the Supreme Economic Council) and to Glavprofobr.⁵¹ With support of these organizations, and with

⁵¹ Glavprofobr (Chief Administration for Vocational Training), established in 1921 as part of the People's Commissariat for Education of the RSFSR (Narkompros) on the basis of the Chief Committee for Vocational-Technical Trainin

personal participation of Lunacharsky, a decree on the creation of VKHUTEMAS was carried out through the Council of People's Commissars. The decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the formation of VKHUTEMAS was signed by Lenin on November 29, 1920. This decree marked the beginning of an education system offering a collective of art and architecture students to learn and later to operate under an institutionalized and standardized system. Although the aim was to encourage an interactive environment for sharing ideas, following the Party Decree "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations," the free workshops transformed into "totalitarian factories"⁵² to create monotype creative workers. The decree states the necessity of the unionization of Soviet arts into several monolithic organizations under Party control, membership of which would be obligatory for anyone pursuing a career in arts.

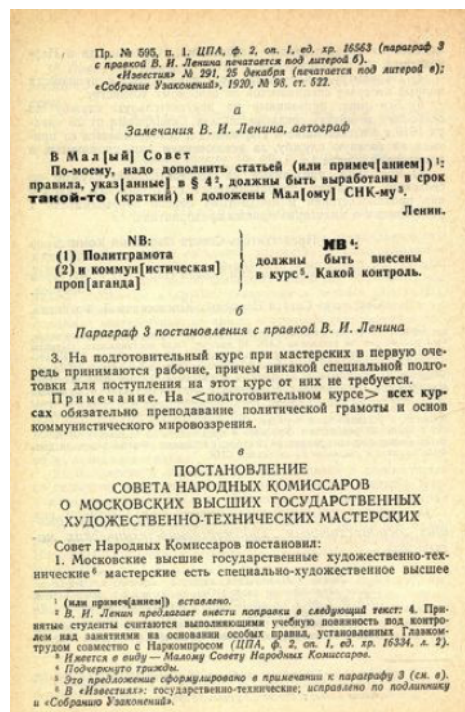


Figure 2.16. The decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the formation of VKHUTEMAS, November 29, 1920
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), f. 681 inv. 1

⁵² Lev Rubinstein, quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Introduction", in "Krug obshcheniya" [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.98.

We lived like in a monastery: fenced off from the outside world, as if we are under siege, outside - a hostile environment. Inside the "monastery" love and harmony reigned, there was no competition.

Ilya Kabakov

The implementation of this exact decree gave birth to the formation of the Nonconformist network in Moscow. Fifty years after the first free workshops were formed, the graduates of the same institutes who invented Free Workshops were re-visiting the idea of an interactive circle and creating their own collective free workshops. However, ironically, their reasoning for forming free workshops was not to feed creativity in the Soviet education system, but because they cannot find a place in the institutionalized art world, and formal artistic structure. By the 1960s and 1970s, in the light of Thaw, the art institutes were relatively open-minded, and in the official creative organizations, all organized under MOSKh (Moscow Artists' Union), a relatively closed circle of artists started believing in international co-operations.⁵³ However, the Nonconformist art and the artworks mostly thought to be mocking with Soviet heritage was still too extreme for the official scene. Therefore, the artists retrieved to their rooms and started holding alternative meetings and alternative exhibitions between like-minded people where their newly achieved private sphere seemed to be protecting them/their artworks from official eyes.

Especially for the artists of the first generation of Nonconformists, the private sphere of a room was newly achieved, rarely possessed, and highly appreciated opportunity to form their networks, and practice their art. It was not a coincidence the Nonconformist art practices flourished in artist apartments, following the privatization of rooms during Thaw after a 40-year-long project of communal living when the artists gained the privacy of producing alternative art. To be able to trace the room as an artist's space: domestic space/workshop/gallery, it is necessary to determine the evolution of the Soviet House in time.

⁵³ See the discussion on the formation of left MOSKh, in Chapter 2.

2.1.1.2 The Soviet House: An Introduction to a Collective Domesticity & Public Privacy

The long history of the Soviet House began right after the October Revolution in a new regime still battling with the effects of World War I.

During the first years of the 20th century, one of the main problems of Tsarist Russia was housing. The rapid expansion of apartment construction in Moscow during the first decade in the 20th century serving the needs of the upper-middle class was far from the reach of the majority of the population. Many projects were produced with a claim to architectural distinction, yet these improvements in 'design' could not address the more significant problems of housing availability. The 'extravagant' apartment construction, however, remained untouched by social reform. In his article "Building for comfort and Profit: The New Apartment House," William Craft Brumfield summarizes the situation as: "Unscrupulous property owners gained more profit per square meter in overcrowded, substandard buildings for transients and the lumpenproletariat that did the builders of apartments for the prosperous."⁵⁴ Even large segments of the middle class were faced with prohibitive rents.⁵⁵ At the bottom of the scale was the working class. Many had no permanent residence at all, particularly those living in the cities on a seasonal basis. Others were squeezed into subdivided and overcrowded apartments. Matey Dikansky, in his article "Housing problem and social experiments to solve it," describes the condition of worker apartments as:

The houses and apartments rented out to workers are distinguished for the most part by a complete denial of all hygiene rules. Terribly crowded, dirty, often dark and sometimes cold and damp indoors, which are the result of poor construction and lack of repair and that take much money for heating - these are the features

⁵⁴ Brumfield, W.C. "Building for comfort and Profit: The New Apartment House", in Brumfield, W.C. & Ruble, B.A. (eds.) *Russian Housing in the Modern Age*, Boston: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.76.

⁵⁵ Approximate rental figures as a proportion of income are summarized in Kirichenko E.I., "Prostranstvennaia organizatsiia zhilykh kompleksov Moskvy i Peterburga v nachale XX veka" [Spatial organization of residential complexes in Moscow and St. Petersburg at the beginning of the XX century], *Arkhitekturnoye nasledstvo* (Architectural Heritage), 1972:19, p. 119-120.

of most worker apartments as if they are deliberately designed to promote degeneration and degradation.⁵⁶

You'll agree that to have a separate apartment of your own is, after all, a pretty bourgeois thing to do. People ought to live together, in a collective family, and not lock themselves up in some private fortress.

Mikhail Zoshchenko
"A Summer Breather"

Domestic life is not a private matter!

Aleksandr Kuprin

This chaotic housing situation was the legacy the young Soviet state took over. On the second day of the revolution, the new Soviet government abolished all private ownership of land. On October 28, 1917, "Decree on Land" was published in the newspaper "Izvestia." The first article of decree clearly states: "Landlord property rights are abolished immediately without any compensation. On January 13, 1918, all-natural resources were declared to become a property of the whole nation. Probably the most critical factor in the formation of the Soviet housing projects was the role assumed by the state. The main element of the collectivization of housing was the state acquiring rights over all building procedures, also taking complete responsibility to provide housing for its citizens. The new housing policies took effect following the adoption in August 1918 of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars' decree "On the Abolition of the Right to Private Ownership of Urban Property." The latest degree focused on the design and construction of new houses, while included decisions on the exiting apartments. The Soviet State firstly believed that the new buildings designed for the proletariat should be "worthy of their class and taste," but more

⁵⁶ Dikanskiy, M.G., Kvaritirnyy vopros i sotsial'nyye opyty yego resheniya [Housing problem and social experiments to solve it], St. Petersburg city government, 1908, p.110.

importantly, they should propagate a collective living. Secondly, on the condition of existing bourgeois apartments, the decree proposes an organization that would later be known as "uplotnenie" (condensing).

Following the decree, radical efforts to affect a total cultural revolution were premised on the principle of environmental determinism - a late 19th-century design discourse given a Marxist makeover-. To change how a person thought and behaved, one must change his or her material surroundings. However, as Marx and Engels failed to prescribe a topology of an ideal revolutionary habitat that would solve the housing question, an ideologically compatible 'proletarian' home did not exist; thus, a new topography had to be introduced.



Figure 2.18. The Decree “On Land”
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI), б/а (13707)

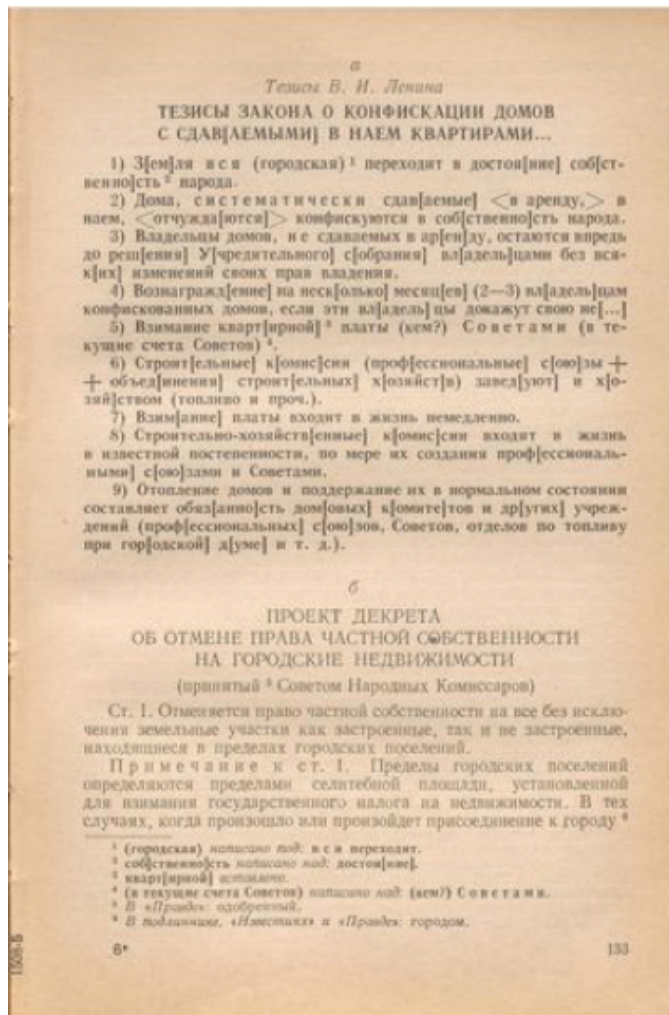


Figure 2.19. The Decree: All-Russian Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars' decree "On the Abolition of the Right to Private Ownership of Urban Property," 1918
Central State Archive of the October Revolution and Socialist Construction (TSAGAORSS), f. 130, op. 1 unit hr 30, p. 26-27.

The model to suit the ideology of the new order was proposed by Lenin as 'socialism in one building,' followed by an invented new architectural terminology such as "block-commune," "dwelling-space," "socialist setting"⁵⁷ that found their way into daily discourse. With the

⁵⁷ Brumfield, W.C. "Introduction", in Brumfield, W.C. & Ruble, B.A. (ed.) *Russian Housing in the Modern Age*, Boston: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.76.

passing of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921 and the flourishing of Soviet constructivism in the early 1920s, the domestic spaces started being reconstructed into collective spaces. A most revolutionary form of these socialist settings was the theory of social condenser and its applications of house-communes ("dom-kommuna") in major cities to impose "collectivities of cohabitation." With the dissolution of the nuclear family, the Soviet architects of the 1920s designed buildings embedding private quarters for the sole purpose of sleeping and carried the leisure activities as well as other amenities to common areas. The kitchen became a collective canteen; the complexes are designed to have their kindergartens and social clubs. In the editorial note of the magazine dedicated to the revolutionary architecture of Soviet state, *Sovremennaia Arkhitektura* in 1927, it states:

Having eradicated the fetters of private property ownership, October has opened up new perspectives for Soviet architecture: of grand planning works, of the development of new types of architecture, of new architectural organisms, and new complexes and ensembles in place of the narrowly individualistic parameters dictated by pre-revolutionary clients.⁵⁸

In a 1927 competition for communal housing sponsored by the avant-garde architectural journal SA (*Sovremennaia Arkhitektura*), architect Moisei Ginzburg noted that communal programs not only permitted transition to a fully Socialist sensibility, they could also reduce construction costs on a unit-by-unit basis. However, the Soviet government was well aware, even with the reduced costs, the newly built house communes could only meet with a small percentage of Moscow tenants' demands.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Editorial Note", *Sovremennaia Arkhitektura*, 1927:6.

⁵⁹ "Inadequate housing stock and rapid industrialization were deciding factors in the establishment of *uplotnenie*. During the political turmoil in the aftermath of the October Revolution, former municipal infrastructure and services disintegrated, no heat, light or water supplies were provided. Some of the buildings were affected during violent manifestations and street fights, others were often vandalized, set on fire and rarely repaired. With no supervision and maintenance, lack of resources and the general disintegration of the ownership system, housing stock declined rapidly during 1914-1921." Andrusz, G.A. *Housing and Urban Development in the USSR*, London: Palgrave, 1984, p.16.

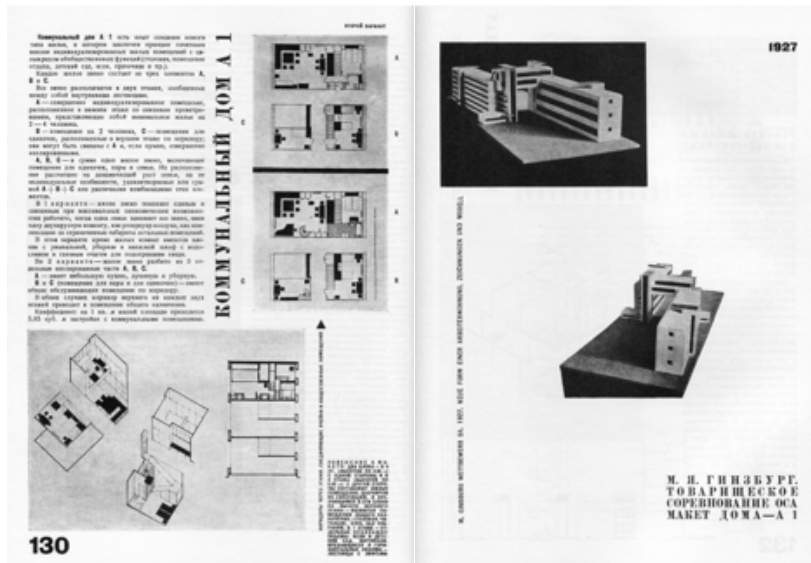


Figure 2.20. The Proposal of Morisei Ginzburg on unit-by-unit house communes, *Sovremenniaa Arkhitektura*, 1927:6
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

For that reason, parallel to constructing "socialism in one building", the Soviet state also had to re-appropriate the existing buildings to fit "socialism in one building." The process called "uplotnenie" started right after the October Revolution. In 1917, the journal "Enlightenment" published an article by Lenin. On the housing issue, he wrote:

The proletarian state must forcibly infuse a family in need into the apartment of a rich man. When our working police examined the rich apartments,⁶⁰ they found out five rooms for only two men and two women, while the working-class lives in the basement with up to 15 people in crowded rooms. You citizens, in those five rooms, will embrace each other this winter and prepare two rooms to

⁶⁰ "A rich apartment is considered to be ... any apartment in which the number of rooms equals or exceeds the number of souls of the population permanently living in this apartment. The owners of rich apartments are obliged immediately, under the threat of confiscation of all property, to submit in 2 copies ... an application for the release of one of the two rich apartments for the needs of the poor population of the capital ..."

V.I. Lenin. "Addition to the draft decree on requisition of warm clothes for soldiers at the front and on requisition of apartments of the rich to alleviate the needs of the poor"

accommodate two families from the basement. While we build suitable apartments for everyone, you will have to make room for all citizens.⁶¹

Soviet Russia's "housing redistribution" (zhilishchnyperedel) policy took effect following this article. On March 13, 1918, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree on the procedure for voluntary-condensation "Samo-uplotnenie" of residents of large city apartments. The decree stated that the owners could register their relatives and friends in their rooms, in order not to pay a considerable amount of money for their extra living spaces. As an addition to the decree, later that year, a new directive was carried out to impose the consolidation on all scale to the former bourgeois houses, which in the Soviet Union was known as uplotnenie -can be translated as "condensation"- . Through this unique form of collective living, the idea of urban communes was realized.⁶²

At first, it seemed that the settlement of bourgeois apartments by workers as part of the construction of a new life. Their joint development of one living space fully corresponded to the idea of communal housing was propagated in Soviet printed media with the slogan "Palaces to the Workers!". "Uplotnenie" both served the ideology of the State propagating the collective living, the dissolution of the nuclear family. Although it was not ideal, the new living quarters upgraded the living standards of the proletariat compared to their pre-revolutionary conditions. The equality of the housing conditions for all citizens was the primary concern in housing redistribution. The distribution method became a unique case of quantifying equality: In the grand scheme of Soviet Housing panning, a person was treated as a statistical unit and was entitled not to a private space or a room, but rather to some square meters.⁶³ Katerina Gerasimova, in her article "Gilje v sovetskom gorode" (Housing in the Soviet city), attributes the reason behind the determination of this norm on living area per

⁶¹ Lenin, V.I. "Will the Bolsheviks retain state power?" [Uderzhat li bol'sheviki gosudarstvennyuyu vlast'?), "Enlightenment," OctOber, 14, 1917.

⁶² For more on this, see Leбина, N. *Everyday Soviet Life: Norms and Anomalies. From Military Communism to Stalinist Architecture.* Moscow: New Literary Observer, 2015.

⁶³ See: Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.125.

person to "the diversity of already existing living accommodations in big cities" which would not be allowing any other normative equality.⁶⁴ The space norm was decided by sanitary and hygiene experts, who focused on the biological necessities of the organism in a given space, volume, etc.⁶⁵ While for the sanitary institutions, the minimal space meant 'the bare minimum,' in the ideological propaganda tools, it 'the norm' is narrated as an instrument through which social equality could be quantified.

With a sanitary standard set at 18 square arshins (about 9 square meters) per person according to the instruction issued by the State Committee for Public Health in 1923, the bourgeois quarters started being redistributed as approximately one quarter per family. Living in the one-bourgeois quarters was difficult for people of the working class who were used to a completely different living volume to fall asleep in a room with five-meter ceilings. However, anthropologist Ilya Utekhin, in his book "Ocherki kommunalnogo byta" ("Essays on Communal Life") states: "Those proletarians who nevertheless moved to large central apartments, as a rule, preferred the former rooms for servants: such a living space was more familiar and did not bother the mind with stucco molding on the ceiling."⁶⁶ Meanwhile, previous owners of the apartments mostly chose the lesser of the evils and prescribed relatives and friends to themselves during voluntary-condensation. Therefore, the first version of the communal apartments appeared.

However, through the end of NEP (1921-1927), Moscow became the largest center for industry in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the flood of workers from urban areas necessitated drastic changes in housing conditions and required even further structural re-organization of former bourgeois quarters. While the newly built apartments have to be designed according to the necessary condensation and new sanitary forms re-determining minimum living space,

⁶⁴ Katerina, G. "Gilje v sovetskom gorode" [Housing in the Soviet city], *Sotsiologicheskii zhurnal*, 1998:1, p.241.

⁶⁵ For example, the norm was associated with the amount of air necessary for a dweller to 'feel normal' after a night's sleep.

⁶⁶ Utekhin, I. "Introduction", in "Ocherki kommunalnogo byta" [Essays on Communal Life], O.G.I./polit.ru, 2001, pp.9.

with the transformations following, the definitions of private and public regarding the domestic space drastically shifted even compared to the house-communes.

The first Five-Year Plan took effect in 1928 and included comprehensive planning in social, economic, and cultural fields. However, by 1928 housing policy had become a pressing priority for the Soviet state. Because of the rapid industrialization propagated in the major cities of the Union, a second flood of immigration from other cities and rural areas to Moscow and Leningrad resulted in more than 3.5 million new inhabitants waiting to be located in apartments.⁶⁷ This unprecedented influx of new inhabitants required the second wave of apartment constructions and a re-organization of living spaces in the former bourgeois quarters that went through 'uplotnenie'.

The policy and architectural design strategies drastically changed when Joseph Stalin came to power in 1927. In 1928 a minimum living space of around 6.4 square meters was allocated per person and 13 per family, and in 1931 it was reduced to 5.8 square meters per person. The new sanitary norms required a further condensation in existing apartments, and a second 'uplotnenie' took effect. Apartments that had more square meters per individual than the determined norm were considered 'extra' or 'izlishki' and subjected to further condensation.

In former bourgeois apartments, the area of each room was up to 40 square meters. Before 1928, a family of four sharing a room was considered appropriate according to the previously determined norm. However, after the new regulations, a very bizarre architectural phenomenon emerged in interiors of these apartments. These large rooms carved up "mathematically and bureaucratically as if it were not a living space, a real home once inhabited by real people, but some topological abstraction."⁶⁸ As a result, most of the rooms in existing quarters in Moscow were re-organized most bizarrely: they were separated with

⁶⁷ With increasing industrialization and migration of new workers, urban population in the Soviet Union had reached 26.3 million in 1928 compared to 20.9 million in 1920.
Andrusz, G.A. *Housing and Urban Development in the USSR*, London: Palgrave, 1984, p.16.

⁶⁸ Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.132.

partitions to meet the mathematical norms, creating long dark corridors, back entrances, windowless rooms, and labyrinthine circulation schemes. The re-organization scheme often required to insert communal kitchens and bathrooms into already over-partitioned floors since the partitioned rooms could only be used as sleeping quarters. One communal kitchen and one communal bathroom were generally installed on each floor of the apartments, usually at the end of each end of the corridors, which would make them the most well-lit places in communal apartments. The process of further condensation applied to most apartments until the early 1950s, for the Soviet Union needed two more decades until the housing problem is relatively solved when Nikita Khrushchev government designed an alternative housing policy to mitigate the overflow in apartments in major cities.

One significant example of the "uplotnenie" is Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10. Built during the last years of the 19th century, and after the abolishment of land, the house was firstly condensed during the early 1920s. Most of the apartments in big cities had to keep 'House Books' ('domovoy knigi')⁶⁹ saving and tracking the information of the tenants moved in or out. The 'House Book' for Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10 shows that on the Quarter No:5 -a former bourgeois apartment approximately 45 square meters-, 14 people were registered in 1924, while the number of tenants was 35 by 1940. In July 1925, after the first condensation, the rental department of the Moscow Real Estate Directorate sent a directive to the housing management board stating a directory of how the partitions (if needed) should be established to preserve the interior organization:

... in order to preserve valuable modeling, arts, coloring, and decoration, the department of Moscow Real Estate Directorate considers it possible to establish [...] partitions in case one related family occupies the rooms. The location and type of partitions can only be installed according to the instructions of the Office.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ The reason for choosing this particular example is, the 'House Book', the floor plans and other documents were well kept, mostly because the writer Mikhail Bulgakov resided in the apartment for 3 years. In 2010, Bulgakov Museum in Moscow collected and archived data regarding the architecture of the apartment.

⁷⁰ Central Historical Archive of Moscow (TsIAM). Fund 179 (inventories 62 and 63).

However, in 1940, during the second uplotnenie, the further partitioning was strictly applied following the 'square meter per person' norms, leaving tow rooms without lighting, and without proper heating.

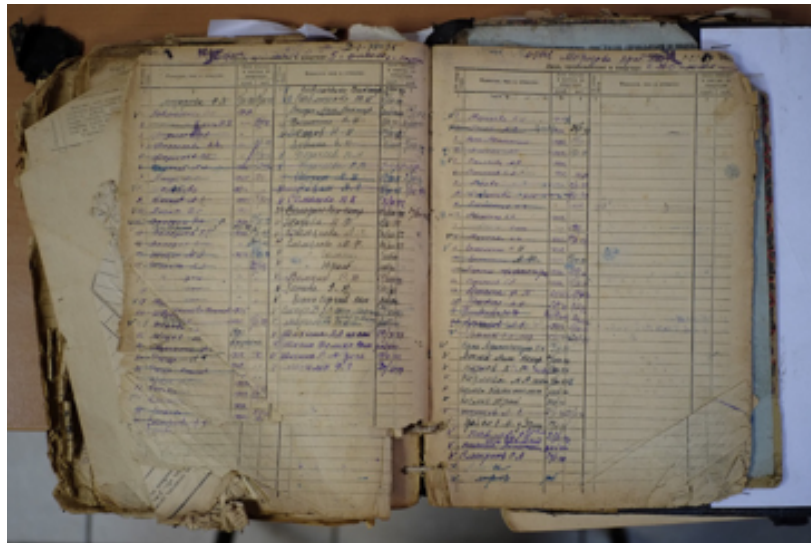


Figure 2.21. The “House Book” (domovoy knigi) of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, Quarter No:5 Bulgakov Museum Archive



Figure 2.22. The drawing for 1997 restoration project of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10. Drawn by: T. S. Borisova, B. E. Pasternak, V. I. Sheredege Bulgakov Museum Archive



Figure 2.23. Photograph of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, 1920s
From the personal archive of B. E. Pasternak

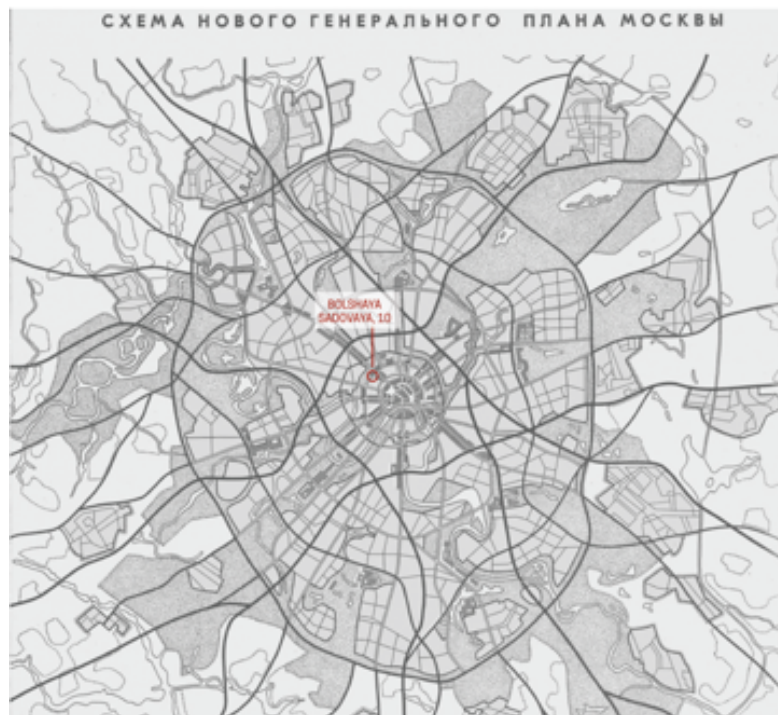


Figure 2.24. Location of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, on General Plan of Moscow 1935
Figure by the author, on 1935 General Plan of Moscow, Central State Archive of the City of
Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

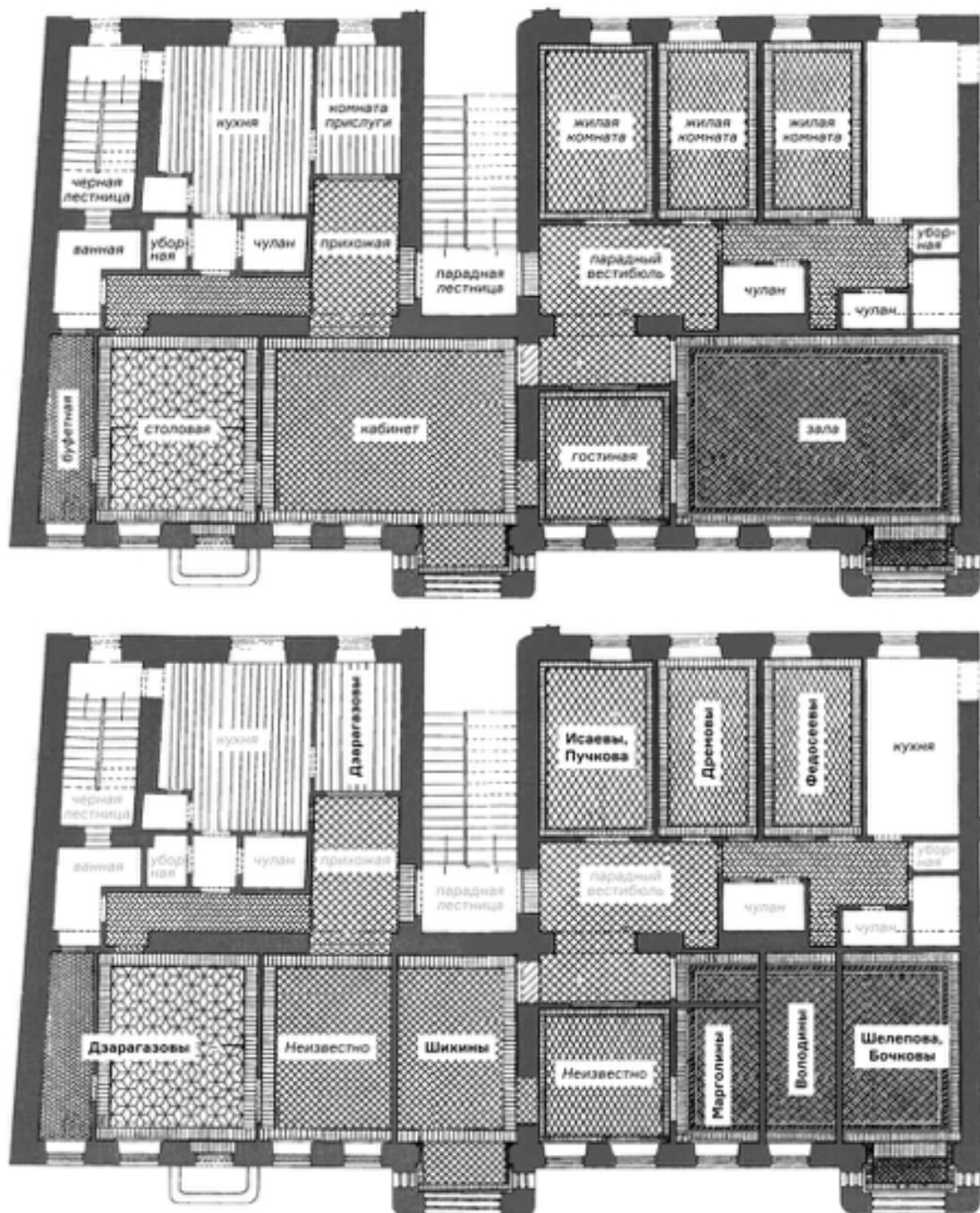


Figure 2.25. The plans of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, Quarter No:5, before and after uplotnenie (1905/1954)

Center for Historical and Urban Studies under the leadership of B. E. Pasternak. 1997, Bulgakov Museum Archive

In the early 30s, serious changes have taken place in the housing construction of the USSR. The need for rapid resettlement required to accelerate the pace of construction. The State was lending an enormous amount of loans to the committees working on the construction.

The dominant architectural style of Stalin's era is known as Stalin's Empire Style;⁷¹ the ideology behind it was a return to the eternal values. For the following 25 years, after 1927, the development of architecture in the Soviet Union took the direction of neoclassicism, exploring the heritage of the Italian Renaissance, as well as Russian Classicism and the Russian Empire Style. Although it inherited some variations of these mixed-matched of styles, it was quite uniform. Grandeur, decorative and monumentalism elements characterized this style of architecture.

The residential approach of Stalinist architecture, although singular examples firstly appeared after 1932, is officialized after the talk by architects G.A. Simonov and A.G. Mordvinov entitled "Architecture of a Residential Apartment Building" given at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Architects in 1937. In the course of their speech, two architects quoted the First Secretary of the Moscow All-Union Party of Bolsheviks L. M. Kaganovich, who proclaimed at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in September of 1933:

... Some think that simplified, crude design is the style of proletarian architecture. Excuse me, but no, the proletariat wants not only to 'have' buildings, not only to live comfortably in them but to have beautiful buildings ... [our architectural practice should] create palaces.⁷²

Although Stalinist apartments reveal a "palace-like" appearance since the design of the facades that overlooked streets and avenues were highly decorated to display their "solemnity and

⁷¹ See: Khan-Magomedvedov, S. O. *Pioneers of Soviet Architecture: The Search for New Solutions in the 1920s and 1930s*. New York: Rizzoli, 1987.

⁷² From the protocol No. 72 of the meeting of the Bureau of the USSR (b) B. October 28, 1933.

loftiness,"⁷³ inside, they were parted to provide approximately 6 square meters of living space per person. Unlike the decorated facades looking at the venues, the facades looking at inner courtyards were imprecise and straightforward, and in between the rowed rooms on each facade, there stuck the long, dark, and endless corridors. While the buildings staging a scene of a theatre set to the visible public sphere, the rooms were almost like installations within an extravagant shell of dark rooms, even darker corridors and sloppily used common areas.

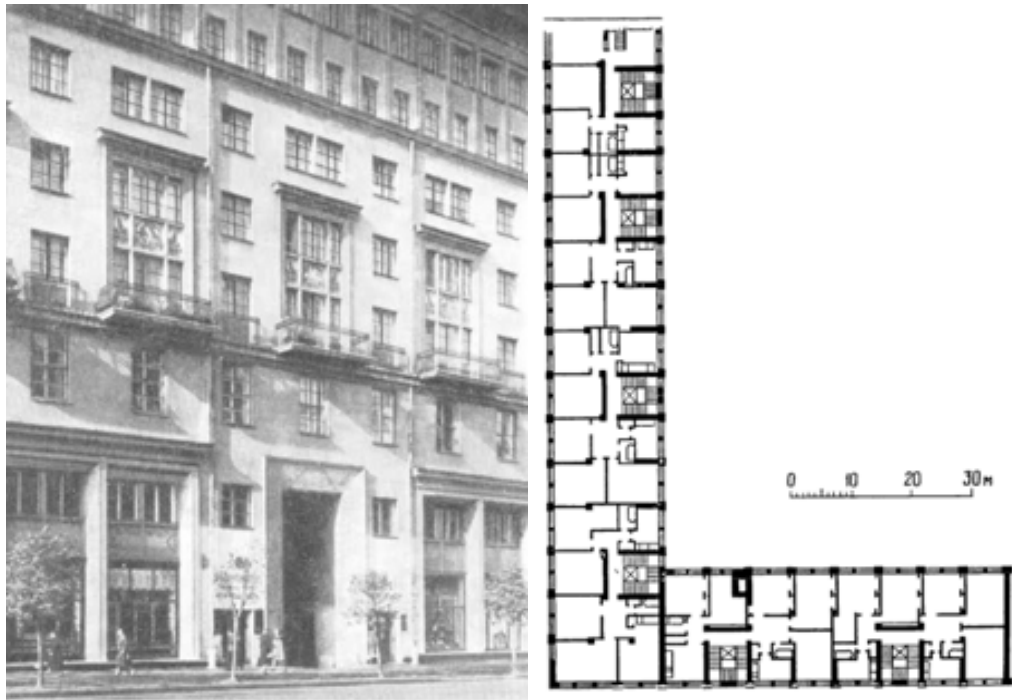


Figure 2.26. Moscow. Residential building on Gorky Street. Architect: A. Burov. 1933-1949, Fragment of the facade and plan
Papernyi, V. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*. Boston: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

By the 1940s, more than 60% of the housing stock in Moscow was 'nationalized buildings.' The overcrowded apartments, both nationalized and Stalinist, were first renamed as "dwelling comradeship" and "workers communes" and eventually started to be referred to as "communal

⁷³ Varga-Harris, C. *Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life During Khrushchev's Thaw*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015, p.17.

apartments" or "Kommunalka." Even after the partitions were added and new Kommunalki were built, the sanitary norms getting reduced repeatedly, which end up more tenants moving in to already crowded rooms. The curtains and fabrics used as partitions were a common form of achieving relative privacy. The communal apartment (kommunalka) became an essential feature of everyday life in the Soviet Union. This type of housing, where several unrelated individuals were instructed to live together sharing the same bathroom, kitchen, hallways, and a telephone, has been the domestic habitat of several generations of Soviet citizens.

Everything physical is to be controlled by the State when the latter is under construction.

“The House is a Soviet Fortress”⁷⁴

The formation of Komunalka was a result of economic realities, while the ideology of the socialist State equally drives it. The destroyed sense of privacy made Kommunalka a particularly important site for ideological intervention. During the first 40 years of the Union, there emerged different levels of privacy and public in houses, and the openness of the private sphere predominantly determined this particular re-configuration to the State and the collective. A total transformation of private into collective came with new definitions that replaced "private". Jeff Weintraub maintains that the new terminology should not be discussed in terms of public-private dichotomy, but in terms of individual-collective. The configuration of the once-private sphere of the Soviet house, according to Weintraub, can be defined as neither private nor public but a new form that is "public-privacy."⁷⁵ Other historians like Vladimir Shlapentokh, defined this new configuration of Soviet house as a "hybrid" space,

⁷⁴ Anon. "Dom -sovetskaia krepost", Krasnaia gazette, 4 December 1919, p.4.

⁷⁵ Weintrub, J. "The Theory and Practice of Private/Public Distinction", in Weintrub, J. and Kumar, K. (eds.), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 1-43.

defined in the Russian as "social" (*obshchestvennaia*),⁷⁶ that is both private and public. When Walter Benjamin visited Moscow in 1928, he likened the 19th-century apartments, once privately owned by the Russian bourgeoisie, had become common property and were now over-populated by numerous families to a town in itself.

...days of the cozy interior were over [...] dwelling as seclusion and security had had its days...Through the hallway [...upon entering to once cozy interior], one steps into a little town.⁷⁷

In her book "Obyvatel i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoy zhizni gorozhan v gody NEPa i khrushchevskogo desyatiletia" (Average People and the Reforms: Pictures of everyday life of citizens during the NEP and the Khrushchev decade)," Natalya Leбина claims the state had desired the lack of privacy:

Through specific living arrangements, the state sought to subvert family structures. Lack of privacy was expected to transform private and personal relationships into 'proletarian comradeship' that would strive in the topology of collective living.⁷⁸

The control of the state in the macro-cosmos of communal apartments further solidified by organizing housing committees, referred to as *ZheK*⁷⁹ to organize personal relationships, to

⁷⁶ Shlapentokh, V. *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People. changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1989, p.3-14.

⁷⁷ Benjamin, W. "Moscow," in *One Way Street*. London: Verso, 1979, p.187-188.

⁷⁸ Leбина, N. "Obyvatel i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoy zhizni gorozhan v gody NEPa i khrushchevskogo desyatiletia" [Average People and the Reforms: Pictures of everyday life of citizens during the NEP and the Khrushchev decade], Moscow: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003, p.45

⁷⁹ According to the decree of 1925 "On Housing Cooperation", three types of cooperative associations are formed: housing and rental cooperative partnerships (*ZheK*), workers' housing and construction cooperative partnerships (*RZHKT*) and civil housing cooperative partnerships.

track paperwork, as well as to contain conflicts while assuring 'the collective spirit' is preserved within housing complexes. Housing complexes were usually formed of several communal apartments in proximity with each other and registered under the same ZheK. ZheK usually attained a manager⁸⁰ from each communal apartment, an ordinary individual to keep an eye and report tenant behaviors to ZheK, having an active role of room re-distribution while removing conflicts between tenants within an apartment building. Formation of Zhek and the tenant-manager as an official representative, although it was convenient for managing the over-crowded apartment, also was a mechanism of preserving the State control over tenants.

The spatial organization of the communal apartment contributed to the social control over and normalization of behavior as in public space. In the early 1930s, a regulation encouraging "discipline in everyday domestic life" (*bytovaia distsiplina*) published to regulate life behind the door of the communal apartment.⁸¹ The regulations divide the spatial functions of *kommunalka* into two types: places of common use that are public, and places of private use that are called later called "social" (*obshchestvennaia*). The first type included communal kitchen and corridor. The second type included: rooms. Although the document was a directory to set separate rules for the public and private sphere within *kommunalka*, this study discusses the function of private and public spheres within *kommunalka* cannot be that easily differentiated. Regarding the "public places" of the *kommunalka*; it can be stated that the places of social interaction in the communal apartment had the characteristics of both public and private spaces.

⁸⁰ The main job of the manager was the redistribution of living space inside the apartment. Mikhail Bulgakov narrates in "Master and Margarita": The news of Berlioz's [the tenant] death spread through the building with supernatural speed and from seven o'clock on Thursday morning Bosoï [the manager] started to get telephone calls. After that people began calling in person with written pleas of their urgent need of vacant housing space. Within the space of two hours Nikanor Ivanovich had collected thirty-two such statements. They contained entreaties, threats, intrigue, denunciations, promises to redecorate the flat, remarks about overcrowding and the impossibility of sharing a flat with bandits. Among them was a description, shattering in its literary power, of the theft of some meat-balls from someone's jacket pocket in flat No. 31, two threats of suicide and one confession of secret pregnancy."

⁸¹ "Obiazatel'nye pravila ukhoda za zhilishchem i vnutrennego rasporiadka v kvartirakh" [Compulsory Housing and House Rules], *Zhilshchnaia kooperatsiia* (Housing Cooperation), nos. 21-24 (1932), p. 44-47.

The typical communal apartment had a long, narrow (up to 1 m. in width) and dark corridor. The function of the "corridor" in a communal apartment was more than a core of the circulation. The corridor sometimes worked as an attic filled with furniture and was often shared by the tenants as an additional space of the room, mostly because almost six sq. meters of living space was too inadequate for the tenants. The new function of the corridor as an extension of the room blurs its definition as public space since the private sphere crossed the space of the corridor. Communal corridor, while separating the room from the outer public with a small partition, acted as both a public and semi-private sphere.

The same analysis is also viable for the communal kitchen. Communal kitchen, as once Ilya Kabakov stated, was "the heart of kommunalka."⁸² It contained a set of functions drastically different from a traditional kitchen within a separate family apartment. "The fulcrum of the communal housing ideology was the kitchen,"⁸³ states Ilya Utekhin. The communal kitchen was the central place of secular communication of citizens who inhabited the communal apartment. The communal kitchen could be the site of the queue, the comrades' court, and exclusively a public place where one encounters strangers. The kitchen was the primary setting of kommunalka where everything public occurs in. A tenant of a Leningrad kommunalka during the 1940s describes the social character of communal kitchen as: "Nowadays all the socializing is mostly in the kitchen. We seldom go into each other's rooms. It is kind of inappropriate to go into rooms."⁸⁴ On the one hand, the communal kitchen contained activities associated with the private sphere, such as cooking and washing. On the other hand, it also included activities of a public space such as daily encounters with strangers.

⁸² Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. ['60s - '70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.82.

⁸³ Utekhin, I. "Introduction", in *Ocherki kommunalnogo byta* [Essays on Communal Life], O.G.I./polit.ru, 2001, p.18.

⁸⁴ Gerasimova, K. "Public Privacy in Soviet Communal Apartment", in Crowley, D. & Reid, S. (eds.) *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life*, London: Berg:2002, p.206.



Figure 2.27. Communal corridor, Moscow 1930s
Ilya Utekhin, *Anthropology of Kommunalka*, Course No:15



Figure 2.28. Communal kitchen, Moscow 1960s
Ilya Utekhin, Anthropology of Kommunalka, Course No:15

The most 'private' spaces in the communal apartment were the tenants' rooms, although they were not the private property of them, and the system did not secure rents. The communal room, like kitchen and corridor, took the role of a multi-purpose living unit in Kommunalka. However, the blurred function of communal room was more significant to analyze.

The communal room was a "social sphere" and a house in one unit, even when it was used for one family or one individual. It usually included a bed for 'a sleeping room,' a desk for 'a study,'

a dinner table for 'a dining room,' and sometimes a children's bed and toys for a 'children's room.' The tenants invited their friends to socialize in the same room they sleep and study and eat dinner. The conditions got even more bizarre during the heydays of communal living during the 1940s. The latest sanitary norm determined as 5 square meters dictated housing authorities to move in more tenants to already partitioned rooms since the loans for reconstruction of partitions were almost impossible to pass through housing committees, tenants came up with their solutions to achieve relative privacy. They sometimes hang curtains, or pieces of fabric to determine the invisible boundaries for each person's own "square meter." Sometimes the pieces of furniture moved and used as a border between two tenants' 'private space.'⁸⁵ Regardless, this relative privacy is continually disturbed with daily encounters within the room.

The communal room had been one of the fascinating spatial configurations in the residential history of the Soviet Union. The merging of the private activities like sleeping with leisure activities in the same spatial configuration was not unprecedented both for the people of pre-revolutionary Russia and in other geographies. It is a known fact that model housing "colonies" had been built for workers in various German cities since 1863, or during the heydays of the Industrial Revolution, workers' dormitories were a common way of finding a place in London.⁸⁶ However, the uniqueness of Soviet communal room, for this study, lies in the way it spatially configured: With the bizarre solution of partitioning as result of 'uplotnenie', the communal room's installation⁸⁷ within both the ornamented and lavished shells of 19th-century buildings, and almost more ornamented shells of Stalinist residential buildings create a curious phenomena for architectural/historical analysis.

⁸⁵ See: Leбина, N. "Communal, Communal, Communal World," in *Russian Studies in History*, 38, 2000, p. 53–62.

⁸⁶ See: Mumford, E. *Designing the Modern City: Urbanism Since 1850*, Yale: Yale University Press, 2018.

⁸⁷ This unique practice of configuration of rooms within an apartment will be referred to as "installing" and "installations" in this study. On the discussion for Nonconformists' take on the communal room as the subject of art, and as especially their installation; the 'uplotnenie' and the concept of room as an 'installation will be revisited.

After 18 years of petitioning various authorities with influence over housing allocation and waiting patiently, it seemed that Seraphim Aleksandrovich Kolosov and his family would finally be moving from their tiny "closet of a room" into a spacious new apartment. Overjoyed, the Kolosovs began planning their housewarming party, preparing a list of everyone at their workplace and in government offices who had tirelessly intervened on their behalf to secure them new housing. As the list grew, they fretted that they would not have enough space to welcome all those who had extended to them assistance or encouragement. Nevertheless, the invitations were finally sent. However, no one came to the housewarming— not because of other commitments, but because, in actuality, everything remained exactly as it had been for years.

L. Aleksandrova, “
Nesostoiavsheesia novosel'e,” (“New Home: A Brilliant Failure”)⁸⁸

When Soviet Communist Party and USSR Council of Ministers issued the Decree No. 1871 in Pravda, the most circulated newspaper of the Union, on November 10, 1955, titled "On the Elimination of Excesses in Design and Construction," the era of Classicism that had been associated with the Stalinist architecture. The decree was a follow-up by Khrushchev's speech to the Soviet Builders' Conference in December 1954, where the new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev stated the immediate necessity of a functionalist and typological architecture in the construction of new housing.

The decree was accompanied by a broad campaign advertising the private house. The private house was an idea may be too mundane for the Western geographies, but a dream for Soviet geography where the communal living had been the norm and a part of everyday life for almost 40 years, since the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee "On Land" was issued in 1917, abolishing the private ownership of the land. Advertised as one-family apartments as opposed to crowded and communal Kommunalka, systematic and fast

⁸⁸ Aleksandrova, L. Nesostoiavsheesia novosel'e," [New Home: A Brilliant Failure], Krokodil, 20 February 1957, p.13.

construction of a new housing type formed of prefabricated units started to surface in the outskirts of major cities that came to be known as Khrushchevka. Khrushchevka did not only brought a slow but systematic end to the communal living by alleviating the density of the existing Kommunalki,⁸⁹ transferring tenants to newly built housing units, it also introduces a new terminology on the concepts of what is private, domestic and collective.



Figure 2.29. Decree No. 1871 “On the Elimination of Excesses in Design and Construction”, Pravda, November 10, 1955
New York Public Library, Pravda Digital Archive

⁸⁹ The plural form of the word “Kommunalka” had been used in Russian as “Kommunalki”, while the plural form of “Khrushchevka” is “Khrushchevki”.

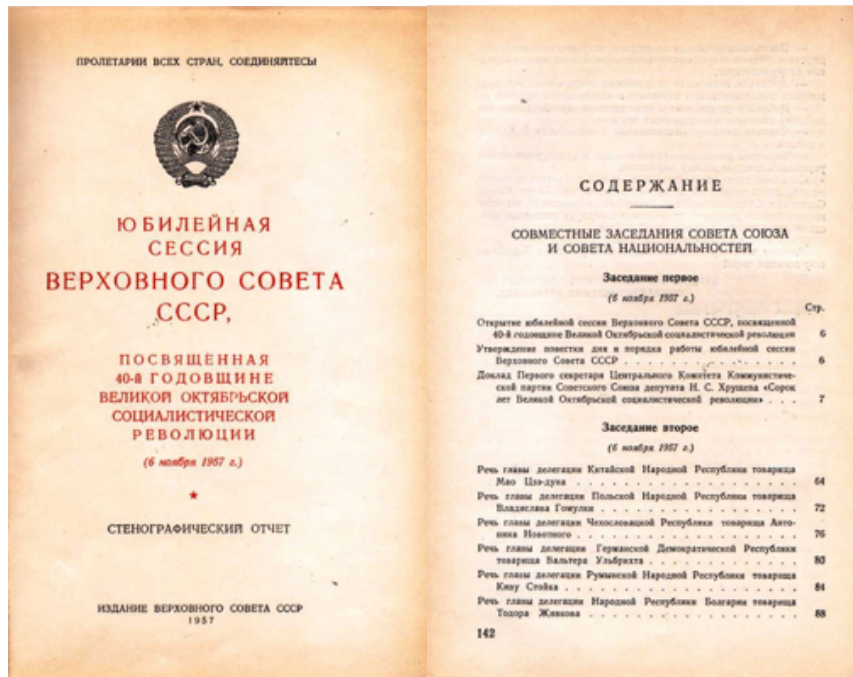


Figure 2.30. Anniversary Session of High Council of USSR Report, November 6, 1957
Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), 4101-III/II: 4/2



Figure 2.31. Leningradskaya Pravda covering Anniversary Session of High Council of USSR, November 7, 1957
New York Public Library, Pravda Digital Archive



Figure 2.32. The decree ‘On the Development of Housing Construction in the USSR’ published in Izvestia on August,2, 1957
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

In July 1957, Nikita Khrushchev, during his speech for the Anniversary Session of High Council of USSR, insisted on the issue of housing and claimed to make residential construction a priority, announcing a decree to solve the housing crisis and to provide each family a "separate apartment" (otdel'naiia kvartira). The decree entitled 'On the Development of Housing Construction in the USSR' set out in the Central Committee and Council of Ministers and issued on 31 July 1957.⁹⁰

The decree was the starting point of the process referred to as "novostroika" (new construction) marking the transition from communal to separate apartment and dominated the architectural construction and design strategies of the late 1950s through the 1960s. While heralding new privacy, the "novostroika" acted as a material, cultural, and architectural embodiment of the period of de-Stalinization.

⁹⁰ 'O razvitiu zhilishchnogo stroitel'stva v SSSR', Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1957, p. 294-309. For an edited version of the decree, see also Spravochnik profsoyuznogo rabotnika, Moscow: Profizdat, 1959, p. 538-42.

Following the decree, the first architectural competition of "novostroika" was organized in November 1957. The competition was entitled "the All-Union competition for the best indicative construction of residential areas, groups of residential buildings and individual residential buildings," and in the program of the competition clearly states the aim is to design "typologies for 3-4-5-story residential houses with private rooms a built-in bathroom in it".

This competition signaled the restructuring of the living space transitioning from communal to the one-family dwelling. Following the exhibition, the first Khrushchevki started being built. Unlike Kommunalki with shared bathrooms, kitchen, and rooms, the separate apartment was to consist of one main room that served as a combined bedroom-study, kitchen, and bathroom.

The process of symbolic privatization of domestic space accelerated in the 1960s. The apartments of the mass construction of prefabricated blocks with apartments for separate families were built at an accelerated pace.⁹¹ In quantitative terms, the outcome of the 1957 decree was astonishing. According to Western assessments, more housing was built during the 1956–1960 Five-Year Plan than during the entire period from 1918 to 1946, yielding over 145 million square meters of living space.⁹² Caught up in the euphoria, a statistical handbook was prepared claiming "if the area of the apartment houses built during the 1961–1965 Five-Year Plan were to form a single line, one meter in width, its length would extend from Earth to the moon, and there would still remain an excess of fourteen million square meters."⁹³ Although construction began to lag in 1961, by 1963, the total stock of urban housing increased by 77 percent.

⁹¹ Shlapentokh, V. *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People. changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p.153-164.

⁹² This assessment of the 1956–1960 Five-Year Plan was made by Di Maio, 20–21. The statistics are culled from Sosnovy, T. "The Soviet City (Planning, Housing, Public Utilities)," in *Dimensions of Soviet Economic Power: Studies Prepared for the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Part V: The Share of the Citizen*, Washington: DC, 1962, p.330.

⁹³ Broner, D.L. *Zhilishchnyi vopros i statistika*, Moscow, 1966, p.31.

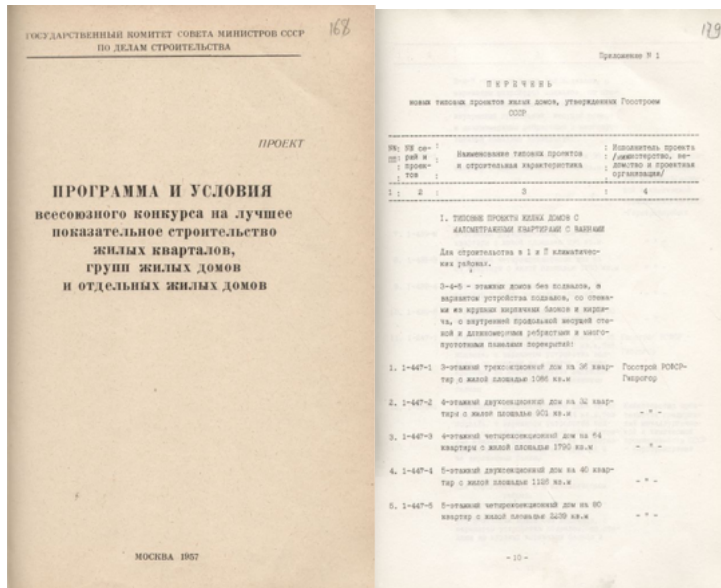


Figure 2.33. The All-Union competition for the best indicative construction of residential areas, groups of residential buildings and individual residential buildings Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE), F. 339. Op. 3. D. 367



Figure 2.34. Construction of Khrushchevka “Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)



Figure 2.35. Exhibition of achievements of Soviet science, technology and culture in New York. Visitors study the layout of the latest panel house. 1959
Life Magazine archive

Paradoxically, the 1957 decree established the one-family apartment as one step forward towards collectivism. The new living space was used for political ends, and the main emphasis was on how the private room could support collective life. It was presented that individual apartments would serve to socialism since the tenants having a qualified life at 'home' will be more efficient on public services and productive in the workplace. A questionnaire published

in Komsomolskaya Pravda in 1962 entitled "Your Ideas about the Young Family," quotes a respondent on their take on the separate apartment as:

A separate, isolated room that opens onto a stairwell [referring to 19th-century buildings transformed into Kommunalki] encourages an individualistic, bourgeois attitude. However, soon it will be possible to walk out of an apartment straight into a pleasant thoroughway with flowers and paths leading to the house cafe, the library, the movie hall, children's playrooms. This new kind of housing will affect the collective spirit.⁹⁴

There was also a philosophy in the kitchen. When we moved to our cooperative apartment in Orekhovo-Borisovo, our house was the last one before the Moscow ring road [...] So in Moscow, two more kitchens were added.

Natalya Abalakova

Although 77% of housing shortage of two big cities had been compensated, by the second half of the 1960s, many tenants were petitioning to move out of their Kommunalka rooms. Although the density of the rooms was reduced after Khrushchevki, and once communal rooms became private, sharing at most by one family each, many of the residents of Moscow were still living in Kommunalki.

Most of the first generation of Moscow Nonconformists were born in communal rooms or later found rooms in Kommunalki. The first meetings among them were held at communal kitchens during the heydays of Khrushchevki constructions. The artists from the older generation called these meetings as "Kitchen Salons," and during the first few years of the 1970s, many artists were still meeting at the kitchens in their apartments, since then the kitchens were becoming quieter and less popular. Although meeting in the kitchens

⁹⁴ Komsomolskaya Pravda, 3, No.8, August 1962, p.32.

symbolically continued as a tradition of first unofficials, the meetings then moved to the artist rooms.

2.1.1.3 Apartment Networks

Apartment meetings had been an integral part of the history of Moscow Nonconformist art during the 1970s. The artists of the 1970s, unable to demonstrate their work in public spaces, localized their lives in private areas - workshops and apartments: where they live, create art, discuss their works and arrange showings. As a result of this practice, a network of apartments was formed in Moscow, what Leonid Talochkin refers to as "places of pilgrimage" of underground Soviet bohemia,⁹⁵ which embodied the artists' desire for creative freedom and a meeting with the audience. Nonconformist artists visiting some artists' apartments more frequently than others created specific nodes of attraction. In these nodes, namely individual artists' apartments, became a center of not only seeing "alternative artworks," but also for the sake of discussing books, unpublished or not yet translated into Russian but somehow smuggled into the country, current philosophical movements, modern concepts of art, or to just to drink wine with a company of like-minded people. "The visitors of the apartment blocks were from all backgrounds," recalls their active participant, now the art director of the State Center for Contemporary Art Leonid Bazhanov, "artists, philologists, doctors, watchmen who studied philosophy and understood it better than university teachers; but they were the stronghold for Moscow Nonconformist artists."⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Talochkin, L. & Palmin, I. "Drugoe iskusstvo": Moskva, 1956-76; k khronike khudozhestvennoĭ zhizni. ["Other Art": Moscow 1956-76; The chronicles of the artists' life.], Moscow: Interbuk, 1991, op. cit, p.116.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.24.

⁹⁶ Bazhanov, L. "Seventies are a new artistic way of thinking", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.22.

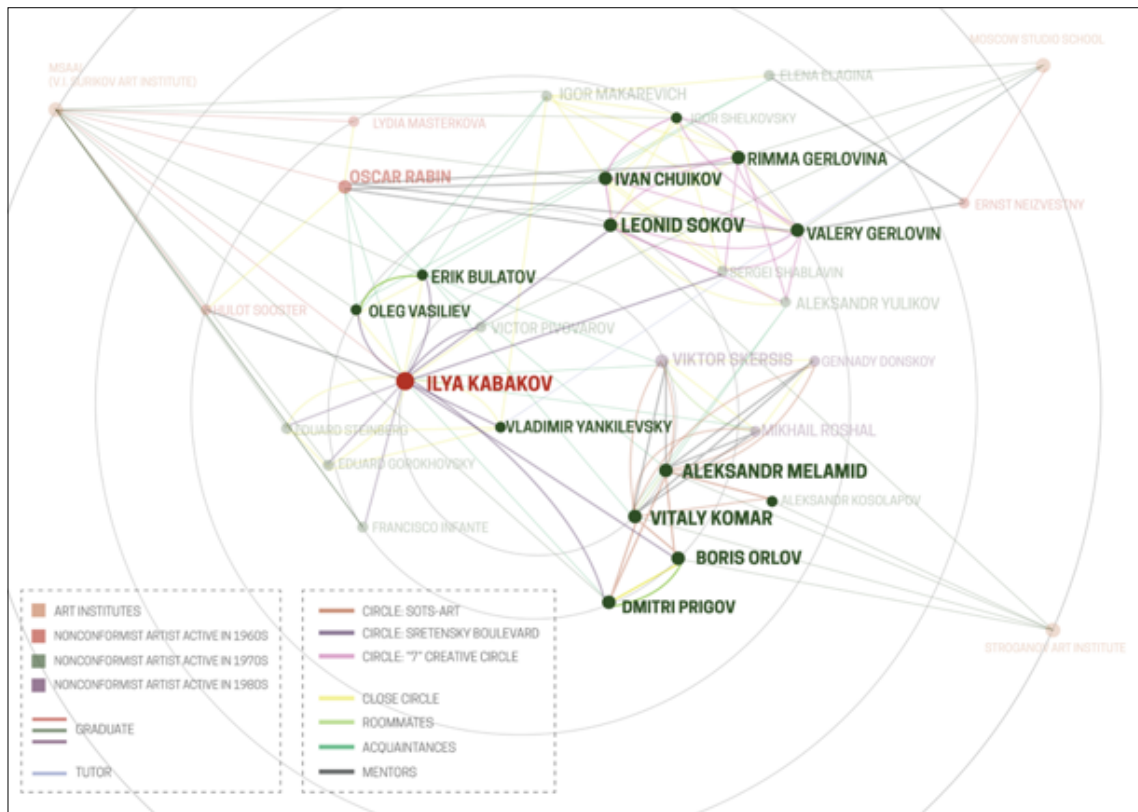


Figure 2.36. Graph showing nodes of frequent meetings among first generation of Nonconformist artists
Figure by the Author

Regarding the graph formed on the networks of Nonconformist artists of the 1970s, it shows that between the period 1975-1979, certain actors' apartments acted as nodes of interaction. These artists had visitors in their apartments more frequently than others, given the fact that their network was slightly broader than others. According to the names selected from the graph, the following actors and their apartments are traced: Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov & Oleg Vasilyev sharing the same apartment, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Rimma & Valery Gerlovin sharing the same apartment, Ivan Chuikov, Leonid Sokov, Aleksandr Melamid & Vitaly Komar sharing the same apartment, and Boris Orlov & Dmitri Prigov sharing the same apartment.



Figure 2.37. Locations of Nonconformist artist apartments: 1975-1979
 Figure by the author, on General Plan of Moscow, Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

The graph indicates that: from the so-called "Sretensky Boulevard" group, Sretensky Boulevard where attic/room/workshop of Ilya Kabakov was located, Chistoprudny Boulevard where the room/workshop shared by Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev was located, and Ulansky Lane where Vladimir Yankilevsky's room was located acted as centers for, firstly, for the artists of the group.



Figure 2.38. Ilya Kabakov on Sretensky Boulevard, 1980s
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

Regarding the name of the group Ilya Kabakov states that the name Sretensky Boulevard was built on an "association on a territorial basis" by art critics and other artists. The artists meeting often within their studios, most acquainted in their school days, could only get closer after they started living close to each other on Sretensky Boulevard. There was not a standard aesthetic style between the artists; they were differently oriented regarding their artistic genre. Kabakov adds:

The only thing that we could consider common is a very warm and friendly relationship. Such friendly relationships [with acquaintances] prevailed throughout [the Nonconformist] underground art world. Moreover, for

preserving communication, sharing the same aesthetic taste was not necessary. [...] In essence, we are more like **neighbors in a communal apartment**.⁹⁷

"It should be explained how the [Sretensky Boulevard] workshops were formed," says Igor Makarevich, who came to the workshop of Kabakov in 1971 with a "guided tour."⁹⁸ Igor Makarevich associates Sretensky Boulevard with the artist town of 1920s in Verkhnyaya Maslovka Street⁹⁹ in Moscow, where apartments were combined with workshops to form a collective and interactive zone of creativity between artists. The Maslovka artist town was solely designed and built as workshop-apartments. Although the artist town was short-lived, the experiment started a tradition for members of the Union of Artists, according to Makarevich "those who were overly loyal to the government," to request an additional workshop space. The Union of Artists usually attained attics and basements of communal buildings during Stalin era to their loyal artists. However, after Khrushchev initiated a mass construction of separate apartments, many basements and attics were freed, and their administration transferred to the non-residential fund to be used for all members of Union Artists. "It was a golden time for us," states Makarevich as a member of the Union, "you could find a place for the workshop and arrange a lease through the Moscow Union of Artists."¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the Nonconformist artists living around Sretensky Boulevard in 1970s, did not find the places close to each other by coincidence. Most of the buildings on and around the Boulevard, built between 1890-1905 and later subjected to uplotnenie, had the characteristics of Tsarist residential architectural organization which had basements and attics. Regarding the

⁹⁷ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. ['60s - '70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.21.

⁹⁸ Makarevich, I. & Elagina, E. "Dialogue/Monologue: "About This""", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.44.

⁹⁹ The artist town of 1920s in Verkhnyaya Maslovka Street was the first of many artist squats in the history of Soviet Union, one of which was later formed by third generation of Nonconformist artists in Furmany many Lane in 1986. For a comparative discussion of Maslovka artist town and Furmany Lane artist squat, see Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁰ Makarevich, I. & Elagina, E. "Dialogue/Monologue: "About This""", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.46.

buildings on Sretensky Boulevard, Kabakov states: "This random association on a territorial basis arose thanks to the great architect David Kogan, who built us workshops in one area."¹⁰¹



Figure 2.39. Ilya Kabakov on Sretensky Boulevard, 1980s
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

"Through the stinking black staircase, on which fragments of communal scandals were heard, you found yourself in a terrible attic where you had to go on some boards ..." recalls the artist Igor Makarevich, "a feeling of anxiety swept over: where am I? In the distance, a little light began to flicker, then a door opened, and a fantastic world appeared in front of you."¹⁰² From

¹⁰¹ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. ['60s - '70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.22.

¹⁰² Makarevich, I. & Elagina, E. "Dialogue/Monologue: "About This"", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti.* [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.48.

the beginning of the 1970s to the end of the 1980s, the workshop of Ilya Kabakov, located in the attic of the former home of the Rossiya Insurance Company at 6/1 Sretensky Boulevard, was one of the most important centers of Nonconformist art of Moscow. "...The climate of the community was diverse, including artists, poets, jazzmen, writers, most of which I met by accident,"¹⁰³ Ilya Kabakov wrote about the atmosphere of his workshop/apartment. In the workshop of Ilya Kabakov, exhibitions were not arranged as collective or curated exhibitions, although the apartment was an active meeting space for more than 10 years, but it was an important center of intellectual and artistic life. When he describes his "guided tour" to Kabakov's studio, Makarevich remembers his visits to Kabakov's apartment with the guidance of Gerlovins and all variety of intellectuals coming and going to the apartment.

It was often visited by Eugene Schiffers, a film and theater director, an independent alternative theologian who, through the prism of theology, examines art. Another guest of his workshop was the philosopher and art theorist Boris Groys. Stormy discussions that happened between Schiffers and Groys during seminars in Kabakov's workshop were devoted to contemporary art and settled the gap between the old and the new, between the circles of the sixties and seventies.¹⁰⁴

However, the main visitors to the workshop were Nonconformist artists. Ilya Kabakov, an artist who witnessed the flourishing of underground art in the 1960s, personified a new generation of artists. For the emerging Nonconformist artists of the 1970s, and later in the 1980s, Kabakov provided an independent space that would not be examined under a microscope by government agencies. The philologist Victoria Mochalova, the artist's second wife, states: "He managed to build this ivory tower - a workshop in which his inner world was projected. Ilya did not even paint the walls - they were just covered with cement plaster. Nothing more - you just needed what was needed to work. Moreover, for communication,

¹⁰³ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. [‘60s - ‘70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.23.

¹⁰⁴ Makarevich, I. & Elagina, E. "Dialogue/Monologue: "About This""", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti.* [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.47.

artists came to him as a guru."¹⁰⁵ Elena Elagina remembers his first visit to Kabakov's studio at the age of 16 when she was working for Ernst Niezvestny:

...And with him [Niezvestny], I visited the workshop of Ilya Kabakov, to which everyone came: Bulatov, Vasilyev, Gorokhovskiy, Pivovarov, Yankilevsky, Eduard Steinberg, Ivan Chuikov. It was a vital place. There were literary and philosophical seminars. Regularly in the workshop of Ilya, there were shows of his albums, spectators gathered. Each time it was an almost magical event. Artists, writers, directors also came to Niezvestny, but Niezvestny himself visited only Kabakov every week.¹⁰⁶

The so-called exhibits in the studio of Kabakov were one-person shows. The performance added to his showings of artworks, the arrangement of the workshop almost like a gallery, was one of the first examples of using the living space as an underground exhibition.

Later the idea was used by artist Leonid Sokov when he arranged the first 'official' unofficial exhibition in his apartment and curating an event bringing together the artworks of his close circle of 7 artists. This type of practice later transformed into well organized, self-curated, and self-documented series of exhibitions referred to as "AptArt" (short for Apartment Art) in the early 1980s. Ilya Kabakov was one of the first among Nonconformist artists to realize the potential of alternative uses of apartment space. He designed his artworks specifically to shown/exhibited in the apartment space since he admitted his artworks have a small chance of being exhibited in the official spaces of the gallery.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with "Iskustvo" newspaper, August 17, 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Elena Elagina, Interview with the Artist, Exhibition footage for the exhibition "MANI Museum", 1991, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Exhibition Collection.



Figure 2.40. Kabakov's album showing, 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection



Figure 2.41. Kabakov's album showing, "Fly", 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection



Figure 2.42. Meeting in Kabakov's workshop: Rimma Gerlovina, Valery Gerlovin, Elena Elagina, Ilya Kabakov, Igor Makarevich
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Makarevich Archive



Figure 2.43. Kabakov in the attic of Sretensky, 6/1, 1970s
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Makarevich Archive

Leonid Sokov describes his visit to the workshop: "Having risen on the smelly staircase of the back door of the house "Russia," the spectators found themselves in a spacious workshop in the attic.":

The owner was at the stand, showing his new album "Flies," 'If you are careful, you can see that people are flying,' the author's voice sounds in silence. Then he slowly turned the back of the plaque, so that the audience had time to look at the image. All are calculated - the timbre of the voice, the rhythm of the permutation of sheets, the time of the album's display: not long and not short, so as not to tire the viewer. The text and the image on the sheets in this atmosphere are the central part of the theatrical production, and both the director and actor is Ilya Kabakov himself. Of course, such evenings and works shown on them made a strong impression and were remembered by all.¹⁰⁷

The building where Kabakov's workshop is located is also essential, for it sets a significant example of Russian architectural history. One of the first, and most innovative examples of the Style Moderne¹⁰⁸ approach to apartment construction in Moscow, the apartment on Sretensky Boulevard, 6/1 was one of the two large apartment blocks built on Sretensky Boulevard in 1899-1902 for the Rossiia Insurance Company, by N.M. Proskurin and referred to as "Dom Rossiia." The eclectic facade combined elements from the Italian Renaissance with Gothic pinnacles, which flourished on the dominant corner tower in imitation of the Kremlin Spasskii Tower.¹⁰⁹ Used as the residence for the middle-class management workers of Rossiia Insurance Company during the Tsarist regime, and transformed into a Kommunalka during the 1930s, Sretensky Boulevard, 6/1 end up hosting several workshops of artists during the 1970s.

¹⁰⁷ Sokov, L. "Moscow, the seventies ...", in Kiesevalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatytye, ili Poterya nevinnosti.* [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.149.

¹⁰⁸ Also known as the "Russian NeoClassicism". See: Brumfield, W.C. & Ruble, B.A. (eds.), *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History*, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

¹⁰⁹ The Proskurin design is analyzed in detail in Vokhotivskaia, E. and Tarkhanov, A. "Dom 'Rossiia'", *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo*, 1986, no.7: p.34-38.

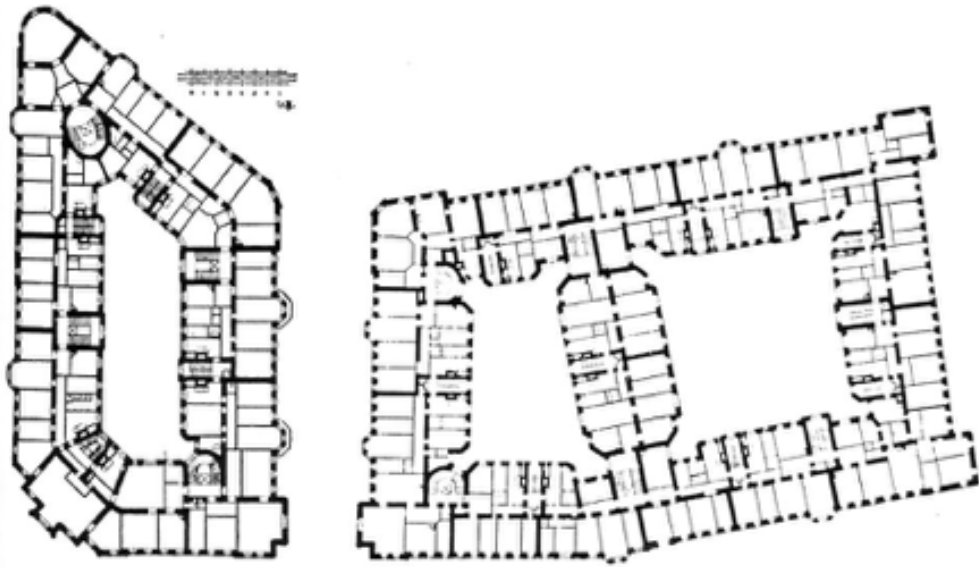


Figure 2.44. Dom Rossiia (Sretensky Boulevard, 6/1, Plan and Photograph, 1905
“Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”))

The workshop of Kabakov, although one of the main ones, was not the only meeting point for the artists living on Sretensky boulevard. Kabakov, Yankilevsky, Steinberg, and Gorkohovsky most often visited the apartment on Chistoprudy Boulevard, where Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev shared the same apartment. The building was located one street away from Sretensky Boulevard and at a walking distance from the workshop of Kabakov and Yankilevsky. The evenings at Bulatov-Vasilyev apartment were mostly conversations over wine states Kabakov. Their background as fellow students at MSAAI had a substantial effect on the continuation of this relationship. However, different their aesthetic styles are, the nature of the meetings were in the forms of showings of new works. As the tradition of the 1970s, the exchange of rather frequent visits to one another and the display of works continue to be the primary form of communication and artistic representation.



Figure 2.45. Workshop of Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev: O. Shablavina, S. Shablavin, B. Orlov and E. Bulatov. 1977
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection



Figure 2.46. Oleg Vasilyev & Erik Bulatov in their workshop
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection



Figure 2.47. Workshop of Erik Bulatov and Oleg Vasilyev
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

Vladimir Yankilevsky's workshop on Ulansky Pereulok, was similarly one of "several hotbeds that attracted like a magnet and where it was possible to warm up artists who were close to each other, as in artist's words. The atmosphere of the meetings in Yankilevsky's apartment was affected by two things: First is the semi-dark space of the apartment which was located on the basement of a 19th-century building transformed into a communal house and once used as a storage unit for Kommunalka; and second, the nature of the artist's works. Yankilevsky was working on installations of five-to-six-meter "coffins," and in such abundance that the workshop space itself looked like "it turned into an installation itself,"¹¹⁰ as artist Irina Nakhova once described. That was the background of the artwork showings, discussions, poem readings, and concerts arranged in the apartment, together with mostly foreign diplomats as visitors who started to appear in the Moscow scene after 1975.



Figure 2.48. Vladimir Yankilevsky at his workshop
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection

Parallel to the meetings in Kabakov's, Bulatov-Vasilyev's, and Yankilevsky's workshops, another circle was arranging meetings. The group of seven artists was frequently meeting at the workshop of Leonid Sokov, which was located on Bolshoy Sukharevsky Pereulok, 7 at apartment 16; Rimma and Gerlovin's workshop on Bolshaya Cherkizovskaya Street near

¹¹⁰ Nakhova, I. "Recycling", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.106.

Izmailovo Station; and Ivan Chuikov's workshop on Festivalnaya Street near Rechnoy Vokzal metro station.

Rimma and Valery Gerlovina's workshop/apartment near the metro Izmaylovskaya acted "something like an art and literary salon,"¹¹¹ Ivan Chuikov states, where artists not only meet or show their works but also organized reading sessions. Reading as a performance was the focus of these meetings. Most of the time Gerlovins invited Dmitri Prigov, a graduate of MSAAI but started his unofficial career as a writer and later produced unique artworks using the deconstructed pages of his writings.¹¹² Prigov also frequently visited Ivan Chuikov's apartment located on a cooperative housing complex located on Festivalnaya Street near Rechnoy Vokzal metro station. Although Chuikov mentions that, Prigov's apartment was the central node of their circle because of its convenient location "for the city center for Nonconformist artists was Sretensky Boulevard," Ilya Kabakov frequently visited his workshop.



Figure 2.49. Valery Gerlovin, in the apartment of Gerlovins, Moscow 1976
Rimma and Valery Gerlovin personal archive

¹¹¹ Chuikov, I. "Probably, we were also dissidents", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyaye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.189.

¹¹² Later, after emigrating to New York, Gerlovins organized an exhibition titled "Russian Samizdat Art", re-appropriating Nonconformist self-published works as artworks. The exhibition was influenced by the works of Prigov.



Figure 2.50. Dmitri Prigov, Ivan Chuikov and Ilya Kabakov at the apartment of Ivan Chuikov, Moscow 1976
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection



Figure 2.51. View from Ivan Chuikov's apartment window, Photograph by Ivan Chuikov
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection



Figure 2.52. Chuikov's apartment, on the right side his "Window" series
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection

Although he considers himself to belong to a different close circle, geographically, Leonid Sokov's apartment was located near Sretensky Boulevard, on the second floor of a 19th-century building on Bolshoy Sukharevsky Pereulok, 7 at apartment 16. The corner apartment was designed by D. Kogan and became the center of not only the center for those seven artists but the whole Nonconformist circle following the exhibition until Sokov emigrated for New York in 1976.



Figure 2.53. Bolshoy Sukharevsky Pereulok, 7. 1960s
“Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskv”)

Before the organization of the exhibition in Sokov's apartment, the apartment resembled any other Nonconformist artist apartments in Moscow: Prigov frequently visited and read poems, while Lesha Grigoriev performed guitar sessions. Occasional displaying of artworks organized and the close circle of Sokov frequently visited. However, during one of the reading sessions with the attendance of Leonid Sokov, Ivan Chuikov, Sergei Shablavin, Aleksandr Yulikov and Igor Shelkovsky in Gerlovins apartment; Sokov came up with the idea of organizing an exhibition curated by and showing works of the artists from that circle. This exhibition shifted understanding of the room and acted as a revolutionary performance among Nonconformist milieu. Following the exhibition, a new awareness started spreading among Nonconformist artists, one that would start re-considering room as a place for exhibit,¹¹³ and a space for collective exhibiting too. He explains his definition of an unofficial exhibition as:

[When I say exhibition] ... I do not mean the not-so-washed, bearded, drunk artist, circling his dirty basement with small canvases with surrealistic attempts hung on walls, while he mumbles: 'Well, old man, this is the Louvre.'¹¹⁴

¹¹³ For a comparative discussion of Sokov's apartment exhibit with later apartment exhibitions, see: “2.2.3.1 Artist Rooms as Underground Museum”.

¹¹⁴ Sokov, L. “Moscow, the seventies ...”, in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyie, ili Poterya nevinnosti.* [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.151.



Figure 2.54. Rimma Gerlovina, Sergey Shablavin, Leonid Sokov, Valery Gerlovin and Ivan Chuikov in the alley of apartment of Sokov, Moscow 1976
Rimma and Valery Gerlovin personal archive



Figure 2.55. Leonid Sokov in his apartment, Moscow 1976
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

While both of the circles' central node was the Sretensky Boulevard and the workshops around it, for the Sots-Artists circle, Komar and Melamid's apartment on Leninsky Prospekt was the

central node. Boris Orlov states, "in the middle of those revolutionary years in 1970s for underground art, [in our circle] revolution has matured in two workshops: the first is the workshop of Komar and Melamid with their students, where Sasha [Aleksandr] Kosolapov also visited, and the second - our workshop in Rogova Street, where Prigov and I worked."¹¹⁵ In the 1970s, Komar and Melamine was teaching at Moscow Polygraphic Institute as members of Union of Artists. Three of their students: Victor Skersis, Gennady Donskoy, and Mikhail Roshal were frequent visitors of their workshops, where outside of the school, Komar and Melamid were mentoring them on the "essentials of being an underground artist."¹¹⁶ Orlov and Prigov often visited their workshop. Like the Gerlovin-Sokov-Chuikov circle, in Komar and Melamid's apartment, the Western art magazines were read and discussed in reading sessions. However, the most significant thing about their apartment is the showing of their works. Komar and Melamid organized performances to enact their works.



Figure 2.56. Vitaly Komar & Aleksandr Melamid in their apartment, during their performance for the work "Passport"
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

¹¹⁵ Orlov, B. "On the desirousness of the alternative culture of the seventies", in Tupitsyn, V. *Krug obshcheniya* [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, pp.66.

¹¹⁶ Skersis, V. "The Seventieth.", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatytye, ili Poterya nevinnosti.* [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.144.



Figure 2.57. Vitaly Komar during a reading session, Moscow 1976
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

Boris Orlov and Dmitri Prigov, friends from the age of sixteen, started working together in 1972 and moved to an apartment together on Rogova Street. The meetings in their apartment started as literary readings, as Orlov states: "We both had a terrible interest in the philosophical literature, and we continuously discussed the books we read with the people came over."¹¹⁷ These literary readings later turned into showings of their artworks from cut out Soviet magazines and Prigov's writings, which Prigov firstly designed on a typewriter, then transform them into what he calls "installations of texts."¹¹⁸ Although their circle was rather small, and their visitors mostly include Sots-Artists, at the end of the 1970s, Prigov got closer to the circle

¹¹⁷ Boris Orlov quoted in Tupitsyn, V. *Krug obshcheniya [The Milieu]*, Moscow: NLO, 2013, pp.110.

¹¹⁸ Dmitri Prigov quoted in Tupitsyn, V. *Krug obshcheniya [The Milieu]*, Moscow: NLO, 2013, pp.111.

of Kabakov on the one hand, and to Chuikov on the other hand, later made him a significant member of 1980s Moscow conceptualist circle.



Figure 2.58. Dmitri Prigov at the apartment on Rogova Street, during a reading session
Vadim Zakharov personal archive

...over the years, a bunch of different showings happened in apartments. Information spread instantly: one of the friends would call, gave the address. You went there, and there was already a list of other apartment showings hung on the wall. So, you would travel all over Moscow.¹¹⁹

As the number of apartment networks and showings increased, and Nonconformist artists started circling all over Moscow, the circles of Nonconformist artists started touching, intersecting, and even overlapping one another. Kabakov claims the reason for this merging

¹¹⁹ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. ['60s - '70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.234.

was "the incredible desire to communicate against the background of the deathly silence around, that of the Soviet stagnation."¹²⁰

Following the formation of the first generation of networks in 1975, a wave of emigration began. Kosolapov left for New York in 1975, Igor Shelkovsky emigrated to Paris in 1976. With Komar and Melamid leaving for New York and Gerlovins in 1980. When Komar and Melamid left, the Sots art tradition left with them. Their students Skersis, Roshal, and Donskoy got closer to Kabakov circle. After Gerlovins left, Ivan Chuikov and Leonid Sokov retreated to their apartments and occasionally attended apartment showings in the 1980s. Igor Makarevich and Elena Elagina got closer to the new generation of artists started showing up in Nonconformist milieu. As a result, during the 1980s, after the massive wave of emigration, remaining Nonconformists re-grouped and started forming a new network of relationships and also a network of apartments.

Looking back at the first generation of Nonconformist artists, two points should be underlined: Although artists whose apartments located around Sretensky Boulevard formed a zone of unofficial art, in terms of their aesthetic terminology, as Kabakov mentioned before, there were various versions and strategies regarding the subject of their artworks. Their association was based on a shared zone of unofficial spaces rather than aesthetic terminology. As Victor Tupitsyn states:

These people did not manifest any particular unanimity on the plane of aesthetic values; their coherence as a group was based on their shared search for a new sociocultural identity. In other words, they sought to create a new communal body, but in a voluntary and non-coercive way.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Kabakov, I. 60-e -70-e: Zapiski o neofitsial'noi zhizni v Moskve. ['60s - '70s -: Notes on unofficial life in Moscow.] Wien: Gesellschaft zur Förderung slawistischer Studien, 1999, p.234.

¹²¹ Tupitsyn, V. The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia. Mass: The MIT Press, 2012, p.35.

On the other hand, Sots Artists, although scattered on two apartments, in terms of aesthetic concerns. They found their ground on what they called "Socialist Art," a form of Soviet pop art in the form of an ironic re-expression of visual icons of Social Realism, therefore, allegorically approaches to Soviet Totalitarian visuality using typical Soviet visual/ideological representations and reproduced them into artworks of mocking.

While Komar, Melamid, and Kosolapov wrote a manifesto for sots Art in 1973, other circles still did not have a homogenous concern for artistic production. For artists remained from other circles, finding a common concern in art, could only be possible after 1980 when the remaining artists and a new generation of Nonconformists started clustering around Kabakov. They found their common language in "Soviet texture."¹²² Later will be referred to as "Moscow Conceptualism," was firstly mentioned in the article of Boris Groys that he wrote for the samizdat A-YA, an unofficial magazine dedicated to Moscow Nonconformist artworks and edited by Shelkovsky after his emigration to Paris. In the article titled "Moscow Romantic Conceptualism," Groys states that the developments in Moscow's artistic field can be described in the framework of conceptualism, as in the narrower definition of the word it encapsulates "a specific designated artistic movement limited to places, times and origins."¹²³ Groys emphasized the role of the newly forming generation of Moscow artists as analysts, documenters, and representers of "real state" Soviet everyday life, which rarely was represented in official media tools.

While Sots-Artists derived their aesthetic terminology from the icons and official aesthetic trends of Soviet visual history, Moscow Conceptualism concerned with documenting and representing the Soviet everyday life in their works, the main portion of which was dedicated to the representations of "communal apartment."¹²⁴

¹²² Vladimir Yankilevsky quoted in Tupitsyn, V. Krug obshcheniya [The Milieu], Moscow: NLO, 2013, pp.54.

¹²³ Boris Groys, "Moscow Romantic conceptualism", A-YA, No:1, 1979, p.2-4.

¹²⁴ For a broader discussion, see: 2.2.2.2 Communal Rooms as the Subject for Moscow Nonconformist Art

2.1.2 Generation Two: Children of the Cold War

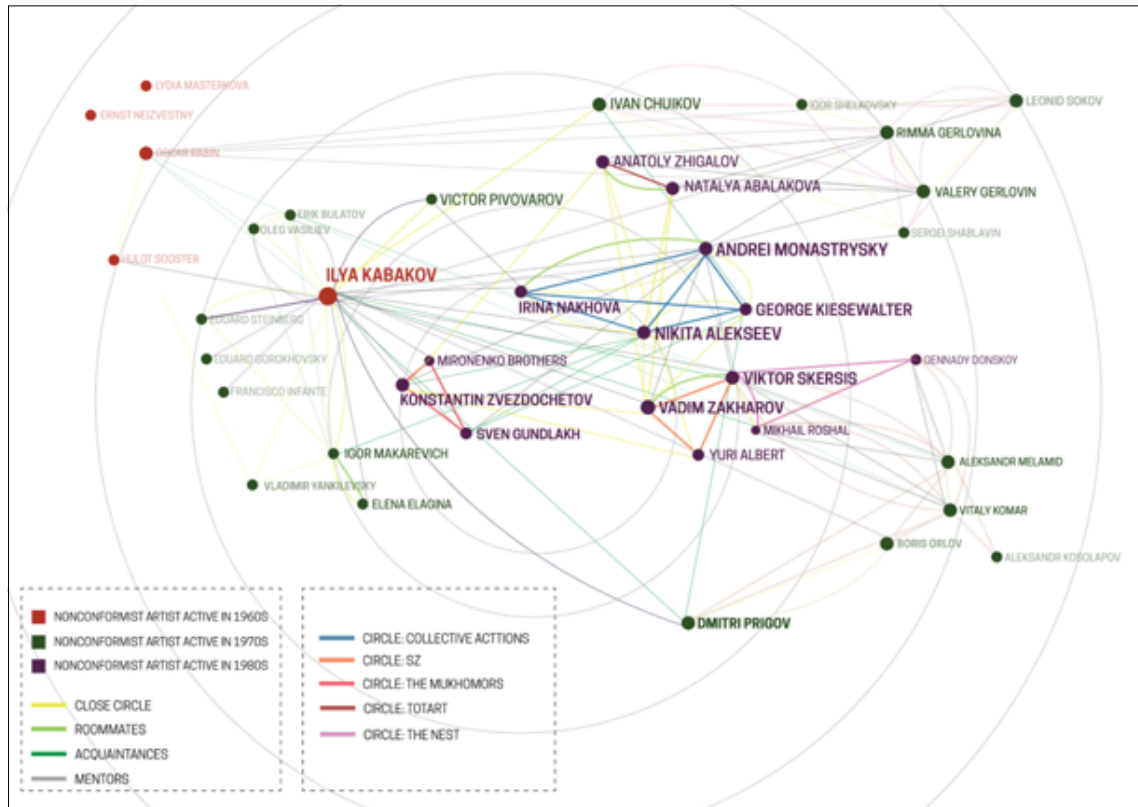


Figure 2.59. Graph showing networks of second generation of Nonconformist artists: 1980-1986
Figure by the Author

What kept us together, like the whole unofficial world, is the common fate of being outcasts.

George Kiesewalter

If the first generation of Nonconformist network was rooted in art institutes, the second generation of the Nonconformist network was built on a mentor-apprentice dynamic between

the older and younger generation. The second-generation stated here involve artists active in the Nonconformist scene until Perestroika when the term "unofficial" artist lost its meaning.

While the first generation of artists was forming, a young artist in Moscow, Nikita Alekseev was accepted to Moscow Printing Institute in 1974. His parents were acquaintances with Liazonovo artists of the 1960s; therefore, he was familiar with the unofficial art circle and newly forming Nonconformist milieu. Although Moscow Printing Institute was one of the leading institutions set up to raise future artists for Union of Artists, he soon started practicing, in his words, "conceptualist" art that caused him to be expelled from the Institute. During his last year in the Institute in 1976, however, he met a student, a young poet named Andrei Sumnin, but goes with the name Andrei Monastrysky. Through Monastrysky, Alekseev met poet Lev Rubinstein. In return, Alekseev introduces Monastrysky to a young painter, Irina Nakhova who Alekseev met through his connections from Lianozovo artists.

Nakhova who was admitted to Moscow Polygraphic Institute in 1968, and her friends took her to meet Victor Pivovarov to mentor her. While mentoring to Nakhova, Pivovarov also acquainted with Monastrysky, and later took the couple to meet Kabakov. Nakhova, while remembering the last years of the 1970s and her meeting with Kabakov, states: "I had perhaps heard of the idea of unofficial art, but I had never met such a person before."¹²⁵ Initially, they were like students to the master when they around Kabakov.

Later in 1979, Kabakov and Monastrysky grew closer, as artist Sven Gundlakh states: "...by the late seventies, Andrei Monastrysky was John the Baptist to Kabakov's Jesus."¹²⁶ This was one of the first mentor-apprentice tie developed. Meanwhile, Monastrysky often visited Gerlovins' apartment at the same time during 1978 and met Igor Makarevich and Elena Elagina through Gerlovins. After Gerlovins emigrated, Makarevich and Elagina got closer to

¹²⁵ Irina Nakhova quoted in Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.138.

¹²⁶ Sven Gundlakh quoted in "Introduction," in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.]* Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.14.

Monastrysky, Alekseev who they met through Monastrysky. Later in 1979, Lev Rubinstein introduced Monastrysky and Alekseev a young photographer who lives close to his apartment, George Kiesewalter. With the addition of Kiesewalter, the first circle of the second generation began to evolve around the group, which later be named as "Collective Actions." The group devised actions that took place sometimes with and sometimes without spectators, in the countryside, in the city or private apartments. These actions were documented by the artists themselves in photographs, in short, descriptive texts and recordings. This new form of practice was among the first examples of Nonconformist artists being their own documenters, in addition to, being their own curators in later apartment exhibitions. Artists of Collective Actions frequently went to Kabakov for mentorship, with Alekseev and Monastrysky getting closer to him.



Figure 2.60. Elena Elagina, Lev Rubinstein, Nikita Alekseev, Victor Skersis, Ilya Kabakov, Andrei Monastyrsky, Maria Konstantinova in the workshop of Ilya Kabakov. Early 1980s
Lev Rubinstein personal archive.



Figure 2.61. Collective Actions, Action in 1983, participants included: Andrei Monastyrsky, Elena Elagina, Vadim Zakharov, Ivan Chuikov, Eduard Gorokhovskiy, Eric Bulatov, Sergey Mironenko, Nikita Alekseev, Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Mironenko, Sven Gundlach
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection



Figure 2.62. Lev Rubinstein, Irina Nakhova, Andrei Monastyrsky, Nikita Alekseev in the apartment of Monastyrsky & Nakhova
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive Collection

While Monastrysky, Alekseev, Nakhova, and Rubinstein frequently visited Kabakov's workshop on Sretensky Boulevard, there they met the artists from the older generation, including Bulatov, Chuikov, and Prigov who got closer to Kabakov after Komar and Melamid left for New York. While Kabakov continued showing albums, Prigov organized reading sessions and the discussion on art was the main topic of conversation, in early 1980 three artists from Odessa came to Moscow. Sergei and Volodya Mironenko knew Sveng Gundlakh since they were little, and all three then decided to practice alternative art, came to Moscow. Gundlakh started studying at Moscow Polygraphic Institute, and Mironenko brothers started studying in Studio School, where they have met Konstantin Zvezdochetov and introduced him to Gundlakh. The group often meet at each others' apartments later met with Dmitri Prigov, who introduced them to Kabakov and Monastrysky. Starting from the early 1980s, Kabakov and Monastrysky started mentoring the group, which later called themselves "Mukhomors."



Figure 2.63. Mironenko brothers, Sven Gundlakh, Unknown artist, Konstantin Zvezdochetov, Moscow, 1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.64. Dmitri Prigov and Sven Gundlakh in Prigov's apartment, Moscow, 1984
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kieseewalter archive

While mentoring to Mukhomor circle, Monastyrsky got closer to Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalya Abalakova, a married couple, who had met Dmitri Prigov through Gerlovins before their emigration and joined the growing circle.

It was about the same time when Zhigalov and Abalakova joined the circle, the growing network of artists visited a showing in a young artist's studio: Victor Skersis. Victor Skersis, together with Gennady Donskoy and Mikhail Roshal, was a student of Komar and Melamid at Moscow Polygraphic Institute where they had been tutoring until their emigration. After Komar and Melamid left, Skersis, Donskoy and Roshal formed their own circle with later graduates of Polygraphic Institute Yuri Albert and Vadim Zakharov. During the showing, Skersis curated and exhibited the works from himself, Donskoy, Roshal, Albert, and Zakharov in his apartment. After the meeting of the small group of artists with the circle around Kabakov, Donskoy and Roshal slowly faded from the circle; and Skersis, Albert, and Zakharov joined the Kabakov circle.



Figure 2.65. Vadim Zakharov and Victor Skersis, for Kiesewalter’s Album “Love Me, Love My Umbrella” 1984
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

In time, Zakharov and Skersis grew close to each other and started sharing an apartment. Later, Nikita Alekseev and George Kiesewalter went to these young artists with an idea of chronicling the practices, artworks, and actors of the circle, which later gave way to the idea of forming what they called MANI, or Moscow Archive of New Art. Later, other artists of the circle got involved, and the group came together under a shared concern on documentation of and producing artworks on what is around them. This curious role that artists took on themselves allow them to document their works, their domestic spaces as well as Soviet everyday life of the 1980s.

In late 1980 or early 1981, the three of us Nikita Alexeev, Lev Rubinstein, and me [Monastyrsky] were at our apartment on Malaya Gruzinskaya Street in Moscow, sitting and talking about how good it would be to create a magazine on unofficial art. It was during this conversation that the name for such a magazine was first mentioned. I don't remember who, but one of us said the word archive

of new art. On that day, we did not take it any further, other than coming up with that name: the Moscow Archive of New Art (MANI).¹²⁷

The artists later started referred by the name MANI, or "MANI Circle" by themselves, although following the term of Boris Groys, in Western literature, they are usually referred to as Moscow Conceptualists.

2.1.2.1 Room Networks

The relationship of Nonconformist exhibiting practices and spaces of exhibiting seem to have a reversed situation when two generations of apartments and apartment networks are compared. The first generation of Nonconformists benefitted from the fired-up atmosphere of Thaw. They had to possibility to rent big enough workshops that they also used as a domestic space, thanks to their connection to the Union of Artists, which allowed them to benefit from the non-residential fund. However, the second generation of artists had to work/exhibit and live in rooms that were mostly once communal rooms transformed into private rooms. This fact reflects in most of the writings and memoirs of the artists. While the first generation of artists refers to their domestic settings either "apartment" (in Russian, "kvartira"), or workshop (in Russian, "masterkaya"); in the documents of the second generation, their domestic sphere is referred to as "room" (in Russian, "komnata").

This fact is reflected in two albums compiled by George Kiesewalter and Vadim Zakharov: the first one he has compiled in 1983 titled "Around the Workshops" ("Po Masterskim"), and the second one in 1986 titled "Rooms" (Komnati). Kiesewalter started his archive on artist spaces in 1982 by photographing the domestic spaces of artists from the "older generation" where also they practiced their art. He explains that he intended to document "the curious phenomena of working, showing, and living" in the same space, "because interesting material was going to waste. It always seemed to me that you could only understand a [art]work by hanging out with

¹²⁷ Andrei Monastyrsky, Pervaia papka MANI, [First MANI Folder], 1981.

the unofficial artist and seeing how they worked, the atmosphere in their home."¹²⁸ Although Kiese-walter started documenting the domestic sphere of the first generation of Nonconformist artists that had not emigrated yet, in time, he expanded his album to include the domestic spheres of the second generation. The album clearly shows the shift in the spatial settings of "homes" between two generations. While in the homes of first-generation artists, Kiese-walter documented piles of works like someone expects from a workshop and barely any everyday item; in the documents of second-generation homes, the artworks merged with artists' furniture: a bed with an artwork hung on, a desk half of which covered with works, or works hung together with kitchen appliances. One can see the sleeping area, working area, and exhibiting area all at once.



Figure 2.66. The cover of “Around the Workshop”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiese-walter archive

¹²⁸ George Kiese-walter in the interview “Within a Close Circle”, for the exhibition “Insider” held at Garage Museum of Contemporary art, 2015.



Figure 2.67. Workshop of Igor Makarevich, page from “Around the Studios”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.68. Workshop of Boris Orlov, page from “Around the Studios”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

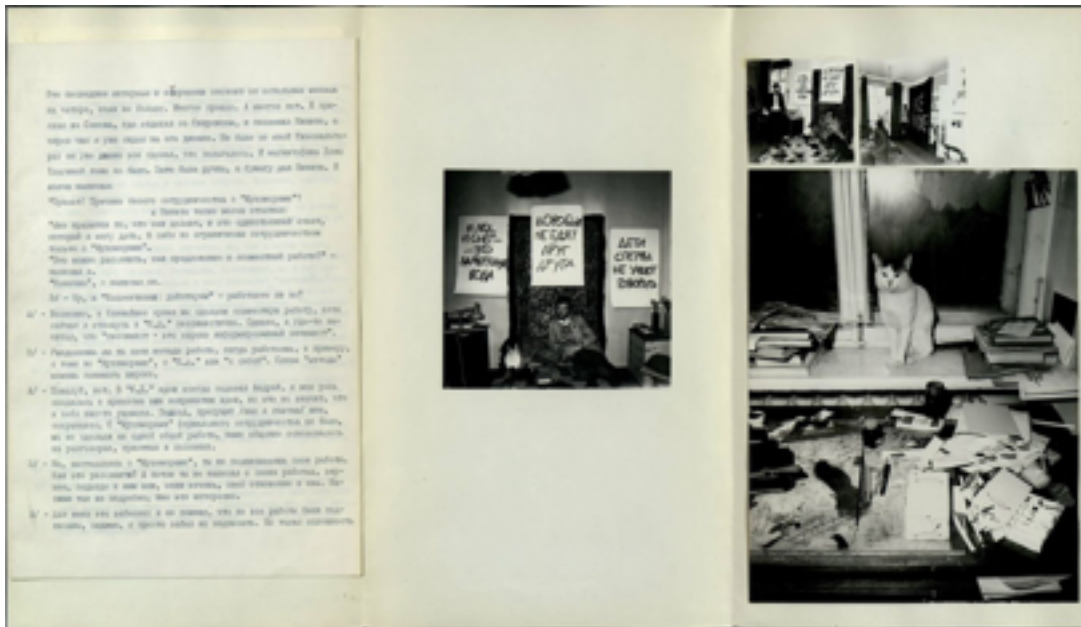


Figure 2.69. Room of Nikita Alekseev, page from “Around the Studios”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.70. Room of Andrei Monastyrsky, page from “Around the Studios”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Following "Around the Workshops," Kiesewalter and Zakharov put together another album which was published in the last MANI folder in 1986, titled "Rooms." However, this time, it was sole documentation of artist homes of second-generation Nonconformists. They wandered around 8 'rooms,' photographed and wrote short commentaries on the album describing the setting of the rooms together with the artists' latest artworks.

The shift in Kiesewalter and Zakharov's definition of the artist space from "workshop" to "room" is significant for architectural analysis, for the rooms had been historically crucial for Soviet history and especially in Soviet history and architecture. The second part of this chapter will dwell on how the "room" was used as an artist space, the space of the unofficial exhibition, and the subject of Nonconformist art.



Figure 2.71. The Cover of the Album “Rooms”, and Room of Vladimir Mironenko, page from “Rooms”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Therefore, in the analysis of the second-generation networks of artist spaces, the term "room" will be used. A graph, similarly generated for the first generation of artists, put together showing the networks of artists of second-generation; it states that as the artists were gradually

forming a unified circle, the room networks became more dispersed since the actors of the 1980s were equally involved in communication with each other.

However, unlike the first generation, the unification of the circle was slightly faster; therefore, the apartment nodes were almost equally visited. Instead of singular actors of a small circle whose apartments serving as a point of interaction, through the 1980s, the apartment meetings were scattered equally among each actor. Therefore, the number of apartments that are more frequently visited is more than those in the 1970s. Even though almost all the actors participated in all events, the number of meeting points increasing proves:

The more unified the circle gets, the more communication developed between artists. That fact resulted in scheduling more meetings, and when the number of meetings increased, there emerged more systematic planning for those series of events.

Furthermore, since the number of actors actively participated in these events is higher than the previous generation, there naturally emerged more nodes of interaction; therefore, the circle started organizing events in many apartments. The randomness of events of the 1970s left its space to a more "institutionalized" unofficial artist circle. During an interview, Viktor Skersis gives an exact amount of time about the frequency of meetings when he states: "We met once in every two weeks in Monastyrsky's room."¹²⁹

For the room networks of MANI circle, the apartments of Kabakov, Skersis & Zakharov, Alekseev, Kiesewalter, Monastyrsky & Nakhova, and Zhigalov & Abalakova will be discussed, since they were the centers of interaction for the circle.

¹²⁹ Victor Skersis quoted in Tupitsyn, V. (eds.), *Vis-à-vision: Conversations with Russian Conceptual Artists, 1978–2013*, London: Spector, 2018, p.88.

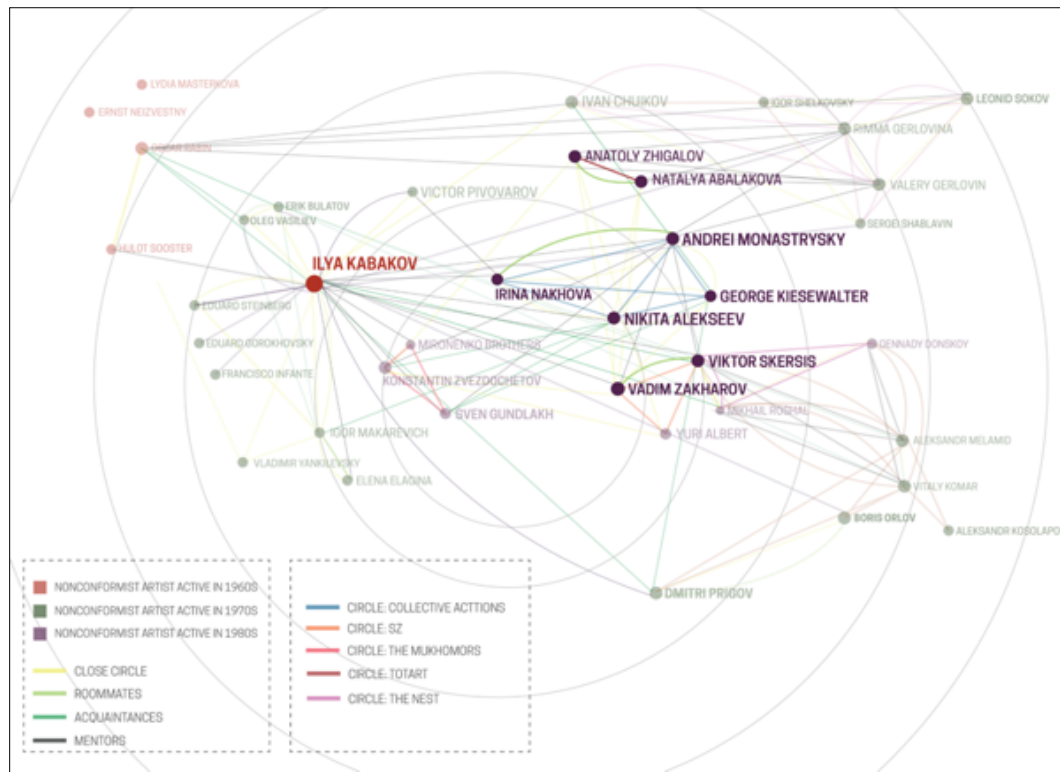


Figure 2.72. Graph showing nodes of frequent meetings among second generation of Nonconformist artists
Figure by the Author

Andrei Monastrysky and Irina Nakhova had a room on Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, No.7. The building had a distinct role for Moscow artists at the time since it was the base of Gorkom Grafikov,¹³⁰ an exhibition space used for artists to organize events after 1975, with, of course, the permission of The Union of Artists and the City Committee. The exhibition hall was located in the basement of the building Monastrysky and Nakhova had an apartment in. The building, which had been a central node for artists from all backgrounds, was also permitted for an "alternative art exhibition" in 1975 after the first generation of Nonconformist artists applied to City Committee. The exhibition was closed hours after opening, and the incident marked a turn for Nonconformist circles as they "almost went official." Following the incident,

¹³⁰ Gorkom Grafikov, or known as Moscow City Committee of Graphic Artists was an independent trade union of artists, graphic artists, photographers. The Committee had an exhibition hall located on Malaya Gruzinskaya Street, 28 (1975-1991).

according to Victor Tupitsyn, the underground art owned/accepted their domestic space as their "official place of the exhibition."¹³¹ In the early 1980s, the Monastyrsky-Nakhova room usually hosted meetings of the Collective Actions group, and Monastyrsky and Nakhova usually arrange performances and mockery readings of daily newspapers including Pravda. Later, when the project of Moscow Archive of New Art started in late 1981, Monastyrsky held sessions where he interviewed with the artists of the circle and recorded it. These recordings later published in MANI Files, and forms a significant portion of documents giving insight to Nonconformist milieu.



Figure 2.73. Locations of Nonconformist artist rooms: 1980-1986

Figure by the Author, on General Plan of Moscow, Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

¹³¹ Groys, B. “Introduction”, in *History Becomes Form: Moscow Conceptualism*, Mass: MIT Press, 2010, p.7. For a broader discussion on Nonconformist circle’s attempts on exhibiting official galleries, see Chapter 2.



Figure 2.74. Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive collection



Figure 2.75. Andrei Monastyrsky during a performance at Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, No.7,
1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Archive collection

Nikita Alekseev lived on Vavilov Street, 48. Alekseev describes his room as: "I lived on the second floor, in the entrance, there were two long corridors on both sides which the doors of one-room apartments open. Retired grandmothers, housekeepers of former professors, and I lived in this building. I lived by the large windows to which opened to the fire escape. When the weather was fine, I took my guests to drink tea on it."¹³² The humble one-room apartment of Vasilyev hosted, in artist's words, "the first private gallery"¹³³ called AptArt Gallery (short for Apartment Exhibition) 'opened.' When the idea of organizing a gallery for Moscow underground art came up within the MANI circle, Alekseev volunteered to host and curate it in his room. "I volunteered for the sole reason that I lived alone," states Alekseev. Following two years after 1982 until one day, KGB agents came and raided the room, regular and scheduled exhibitions were organized in Alekseev's apartment, most of them stayed open for days, and in the meantime, he continued to use it as a living space.



Figure 2.76. Vavilov Street, 48 in the background, during demonstration "Art to the masses.", 1978
Nikita Alekseev personal archive

¹³² Nikita Alekseev, "Into the Void", Interview for Smengazeta, September 12, 2006.

¹³³ Ibid.

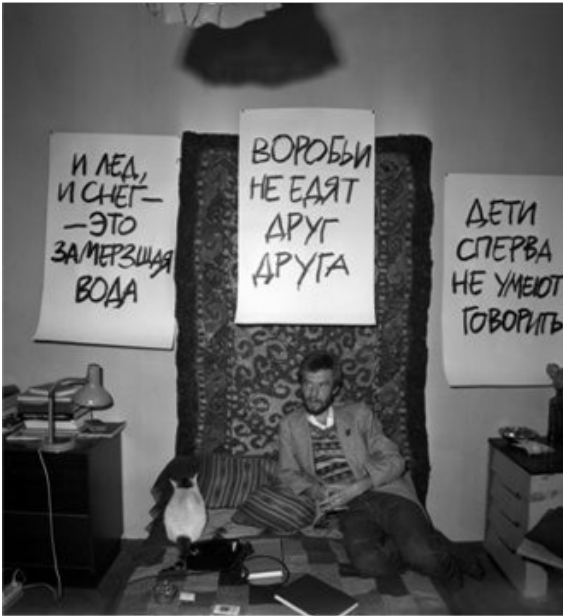


Figure 2.77. Nikita Alekseev in his room, Vavilov Street, 48
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

While Monastyrsky and Nakhova organized performances, and Alekseev turned his room into a gallery space, Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalya Abalakova were organizing one-day showings in their rooms located on Chertanavo district. However, the use of the room space for an exhibition between these two examples was significantly different. Alekseev had to adjust his domestic life around the collective exhibitions, which sometimes went on for days. Alekseev's room had to continue functioning as a domestic space. Even during exhibitions, he kept all his furniture inside, some of which were used to hang works on and even transformed into artworks during AptArt exhibitions. In the case of Zhigalov and Abalakova, we observe a different transformation of their room. What Zhigalov and Abalakova called "TotArt" (Total Art for short) required an overall re-transformation of space. They produced 3 meters large installations that required the use of the entire space of their tiny room for their one-day exhibitions. Therefore, the artworks had to be exhibited, documented, and then de-installed within a day. They moved all their furniture outside to install their artworks during these one-day shows. After de-installing at the end of the day, they re-installed the demoting setting. Their room was either an exhibition space or a domestic space, not both at the same time.



Figure 2.78. Zhigalov and Abalakova installing in their room, 1983
Abalakova and Zhigalov personal archive



Figure 2.79. Zhigalov and Abalakova room, 1983
E.K. ArtBureau, Museum MANI archive

Meanwhile, Vadim Zakharov and Victor Skersis were organizing one-day exhibits and actions in their room located on Chertanavo district, very close to Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalya Abalakova's room. In 1982, the time Alekseev used his room as a gallery space, Zakharov started collecting artworks of MANI artists. Zakharov & Skersis' room was already being transformed into an archive in mid-1980s, where the collected works were kept. Similarly, George Kiesewalter started forming his archive in his apartment on Polyanka Street. However, his method of archiving was documenting MANI activities, events, exhibitions, and artists' rooms. Kiesewalter, as a photographer, was one of the master chroniclers of the circle who later turned these documents into albums by 1983. The albums were shown in his apartment meetings and later published in MANI Folders.



Figure 2.80. “The Room of Vadim Zakharov”, from Kiesewalter’s album “Around the Studios”, 1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.81. Vadim Zakharov in his room
E.K. ArtBureau, Museum MANI archive

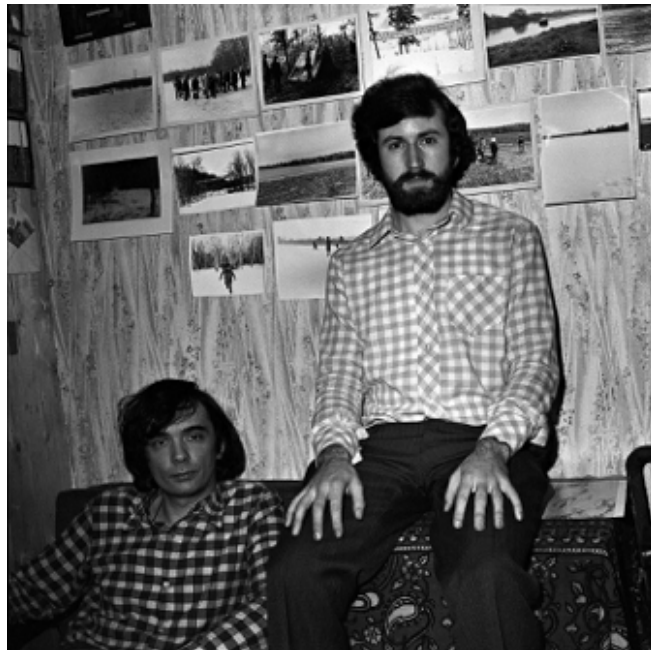


Figure 2.82. Andrei Monastyrsky and George Kiesewalter at the apartment of Kiesewalter,
1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.83. George Kiewalter at his apartment: “Self Portrait”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiewalter archive

This analysis of two generations and the networks of domestic spaces shows that there is a reverse relationship between the artist space and Nonconformist exhibition practices. While the first generation, who got the opportunity to build their 'humble' workshops, had an ideal setting to hold an "organized" exhibition, their use of space was mostly in the form of individual showings. However, the more the network of actors unified and found a common aesthetic concern, the more the organization of their domestic surroundings evolved into a collective exhibition space. The most significant practice in the Nonconformist art is the artworks produced in, and produced on the domestic space artists were dwelling in. The second section will analyze the role of the room on the practices of Nonconformist artists, including the artworks representing/about the communal room, produced in their once- communal rooms, and exhibited in them.

2.2. Formation of Artworks

The pathology of the unofficial life of art mirrors the pathology of official life [...] Both were sick, of course, each in his own way. Nevertheless, they are pieces of the same whole [...] two sides of the same Soviet medal: without one, there would not be the other.

Ilya Kabakov

Although the unofficial art and artists started to surface during the 1960s following the Thaw, these artists of the 1960s mainly concerned making art for the sake of independent creation, and in support of a counterculture. However, during the process, as Margarita Tupitsyna states, "they ignored the issues they had as regards the nature of [Soviet] context."¹³⁴ According to Tupitsyna, the artistic genre of the first unofficial artists formed following the "National American Exhibition" in Sokolniki Park in summer 1959 where the artists got to see the works of Jackson Pollock and other abstract expressionists, including Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko, and William Baziotes.¹³⁵

Influenced by the works, some of which they could only have the chance to see in coffee-table books of Western contemporary art smuggled into the country, they formed a "context-rejecting" perspective. Victor Tupitsyn observes that first unofficial artists "preferred position of the "genuine" and "pure" avant-garde to the very "false" and "unsterile" domestic art situation."¹³⁶

¹³⁴ See Tupitsyn, M. "Avant- Garde and Kitsch" in *Margins of Soviet Art: Socialist Realism to the Present*, Milan: Giancarlo Politi Editore, 1989, p. 23– 37; and Tupitsyn, M. *Against Kandinsky* Cologne: Hatje Cantz, 2006, p. 163– 167.

¹³⁵ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.143.

¹³⁶ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press, 2012, p.36.



Figure 2.84. “National American Exhibition”, Moscow, 1959
MoMA Archives, IC/IP: I.B.135



Figure 2.85. Lydia Masterkova in her apartment in Moscow, 1967
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection

The Western art inspired the unofficial art of the 1960s, while the artists were also deriving forms from Soviet avant-garde heritage. This particular choice of genre was a result of their hunger for international communication, and National American Exhibition fueled the first interaction. Margarita Tupitsyn states: "In the early seventies, despite the [existence of] Iron Curtain, we were no longer categorically cut off from the new artistic thinking that changed Western art."¹³⁷ However, during 1970s a new terminology, and a new content was introduced to unofficial art by the first-generation Nonconformists. Margarita Tupitsyn states regarding the formation of this new language that: "a consensus" seems to be reached among the artists to produce art on the cultural and material context surrounding them, "which was influenced by the collective activities" of their generation.¹³⁸ Therefore, the hallmark of Nonconformist art was formed, which is a context-dependent artistic practice. Victor Pivovarov states regarding newly emerging artistic language that it was "a change in the semantics of art, a change in content" that the art of the sixties failed to dwell on or discover.

What did the art of sixties say about the content lying in front of their eyes, waiting to surface? The content was our [Soviet]' social' sphere (obshchestvennaia). As once Kabakov stated, [with Nonconformist art] the epoch of 'I' was over, the epoch of 'WE' had begun.¹³⁹

During the time of their studies in foremost art institutes of Moscow, many Nonconformist artists were subjected to the doctrines of Socialist Realism since the State art institutes had still officially recognized Socialist Realism as the only creative method. The principal dogmas of Socialist Realism demanded that the artist depicts "Soviet life by deriving forms from everyday life itself" and "from its revolutionary development"; while creating works "national

¹³⁷ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.146.

¹³⁸ Tupitsyn, Margarita. Introduction to the exhibition catalog for "Russian New Wave" exhibit, Contemporary Russian Art Center of America, New York, 1981.

¹³⁹ Pivovarov, V. "70s: Change of language codes", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.130.

in form and socialist in content." While forming their artistic genre, the Nonconformist artists re-interpreted that same doctrine by dwelling on and forming a reaction against its statements. The reason for the Nonconformists' reaction to Socialist Realism is because the artists acknowledged the undeniable effect of the movement on everyday life and spaces of Soviet individuals even in the 1970s, almost 20 years after the denunciation of Stalin in 1953. One of the most significant aspects of art and architecture produced between 1928-1953 was their lasting effect on everyday life, as it was in the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) doctrine to achieve the Revolution in everyday life and everyday spaces. Revolutionizing everyday life, although started as an idea immediately following the Revolution, went to extremes during the period between 1928-1953, during the Stalin regime. Therefore, an introduction to the history of the visual heritage of the Soviet Union between 1917-1953 is crucial in understanding its representations and effects on everyday life, as well as the references derived from Socialist Realist visuality by Nonconformist milieu.

2.2.1 The Brief History of Soviet Visuality I: Soviet Mass Propaganda and Ideological Visuality

The artist has the right to experiment on life.

Gustav Klutskis

Starting from the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution, mass propaganda had been the primary tool for spreading the ideology and political education of the masses. Although propaganda tools took many forms during Soviet history, the visuality and visual presentations and representations of ideology had been at the center of preserving the reign of the Soviet State. Immediately after the Revolution, the young Soviet government expropriated the primary media resources of the formerly Tsarist regime. The Communist Party took upon itself the role of supervision and control of these resources and effectively monopolized the flow of mass information in Soviet society. Except those few who had access to alternative sources—principally foreign radio stations run by western broadcasting, intelligence services,

and underground 'samizdat'¹⁴⁰ publications which could only be accessible for public after Thaw—the Soviet citizen was almost entirely dependent on official media for information for decades. In the decree, 'Draft Resolution on the Freedom of the Press,' composed in November 4, 1917, shortly after the October Revolution had taken place, Lenin dismissed the bourgeois notion of press freedom, since for Lenin, "freedom for the rich to publish and for the capitalist to control the newspapers, a practice which in all countries, even the freest, produced a corrupt press."¹⁴¹ From this point on, the official media tools took over the mission of establishing the norms of a new everyday life through textual and visual propaganda between 1923-1954.

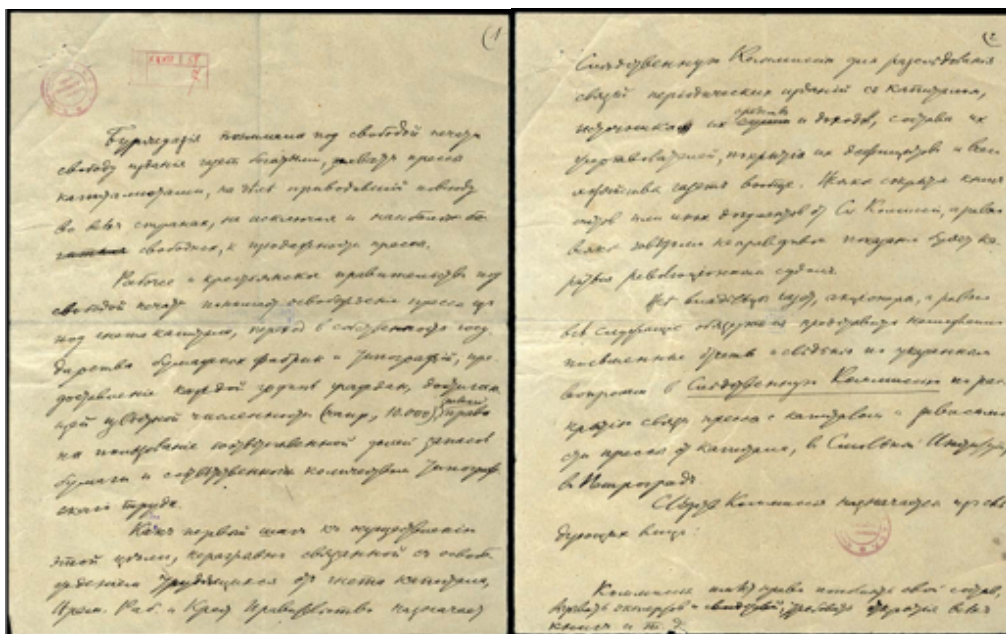


Figure 2.86. ‘Draft Resolution on the Freedom of the Press’, handwritten by Lenin, and presented at the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on November 4 (17), 1917
 RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History), F. 2. Op. 1. D. 4665. L. 1, 2.

¹⁴⁰ The history of printed media in Soviet Union mainly had three types of literary outputs: gosizdat - literature emanating from official Soviet publishing houses and thus having the approval of the state censor; samizdat - unapproved material produced or reproduced unofficially in the Soviet Union; and tamizdat - works also denied approval by the official censor but published abroad (either with or without their author's consent) and then smuggled back into the Soviet Union.

¹⁴¹ First published in newspaper “Pravda”, November 10, 1917.

Christina Lodder, one of the central figures on Soviet Constructivist theory and artistic practices, in her article "Art of the Commune: Politics and Art in Soviet Journals, 1917–20", discusses the earlier traces of visual propaganda in Soviet journals of art on one of the longest-running official printed media of the State: "Iskusstvo." Lodger discusses the introduction of the term "Proletkult,"¹⁴² which denotes the (re)culturalization of the proletariat. Louder states that the primary concern of Proletkult was to reform art to "organize the living images of social experience not only in the sphere of cognition but also in the sphere of aspirations."¹⁴³ The official magazine in the early Soviet context brought text and image together, while educating the mostly illiterate masses, it also aimed to establish new aesthetic values for designing everyday space and objects. Lodder claims that the campaign resulted in the production of everyday life in Constructivist terms.¹⁴⁴ Unlike the 19th-century Romantic slogan of "art against life," an overall campaign of "art into life" was initiated through printed media.

The reconstruction of everyday life was firstly initiated in the public sphere. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, in 1918 Congress of Communist Party, announced a revolutionary plan to reconstruct the public spaces of Soviet capital of Moscow. Later referred to as "Monumental Propaganda," it was mentioned in an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1933 written by A.V. Lunacharsky on his memoirs on a conversation between Lenin and Lunacharsky which took place after the Soviet government moved to Moscow, between March 15 and April 8, 1918. He remembered how Lenin insisted on the role of art in socialist cultural construction and the practical steps of the artistic order that can be taken in this direction. He stated: "...if I am not mistaken, it was the winter of 1918/19, [when Lenin mentioned his plan on a new form of visual

¹⁴² It was also the name of the organization established in November 1917 as a part of Commissariat of Enlightenment after the Bolshevik Party formed the Council of People's Commissars. "Proletkult" -the independent proletarian cultural and educational organizations were set up by Aleksandr Bogdanov in November 1917.

¹⁴³ Bogdanov, A. "Proletariati iskusstvo" [Proletariat and art], in "Pervaia Vserossiskaia konferentsiia Prosvetitelnykh organizatsii "[The First All-Russian Conference of Educational Organizations], *Proletarskaia kultura*, no.5, 1919, p.32.

¹⁴⁴ Lodder, C. "Art of the Commune: Politics and Art in Soviet Journals, 1917–20," *Art Journal*, 1993:3, p.52
Punin, N. "Proletarskoe iskusstvo" [Proletarian art], *Iskusstvo*, 19, April 13, 1919, p.1.

propaganda] 'I think I would call it monumental propaganda', he said."¹⁴⁵ Lunacharsky continued to quote from Lenin:

You should organize artistic forces and choose appropriate places in the squares [so that] our artists could put short but expressive inscriptions on suitable walls or some unique structures, containing the fundamental principles and slogans of Marxism. Please do not think that I imagine marble, granite, and gold letters. We must design everything modestly. Let it be some concrete slabs, and the inscriptions on them are as clear as possible. I do not think they should be permanent, too. Let all this be temporary.¹⁴⁶

Lenin also stated the importance of building monuments to predecessors of Socialism: its theorists and fighters, as well as those lighted its philosophical thought in science and art of whom, although, did not have a direct relationship to Socialism, were genuine heroes of culture. As a result, the monuments of heroes started being built. Also, the banners and propaganda posters started being design designed for public spaces, which later became the hallmark of Soviet visual propaganda. Following the conversation with Lunacharsky, Lenin took the issue to the meeting of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on August 2, 1918. Immediately after, Lenin's "Monumental Propaganda" had extensive coverage in several official magazines and newspapers but especially in newspapers *Krasnaya Niva* and *Ogonyok*,¹⁴⁷ which were edited by Lunacharsky as "Building a New Life."

¹⁴⁵ First published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1933, No. 4–5, January 29. The quotation is derived from the booklet published in 1961 by the Union of Artists, titled "Lenin's Monumental Propaganda".

¹⁴⁶ First published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1933, No. 4–5, January 29. The quotation is derived from the booklet published in 1961 by the Union of Artists, titled "Lenin's Monumental Propaganda".

¹⁴⁷ The Soviet press in the period under review was represented by mass literary, artistic and socio-political weeklies: *Krasnaya Niva* and *Ogonyok*. The *Krasnaya Niva* magazine appeared at the *Izvestia* publishing house of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee as an appendix to the *Izvestia* newspaper and was edited by A.V. Lunacharsky. It contained mainly literary and artistic material, the magazine was intended for family reading.



Figure 2.87. Lenin opening the plaque dedicated to fighters of Socialism, on the Senate Wall of Kremlin, November 7, 1918
Arkhitectura SSSR, 1962, No:4



Figure 2.88. Lenin in front of Marx & Engels monument, November 7, 1918
Arkhitectura SSSR, 1962, No:4

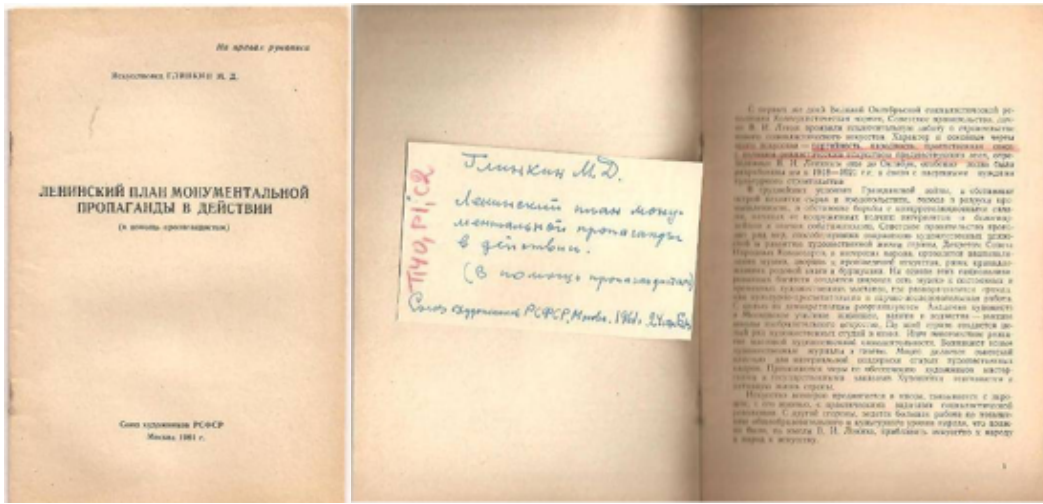


Figure 2.89. “Lenin’s Monumental Propaganda”, Gosizdat: The Union of Artists, 1961 Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

Everywhere I look, I see people writing about me. I find this utterly un-Marxist concentration on a single individual very harmful. It is wrong, undesirable, and unnecessary. And as for these portraits! They are all over the place! What is the point of it all?

Vladimir Il'ich Lenin¹⁴⁸

Following the death of Lenin in 1927, the monumental propaganda took a new form. After the death of Lenin, in Moscow and Leningrad, monuments of Lenin started replacing the anonymous monuments of heroes of Socialism. Soon after, the mausoleum Lenin was built on Red Square, where the embalmed body of the leader lay in a sarcophagus with a glass lid. Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote in his poem "Vladimir Ilyich Lenin," which later published in

¹⁴⁸ Lenin to Vladimir Bonch-Bruевич, 1918, quoted in Hegewisch, K. “Preface”, in Lenin by Warhol, Munich: Galerie Bernd Klüser, 1987, p.67.

textbooks: "Lenin is now more alive than all living things."¹⁴⁹ After the decree "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations" was issued in 1932 and Socialist Realism was attained as the official style in the art of Soviet Union, the realist images of Lenin with Stalin started surfacing in printed media. They were later called "the cult of personality" by Khrushchev in his street speech in 1955. The idea was based upon the idea of party ideologists replacing the language of Marxist abstractions, which they believe was poorly absorbed by society with a more understandable ideology portraying the leaders of the Party. Partly the validity of this approach is confirmed by some statements by Stalin himself. In 1935, Maria Svanidze, who was part of the leader's family circle, wrote down her conversation with Stalin in a diary: "He once talked [to me] about the praises arranged for him — the people need a king [he said], that is, a man whom they can worship and in whose name to live and work."¹⁵⁰

Although the cult of personality was not a unique invention of Stalinism and similar cults arose in the first half of the 20th century in many countries of the world, it was one of the most critical political mechanisms of Soviet power. The proper functioning of this mechanism was impossible without a well-developed infrastructure for the production of the cult - and this largely explains the attention that the Soviet government paid to art. Thus, culture turned into politics, and journalists, directors, writers, artists, sculptors, and party ideologists became servants engaged in the work of state importance - the creation of a cult.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Mayakovsky, V. "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin", Pravda, 1927.
See: Jangfeld, B. Mayakovsky: A Biography, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ Montefiore, S.S. Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar, New York: Vintage USA, 2005, p.102.

¹⁵¹ For more discussion on the role of Stalinist art on the formation and evolution of personality cult; see: Zinovieva, O. Symbols of Stalinist Moscow. Moscow: Tonchu Publishing House, 2009; Groys, B. The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond. London: Princeton, 1992; Golomshtok, I. Totalitarian Art: the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People's Republic of China. London: Cosgrove, 1990; Guldberg, H. The Culture of the Stalin Period, London: Palgrave, 1990; Bowlt, J.E. "Russian Sculpture and Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda," in Millon, H.A. and Nochlin, L. (eds.) Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1978; Stites, R. "The Origins of Soviet Ritual Style: Symbol and Festival in the Russian Revolution," in Arvidsson, C. and Blomquist, L.E (eds.) Symbols of Power: The Esthetics of Political Legitimation in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Stockholm: Cosgrove, 1987.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, the monuments of Lenin and Stalin started surrounding public spaces. New banners decorating the streets had been quoting from Lenin and Stalin, instead of verses and phrases of Socialist ideology and philosophy. The everyday practices in city space evolved accordingly. This evolution added yet another layer to the dichotomy of outside in the city and inside in the house. The public places lavishly decorated and massive buildings covered with tens of meters high portraits of Lenin and Stalin; wide avenues were covered with banners of Stalin quotations, advertising Soviet accomplishments, and promising a revolution in the global scale. While the scale in the public sphere is getting more massive and overwhelming, the private sphere was getting smaller in size. As a result of dichotomy between city space and domestic space, Soviet individuals shaped a double life, one that is inside and one on the outside.



Figure 2.90. Moscow, 1950s
Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

2.2.2 The Emergence of Context-Dependent Art of Moscow Nonconformism

The period of Socialist Realism was a period of contradiction and dichotomies, especially regarding everyday life and everyday spaces. The dichotomy in Stalinist architecture lies in the vast difference between designing of the outside and inside of *Kommunalki*. As was explained in the Soviet housing history, while the collective living unit was being transformed into *Kommunalki* with a bare 5 square meter of living space per individual, the interior blueprints of the apartments turned into a random mismatching of evenly distributed rooms opening to dark corridors. On the outside, the overly-decorated facades were framing colossal avenues and squares, while on the inside, where the everyday life of tenants was formed, lined up rooms acted as they were randomly installed in the flamboyant shell of the apartments.

The inventors of Nonconformist art dwelled on the dichotomies and the contradictions between the vision of life in official ideology and the reality of everyday life. They used the city they live in and the domestic spaces they were born in as case studies to present and represent these dichotomies. In a variety of methods, and using a variety of artistic mediums, Moscow Nonconformists sometimes transformed the Soviet everyday space and everyday objects into art, while sometimes they mockingly derived from and re-appropriated the visual language of official art. They felt a similar emptiness, deceit, hypocrisy, and cynicism regarding the tools and visuality of official Soviet art, which stood in the service of the totalitarian regime, as they did with the advertisement and idealization of Soviet spaces, mainly regarding the Soviet house. The depictions and representations of everyday life in the domestic sphere and the Soviet room in the official mediums were far from the real and banal setting of it. Therefore, Nonconformist artists took on the role of documenting, depicting, and dedicating their artistic works to produce representations of Soviet everyday life, mainly in the domestic spaces. They formed their genre on, as Victor Tupitsyn prefers to call "Soviet communal culture,"¹⁵² banal everyday objects contradicting the pure and socialist visions of the socialist ideal interior, and relationships and interactions in communal setting contradiction the visions of the ideal collective life. George Kiesewalter summarizes the Nonconformist

¹⁵² Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press, 2012, p.18.

artistic tendency as: "We were the guardians of culture in that terrible world that surrounded us in those years."¹⁵³ The urge to represent and document Soviet everyday life aside from/as opposed to its representations in State-sanctioned media invigorated the aesthetic terminology of Nonconformist artists and formed a variety of artistic genres among two generations of unofficial artist that all in their way were tied to the Soviet culture, context and visual traditions. These genres all together formed a "context-dependent" artistic discourse. The context-dependency of Nonconformist art lies in its aesthetic terminology that it derives forms from Soviet everyday life. However, unlike Socialist Realism, the artists' main concern was to make an inquiry on how Soviet everyday life was formed, not only in regard to but also despite revolutionary developments. Nonconformist art not only made a speckle of Soviet everyday life but also saved its memory for a future that became different from that of the official vision. It is a memory of shabbiness and austerity of the Soviet everyday life but also of the utopian energy of the Soviet culture.

However, the earliest examples of this context-dependency were not specifically targeting the everyday life. It emerged as a reaction to official tools of mass propaganda and official visual genre. The Nonconformists of the first generation were not only unofficial but anti-official in their artistic products. George Kiesewalter asserts that Nonconformist art found its autonomy in the desire to go beyond the traditions of the avant-garde past. However, that autonomy born as a reaction to the heritage of Socialist Realism.

Under such diverse conditions like the grotesque hyper-ideologization of mass media and agitation posters on the streets, while a giant monument of Il' lich [Lenin] was being built under the night sky over the failed Palace of Soviets, during the celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution, the autonomous terminology of Nonconformist art was formed.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Kiesewalter, G. "From the author", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.5.

¹⁵⁴ Kiesewalter, G. "From the author", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.9.

This reactionary statement was formulated by Sots Artists of the 1970s in the form of mocking reproductions of icons of Socialist Realism. The term "Sots Art" was first founded by Komar and Melamid in Moscow in 1972. According to them, Vladimir Paperny,¹⁵⁵ who had visited their studio, had seen their paintings based on Soviet mass-cultural imagery and concluded that this work was a Soviet variation of American Pop Art.¹⁵⁶ Later Komar and Melamid, interested in this comparison, invented a similarly generic term: Sots Art ("Sots" being short for "Socialist"). Later, Aleksandr Kosolapov, together with Komar and Melamid's student from Moscow Polygraphic Institute: Skersis, Roshal, and Donskoy produced a Sots Art manifesto. Their aesthetic genre originally derived the idea from the popular culture of the 1970s and 1980s; from a culture of dirty jokes on Soviet rituals, leaders and slogans spread among ordinary Soviet citizens and became a part of everyday life. Sots art became a specific aesthetic reaction to the dominance of official propaganda.

Using common symbols, slogans and signs of socialist agitation (a sickle and a hammer, a star, a pioneer salute, standard-bearers, a portrait of a leader, etc.), social art playfully unmasked their true meaning, thereby liberating the viewer's perception of ideological stereotypes. The grotesque, ironic, sharp substitutions and free quoting of any plastic objects and styles became the basis of this catchy, consciously eclectic artistic language, which largely coincided with the methods of conceptualism that started forming among Nonconformist artists of 1970s. The main subject of irony in the Sots Art genre was the mass propaganda and Soviet State-sanctioned visuality and taste that belonged to the visual tradition of Socialist Realism. They initially expressed their attitude using the most odious clichés, forms, symbols, signs, stereotypes of this art form, and political propaganda toolkit. By actively manipulating the visual stereotypes of Soviet propaganda, they created an independent politicized direction in Moscow Nonconformist terminology. Objects of Sots Art are, as a rule, collected and composed of blocks, elements, and quotes from the Soviet official-state entourage according to the pop art principles of visual-spatial organization. Such as, in

¹⁵⁵ Vladimir Paperny, who later emigrated and published the book, *Kultura 'Dva,'* an excellent examination of Socialist Realist architecture.

¹⁵⁶ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.88.

their work "history of the USSR in popular slogans," Sots Artists made a clever reference to the Soviet obsession of idea size and dimension as well as to official visual heritage. They produced traditional Soviet banners with slogans on them, which they claim that the size of the banners was designed precisely to cover a cube. Similarly, in their "Double Self-Portrait," Komar and Melamid replaced a very mundane representation of a Lenin-Stalin portrait with their own mosaic portraits. The Sots Art was both a nostalgic greet and an anesthetization of a bygone era. It was also a significant analysis of 1970s Moscow, which was still living under the dichotomy between a bygone past and a stagnant present.



Figure 2.91. Moscow 1970s

Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick



Figure 2.92. “Forward -to the Victory of Communism” and “History of the USSR in Popular Slogans”, by Komar and Melamid, 1974
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick



Figure 2.93. “Double Self-Portrait”, 1972
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick



Figure 2.94. Gustav Klutsis, Photomontage for Pravda, 1933
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

A similar approach to official canon formed the aesthetic genre of Erik Bulatov. In 1976, Erik Bulatov produced the painting "Krasikov Street" depicting an unremarkable Soviet street in Moscow. The painting depicts the street lined with Khrushchevki, the hallmark of the 1970s' Moscow. The figures and the traffic on this mundane stage move to the opposite direction of the massive billboard with a giant figure of Lenin painted on it, seems like he is walking towards the viewer's gaze. The pedestrians seem oblivious to the oversized and over-enthusiastic posture of Lenin while they were walking on the half-paved sidewalk.

Moreover, the artistic presentation in billboard seems like Lenin perfunctorily was cut out from the page of a magazine and randomly montaged in the scene. The leftover white background of the image increased the sense of cut-outness, which looks as bizarre as the figure of Lenin in sizing. The painting is a clever innuendo to the Monumental propaganda, and the personality cult of Soviet leaders and the apathy of ordinary Soviet individuals towards the gigantic ghosts of founders of the Soviet State embodied in enveloped the city space.



Figure 2.95. “Krasikov Street”, Erik Bulatov, 1976
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

The next section concerns how this context-dependency revolved around and evolved into artworks on the communal room, the communal apartment, and the communal everyday life. The Soviet culture industry of the postwar period did not attempt to absorb unofficial art, meanwhile as Tupitsyn states Nonconformist art constituted what would be "contents of an indefinitely deferred museum"¹⁵⁷ with the forms derived from that industry. The initial claim of Nonconformist artists was the portrait of everyday space, everyday Soviet banality, as opposed to their depictions in the official mediums. Therefore, the Nonconformist representations of Soviet room derived its terminology from two layers:

¹⁵⁷ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press, 2012, p.21.

1. The official representations of the Soviet house in printed media.
2. The artists' experiences of, observations and documentation on the room in communal and once-communal apartments.

The main subjects of the Nonconformist art regarding the Soviet house are the room, the everyday domestic object, and the communist body as the dweller of the room. The next section will trace the Nonconformist artworks done on the three subjects mentioned above while making an inquiry of representations of room in official printed media and art in comparison to Nonconformist art.

The next section is Nonconformist artworks produced on rooms and exhibited in rooms. The study firstly will trace the origin of visual references of Nonconformist artworks on the rooms, room interiors, Soviet everyday objects in the history of Soviet house, and visual representations of the house. Then, a comparative analysis will be developed between Soviet official genre and individual Nonconformist artworks from each generation and their take on communal house, object, and communal body. Finally, the study aims to analyze the practice of exhibiting the artworks on rooms in artist rooms through two generations of Nonconformist collective apartment/room exhibitions.

2.2.3 On Rooms

2.2.3.1 The Brief History of Soviet Visuality II: The Representations of Room in Soviet Official Visual Tools

Following the issuance of the decree "On Land," and the dissolution of the private sphere into collective house-communes, a broad visual campaign on Soviet official media started being conducted on how the interior of a collective living unit should be designed and used. A broad campaign on "how to live" became the primary concern of the Soviet state in the following several decades and propagated by mainstream printed media starting from early years of Revolution.

The advertisement for house-commune and collective domesticity began by attacking the old forms of domesticity. The elimination of private property in the Soviet state was firstly initiated in the form of eliminating the fetishization of the object as a grand campaign against possessions. The center of this attack was the everyday object, which in Soviet avant-garde artistic terminology referred to as "poshlost". The Russian word "poshlost" comes from the verb "poshl": something that has been in the past or occurred. "Poshlost" in Russian literature was both used to describe what is traditional and ancient, but also the banal and kitsch. After the Revolution, "poshlost" was used to refer to reified domestic objects, and the war against "poshlost" became a cultural obsession of the Soviet state and intelligentsia. This battle against "poshlost" laid the ground of transformation of domestic space into a collective, the private into public while being the first step of designing the collective house from inside out.

The avant-garde writer Sergei Tretyakov announces a "battle of taste" regarding the everyday practices of Soviet citizens, their "psychological make-up." The battle against 'poshlost', as Tretyakov stresses, is a battle against everything that has once bourgeois:

We will call byt (everyday life) or poshlost'...that things a person surrounds himself with, to which, independently of their usefulness, he transfers the fetishism of his sympathies and memories, and finally, becomes-literally-a slave of those things.¹⁵⁸

Tretyakov distinguishes between consumers (priobretateli) and inventors (izobretateli), and the dismissal of possession can be summarized as elimination of "collectors of past" through "creators of the future."¹⁵⁹

In 1923, poet Vladimir Mayakovsky wrote the book "About This," a chapter of which he dedicated to poshlost titled "About Trash." Mayakovsky stated: "The Soviet citizen threatens

¹⁵⁸ Tretyakov, S. "Perespectivy futurizma," in Literaturnye Manifesty, 1932:2, p.239-240.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p 239-240.

the Revolution with Marx on a wall, a canary in a cage, and a cat which lies purring on a copy of Izvestia. The revolution would be betrayed by Marx -in the crimson frames of a cozy meshchanski interior."¹⁶⁰ The book "About This" light the fuse of a grand campaign against the domestic trash, the "poshlost". In the spring of 1923, Rodchenko published a series of photomontages illustrating "About This." Like the poem, the illustrations take up the temporary problem of the transition to socialism in domestic space. Christina Kiaer, one of the seminal researchers on Constructivism and the design objects of early Revolutionary Soviet, writes in her book "Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism" states that Rodchenko's photo-montage on "About This" transformed the interior incorporating the banal everyday object into "the organized spaces of the revolution."¹⁶¹

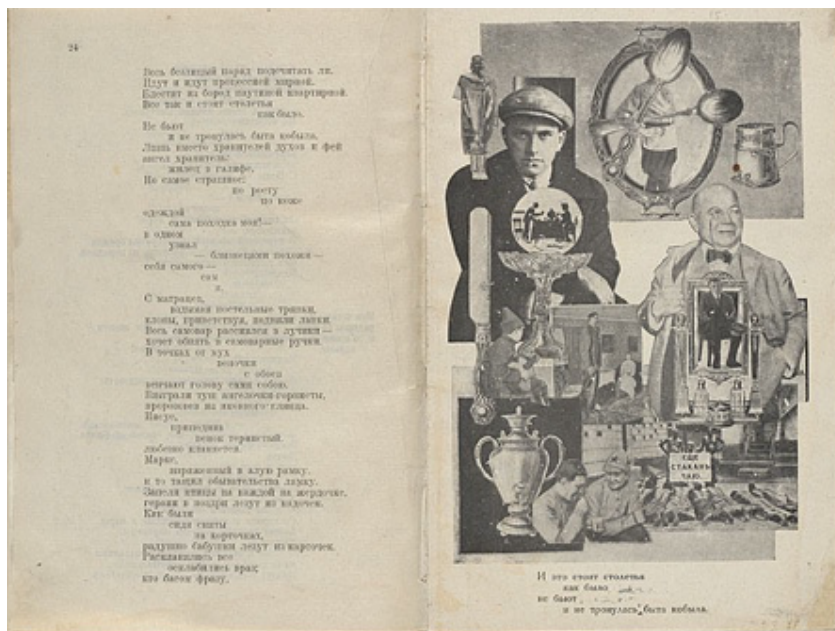


Figure 2.96. Pages from the illustrated print of Mayakovsky's book "Pro Eto", illustrations by A. Rodchenko, 1923
Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo [State Publishing House]: 1923, 1st edition, Columbia University Butler Library, Rare Books Collection

¹⁶⁰ Mayakovsky, V. "About This" [Pro Eto], LEF, No:1, 1923.

¹⁶¹ Kiaer, C. Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism, Mass: MIT Press, 2005, p. 121.

The State started fighting with full power through its main printed media organs against all signs of post- Revolutionary domesticity, such as rubber plants, lyrical gramophone songs, and all kinds of pets. In 1928, responding to Rodchenko and Mayakovsky's call, the Newspaper Komsomolskaia Pravda started a campaign titled "Down with Domestic Trash!". The July issue of the magazine opened with the title: "Let us stop the production of tasteless bric-à-brac!"¹⁶² Between 1928-1929, Komsomolskaya Pravda dedicated the last issue of every month to the dismissal of domestic trash while an extensive campaign of "re-decoration" instructed the masses how to live in the collective interior.



Figure 2.97. “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, July 1928, “Down With the Domestic Trash!”
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

¹⁶² Anon. “Down With the Domestic Trash!” in “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, July, 1928.

Parallel to the fight with poshlost, another campaign was conducted on printed media, regarding the decoration of a house-commune unit. Mayakovsky's long poem "Vladimir Ilich Lenin" gives us an implicit view of how Soviet avant-garde predicted the interior decoration of a collective home: "There are two of us in the room; me and Lenin-a photograph on the white wall..."¹⁶³ Similarly, in one of the very first issues of Komsomolskaya Pravda, the following letter of one of the readers was published:

Dear women, home-makers! I accepted the challenge of Komsomolskaya Pravda: I tore off the walls postcards and paintings. I put them in the stove. I broke the statuettes representing naked vulgar women in improbable poses [...] I broke the bric-a-brac-all this peasant- guys and dolls. I carried them to the trash [...] This kind of beauty is not in my head. The room is much better and so full of light now! Having done this, I appeal to all women homemakers to follow my example.¹⁶⁴

Although few interior scenes from the years of the Russian Civil War survive, graphic art played a significant role in advertising the rooms of house-commune. Starting with a sterile rectangular space, artists of the 1920s, while presenting room interiors, would place in it only essential, ascetic items of furniture, while in smaller details, the Constructivist designs of everyday objects are visible. One theme in common for the room interiors of the decade is the advertisement of a minimal living in terms of space and everyday objects. Artist Vladimir Lyushin, in his sketch named "At The Red Rose Factory Residential Halls" he drew in 1921 for "Iskusstvo" depicts an interior of a factory house-commune, a dormitory-like space of one of the earlier examples of house-communes designed for workers. In the drawing, we see a minimally designed

¹⁶³ Mayakovsky, V. "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin", Pravda, 1927.
See: Jangfeld, B. Mayakovsky: A Biography, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.

¹⁶⁴ Anon. Komsomolskaya Pravda, October 1925.

worker living unit. A worker hangs a poster titled "Rabotnik" - "The Worker"- which was a common theme in earlier Revolutionary years. Three tables standing beside the wall remind Tatlin's cabinet designs under the "Novy Byt" series, and one of the beds has Stepanova's textile patterns as a bed cover. The central theme was the collective way of living and the minimal use of space. Getting the most of a collective room, whose dimensions were carefully calculated, and whose aesthetics is carefully planned by the State was the primary concern, given that, parallel to the advertisement campaigns, the sanitary norms of minimum living space kept getting re-sized and smaller.



Figure 2.98. Vladimir Lyushin, “At The Red Rose Factory Residential Halls”, 1921
Tretyakov Gallery Archive

While *Komsomolskaya Pravda* was devoting an entire page each month to the Soviet household during 1928, the official propaganda on ideal Soviet interior and collective domesticity were slowly changing. The decoration clues and illustrations on minimal space left its place to photographs and paintings depicting and advertising the new house.

Around the same time, the cult of personality slowly entered into the language of depicting the public realm, and the images of it dominated the city space. These photographs depicting rooms as if they are private spheres usually had no figures in them. The furniture placed in the photographs presents the newly emerging aesthetics of Socialist Realist decoration, and in every photograph, we see a picture of the fathers of the nation: either one of Lenin's or

Stalin's. In a picture published in the newspaper in 1930, the room seems to be uninhabited and staged with books neatly piled by the window, a chair facing away from the table blocking the wardrobe. The only detail that giving a feeling of "home" is the two frames on the desk, but they were prevailed by the picture of Lenin, who appeared to look directly to the viewer.



Figure 2.99. “Komsomolskaya Pravda”, 1930
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

While the idea of a cozy interior was shifting, the battle with bourgeois everyday object took a different form under the rule of Stalin. In the last years of the 1920s, the leading printed media organs of State started publishing criticism toward the Constructivist style. Their central claim was that the design of Constructivist objects is a new form of petit-bourgeois and should be replaced with new designs that were "national in form, socialist in content." On December 4th, 1928, Komsomolskaya Pravda published a letter wrote by a reader entitled "What Will You Give Us Instead of Trash?":

Everyone writes "down with"! I have already thrown out everything [...] I agree that there is little new in art and that mass production is trash, but nobody has explicitly shown how to decorate the apartment.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Komsomolskaya Pravda, December 4, 1928.

Following this letter, in 1929, the magazine "Iskusstvo" published an article discussing the taste of goods:

To find dishes decorated with Soviet themes is very difficult [...] Instead of workers at the factory bench, shop workers, collective farm women, or Civil War heroes, we have all sorts of old antiques: marquises, princes and such in eighteenth-century clothing, playing lutes. There are even "poshlyi" - poshlostlike-, petit-bourgeois subjects such as beauties and shepherds...It must be remembered that every plate, every mug is a powerful artistic mass-agitator. The state must direct the porcelain and ceramic industries to "sovietize" their illustrations on everyday goods.¹⁶⁶

In the 1930s, an overall transformation of everyday objects was initiated to suit the style of Socialist Realism and, in respect to the inheritance of the Soviet Revolution following the Decree of Central Committee of the Communist Party "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Artistic Organizations" in 1932. Artists in "Iskusstvo" confronted the issue of home decoration but in an entirely new manner this time. Desires for consumer goods were encouraged as earned presents for preserving the glorious new interiors, as long as the possessions suited to the taste of socialism. Material possessions, old-fashioned dinnerware, and household decorations that were decorated with the images of Lenin and Stalin were no longer regarded as petit-bourgeois; instead, they were presented as legitimate parts of an ideal interior. The leading porcelain factories started producing crafts and household goods with the image of Stalin. The porcelain vase, a product of Stalinist arts and crafts, was precisely the kind of object that would have been trashed as kitsch in the 1920s. However, it became the representative of a new apartment and new interior through postwar years in the Soviet Union, while the domestic idyll was permitted to enter the pantheon of genres of Socialist Realist painting.

¹⁶⁶ Aleksandrova, K. "Za novyi byt", [For a New Life], Iskusstvo, 1930: 4.



Figure 2.100. Leningrad, 66 Nevsky Prospekt, a store of the State Porcelain Factory, early 1930s
Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA)



Figure 2.101. Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in Moscow, early 1930s
Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA)

The first traces of Stalinist domestic idyl represent a house the masses wish to see themselves and be seen in it, but the following examples of its genre, photographs, and paintings of Socialist Realism narrate stories for "How We Should Live" rather than presenting "How We Live." The communal room became more idolized as the sanitary living norms hit their lowest

during the 1950s. Laktionov's painting "Moving to The New Apartment." of 1952 is a significant example of Stalinist domestic idyll and its representations in art. The communal apartment depicted in the painting is not the house-commune imagined by the revolutionary architects in the early Soviet era, and most importantly, even further from a depiction of the reality of the communal room. In the painting, we see a cheerfully lit room. In the center is a middle-aged woman with a war medal, the proud owner of the new room. Nearby is her son, holding a portrait of Stalin. The gazes of this Soviet family are rather bizarre as if the mother is posing for someone else, while the portrait of Stalin visibly looks towards the viewer. Svetlana Boym, when writing about the painting, states that: "The scene appears to belong to some familiar totalitarian sitcom: the characters wear appropriate Soviet uniforms and freeze in the established theatrical poses known from films and paintings as if waiting for the predictable prerecorded applause."¹⁶⁷

The furniture in the room is very sparse. However, we see piles of books again, but this time they are ready to be placed in the room as we understood from half-folded political poster titled with the famous slogan of Stalinist regime: "Glory to our beloved Motherland!" unfolding itself and getting ready to be hung to the wall covered with what appears to be a "poshlost" wallpaper. Unlike the earlier depictions of *kommunalka* interiors, we can read the titles of the books: Russian and Soviet classics -of which the book of revolutionary poet Vladimir Mayakovsky stands out. On the corner stands two rubber plants, which in earlier Revolutionary years could be referred to as a "domestic trash" but found their place in the new Stalinist domestic idyl. There are no empty spots, no room for accidentally placing an object, a piece of furniture, or a figure. This painting is a perfect example of the Socialist Realist genre. What is important is that this is not an image of cozy domesticity or a private family festivity. It is also not a celebration of the Soviet collective in miniature in the newly 'repaired' communal apartment where there should be no distinction between public and private here, only one fluid and seemingly cheerful ideological space. However, the painting is neither, and both. We cannot say the Stalinist domestic interior is private as we see "the neighbors" coming into the room, nor we can say it is public because of the background image

¹⁶⁷ Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.226.

of another unit, which could easily be a private room or another communal room. We cannot say it is deprived of any petit-bourgeoise "byt" or "poshlost", nor we can say it belongs to collective life.



Figure 2.102. Alexander Ivanovich Laktionov, "Moving to The New Apartment.", 1952
Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA)

However, the ideal vision of socialist domestic interiors did not always coincide with reality. The campaign against 'domestic trash' was not particularly successful. Svetlana Boym states that the Soviet individuals "rebel against ideological prescriptions through the consolidation of furnishings and objects."¹⁶⁸ Stalinist prescription to collective everyday objects failed,

¹⁶⁸ Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.227.

since, even under the public-privacy of communal apartments, the coziness for communal dweller was still being defined and constructed through banal everyday objects. Elaborate old chairs, chandeliers, plush curtains, and patterned wallpapers constituted a typical interior of communal apartments during Stalin years. Chests, side tables, tablecloths and embroidery, runners, multi-colored patterned silk scarves and table napkins were seen as genuinely beautiful and added a feeling of 'home' to communal rooms. Even during Khrushchev's fight against "bad tastes" and advertisements of a new modern look for the new separate apartment, the interior 'banality' of the room and pre-revolutionary ornaments sustained their presence in the rooms. The propaganda on functionalist interiors during the 1960s fell short against the reality of the percentage of people who had still been living in Kommunalki, in their old rooms where cozy and beautiful was identified with the possession of banal objects or a standard piece of furniture decorating the once-communal room which had been the only piece of private material in a communal surrounding.

2.2.3.2 Communal Room as the Subject for Moscow Nonconformist Art

For three generations, Nonconformist artists took communal terminology as the primary concern of their genre. Although the nature and method of representing communality had evolved through generations, especially regarding the representations of domestic space and everyday domestic life, the first two generations were the first representatives and creators of the unofficial art on the rooms. Although the methods and genres shifted in two generations, this section will focus on the evolution of Nonconformist artworks produced on domestic life and communal dweller into spatial representations. The Nonconformists' concern for everyday domestic life finally transformed into installations depicting and reenacting the communal room in installations. Installation art had been a significant part of Nonconformist artists, especially in the second generation, to perceive and represent the communal culture and its spaces. This chapter, tracing the earlier examples of depictions of communal room and Soviet domestic space in different genres, will discuss the road leading to the production of artwork as an architectural product, and a reenactment of communal rooms.

The genre of installation extensively used by MANI circle had its roots in the 1970s when several Nonconformist artists from the first generation started an interest in everyday domestic objects. Irina Nakhova, while explaining the transformation of the everyday objects into artworks in the Nonconformist genre, states that the artists of first-generation found their original terminology in recycling. During an interview, when George Kiesewalter asked Irina Nakhova to define the 1970s with one word, Nakhova replies: "The word arises very definite, and for some reason in English, it is RECYCLING."¹⁶⁹

...the seventies were the years of a remarkable flowering of recycling and processing. Nothing was thrown away: the widespread accumulation of jars, boxes, newspapers, rags, books, cracked and half-ruined utensils, threads, darning, buttons, salt, matches, and croups led to complete overcrowding of burrows, but, in an ecological sense, And its environment.¹⁷⁰

The banal object for the ordinary Soviet individual was the only part of their everyday domestic life they could possess. Especially during the heydays of communal living, communal dwellers relied on ornamented objects to design the partitioned 5 meter-square of space. Following the private room, and Soviet individuals had a room of their own, the obsession of owning poshlost created a culture of collecting. During the seventies, collecting constituted the key ingredient of domestic life. The Nonconformist artists adopted this idea of a collector, and the culture of collecting from their surroundings, and used the collected banal objects, the collected memories and stories of Soviet individuals and themselves and produce art out of them. Vadim Zakharov once wrote: "There is nothing new or surprising about an artist being a collector and an archivist at the same time. The artist's world accumulates from documents, letters, and gifts that became a part of his domestic space on the walls, shelves,

¹⁶⁹ Nakhova, I. "Recycling", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.105.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.106.

and in cabinets."¹⁷¹ The Nonconformist genre was more than an artist's collection. Zakharov states that there are two layers to the Nonconformist practice of collecting:

In the first layer, the artist actively transforms what Ilya Kabakov calls as "Soviet garbage"¹⁷² into an archive and an artwork. What Zakharov calls the "garbage archive," Nakhova calls as "recycling." Nonconformist artists collected real-life objects: utensils, threads, darning, buttons, and matches. What may be considered as "rubbish" in any other context constituted an essential part of authentic Soviet domestic culture. As Kabakov once stated: "...that which we call art is preserved for the future through objects that a [Soviet] legend wrapped around them."¹⁷³

Zakharov states that the second layer of collecting the everyday object and transforming into a work of art is the collection transforming into a "hired-assassin." When a collection is constituted of ready-made objects, and found images, the collection and the artist are equated in their claims to authorship, "the development of latter linked inexorably to the expansion of former."¹⁷⁴ The artist-collector takes a role of gatherer, and the archive obscures the art. It became a document of history.

The archive treats the artist as if he were merely the subject of one of its files; it collects itself and comments upon itself. It bursts through all the barriers constructed by the artist.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Zakharov, V. "Shiva's Method: Archive, Collection, Publishing House, Artist", in Rosenfeld, A. (ed.), *Moscow Conceptualism in Context*, New Jersey: Prestel, 2011, p.355.

¹⁷² Ibid, p.355.

¹⁷³ Ilya Kabakov quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Vis-à-vision: Conversations with Russian Conceptual Artists, 1978–2013", London: Spector, 2018, p.38.

¹⁷⁴ Zakharov, V. "Shiva's Method: Archive, Collection, Publishing House, Artist", in Rosenfeld, A. (ed.), *Moscow Conceptualism in Context*, New Jersey: Prestel, 2011, p.357.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p.357.

Before being transformed into installations, the Soviet domestic depictions firstly emerged among the first-generation Nonconformists as communal artistic commentaries drawn on paper. However, even in their earliest forms, they derived their techniques from Soviet official documents and prints. The method of art reproduction and the technique of presentation, just like the content of their works, were derived from the Soviet context. The formation of Nonconformist art methods and tools of representation were as significant as the content of their work.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Ilya Kabakov was producing large masonite panels for his project titled "In our ZheK." the masonite panels contained charts, lists, "reports for the conducted public work" and lines of duties for a made-up ZheK committee of a Kommunalka supposedly was located on "Baumansky district of the city of Moscow." He titled his work, as in his words "Institution," the Housing and Communal Services Department. Kabakov states that he filled up the panels with what he imagined to be the contents of the carefully organized and carefully numbered folders archived in the ZheK of a Kommunalka. He states that ZheK symbolizes the communal life as the atmosphere that he breathed from the day he was born. "For this," he argues, "we should not neglect the value of the housing office."¹⁷⁶



Figure 2.103. “ZheK” series in Kabakov’s workshop
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection

¹⁷⁶ Kabakov, I. *On Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.31.

		Расписание выноса похозяйного ведра «дашу» № подъяезд. 6 улицы «м. Б. Бердяна ЖЭК» в Быховском р-не.					
		1979 г.	1980 г.	1981 г.	1982 г.	1983 г.	1984 г.
	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	Выходящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян Входящие: Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян, Дарьян Дарьян	

Figure 2.104. “ZheK” series: “Taking out the Garbage Can”
 Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

While compiling his work on Zhek, Kabakov came up with a new genre in the late 1970s, which he later called albums.

At that time, I was very attracted to the topic of garbage, which was one of the main meta-forms of our life. At the same time, probably, for the same reason, I was engaged in making an "Archive of unnecessary things," which looked like a collection of folders, boxes, boxes, where I put all sorts of paper nonsense, which was poured daily on me in the form of receipts, notes, certificates, and so forth. Filling the first folder and sewing it with a string, I inscribed on top: "Books on Life. Volume 12" and proceeded to the next.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Kabakov, I. The Text as the Basis of Visual Expression [Der Text als Grundlage Des Visuellen], Munich: Otkagon, 2000, p. 63.

An "album" was a set of drawings and texts dedicated to a single fictional character -a communal apartment dweller. He executed them on sheets of paper and sometimes set of plaques, then packed them in a file according to a specific order in a home-made box covered in fabric. Unlike Kabakov's sizable and heavy Masonite panels that he had to lean against a wall or hold up for private viewings, his albums were compact and portable, expanding the field of display within the workshop space.¹⁷⁸

Inside the albums, Kabakov placed cut-out pictures from official magazines together with photographs he found and collected from the empty communal rooms. Kabakov, who had been known in the circle as the "master chronicler," later stated: "the character is part autobiography, part memorabilia, but day-to-day recreation of Soviet everyday life."¹⁷⁹

Kabakov started building his character as firstly an ordinary communal dweller, then an unsuccessful artist who has to produce art in his communal room. Kabakov produced ten albums, each dedicated to a different version of his character.

The character was sometimes a "composer," a "collector," and an "untalented artist" "who flew into his picture"; the other times he was a communal dweller who "never threw anything away," who saved his neighbor "Nikolai Viktorovich" or just a "short communal dweller."

In the albums, he included descriptive texts introducing his character, his life story, as well as descriptions and illustrations of the character's room. Kabakov's character was a collector, an artist, and a narrator of the communal room.

Our communal room is big, hosts twelve families. We live on the top floor of a four-story house. For several months he came almost every day to my attic room. Although my neighbors questioned him on what he was doing here, he did not

¹⁷⁸ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.173.

¹⁷⁹ Kabakov, I. *The Text as the Basis of Visual Expression [Der Text als Grundlage Des Visuellen]*, Munich: Oktagon, 2000, p. 66.

talk to anyone. He seldom went to the kitchen beside putting a kettle on the stove, although his room was next to it.¹⁸⁰

Later, Kabakov transformed the albums into installations and started building rooms for each of his characters.¹⁸¹ The albums became what Zakharov called as a hired-assassin, something in between art and document while depicting the kommunalka. It also was memorabilia chronicling Kabakov's biography as an underground artist who practices art in a communal room.

Margarita Tupitsyn states that Kabakov's albums represent an essential shift in the Nonconformist circle. By adopting the language of a communal dweller and prepared the albums from images of everyday life mixed with official representations of the soviet house, Kabakov "tackled the peripheral, reverse side of Soviet reality that was veiled by the myths of a Soviet communal paradise." While leading the way to represent/reconstruct/reenact the communal room space,

Kabakov also encouraged the next generation of Nonconformist artists to collect and archive not only their everyday surroundings but also their artistic productions. Nonconformist artists being their own archivers, besides being their own curators and critics was rooted in Kabakov's albums. Albums later influenced the self-published artist books: exhibit-able books worked not only as archives for artists' artworks, but also acted as artworks themselves. The MANI Folders started publishing in 1982 was built on the idea of Kabakov's albums, while influenced by the design of Kabakov's albums.

¹⁸⁰ Ilya Kabakov, description for the album "Primakov Sitting-in-the-Closet".

¹⁸¹ When Kabakov transformed into his ten characters into installations and started building communal rooms for each character, he used the names he came up with for his albums, and they constituted the titles of each artist and each room.



Figure 2.105. Kabakov exhibiting albums in his workshop, Moscow, 1979
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin Collection



Figure 2.106. Cover and pages from the album “Primakov Sitting in His Closet”
Ilya & Emilia Kabakov personal archive

While Kabakov was forming his genre on his background as an underground artist, Victor Pivovarov was deriving forms from his personal background. Pivovarov, together with Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, and Vasilyev, was working under Gorkom Grafikov doing illustrations for children's books. The genre of Pivovarov derived its aesthetic language from

Soviet children's books of the 1970s, while the content was again his domestic surroundings. Pivovarov started doing illustrations depicting the workshops and apartments of his Nonconformist colleagues, and later these depictions turned into scenes from everyday domestic life.



Figure 2.107. Victor Pivovarov, “In Kabakov’s Workshop”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art Institutional archive

In parallel, Valery and Rimma Gerlovin derived another official form of art produced for children: they have started working with objects and toys designed and manufactured for children. Their main concern was to comment on the diffusion of ideology into the private sphere, primarily through children's toys. In the Soviet context, the idea of building a future in metal was the main slogan while building the new cities of industrialism. The industrialist ideals were especially crucial in the formation of future generations. The idea of a metal future was propagated, primarily through children's toys. In the 1970s, one of the most popular toys was a set called "The Constructor," a do-it-yourself set compiled of metal pieces with which children had the liberty to build their objects. Gerlovins used the parts of the "Constructor" sets to build everyday objects, representing activities of Soviet life and restate political events such as Communist Party meetings. Their take on a metal future was the incorporation of State ideology with the everyday object in domestic space, even through toys. The domestic space

for Gerlovins became ideologically charged through children's toys. Therefore, the everyday Soviet object, however banal it may seem, was a product of the Soviet context and ideology.

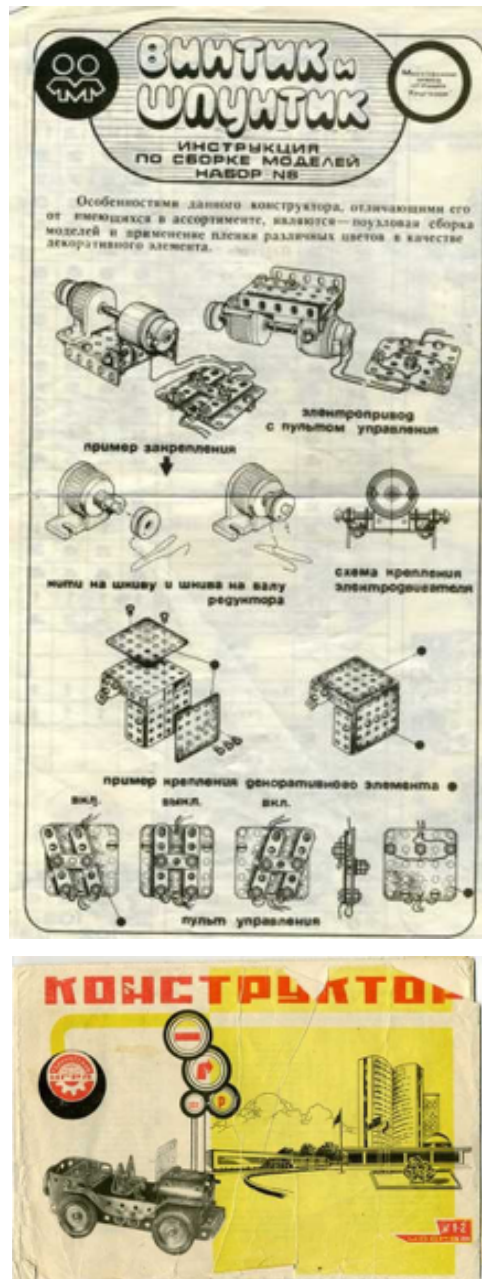


Figure 2.108. “The Constructor” children’s toy set
Virtual Museum of Communal Life, <http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/>

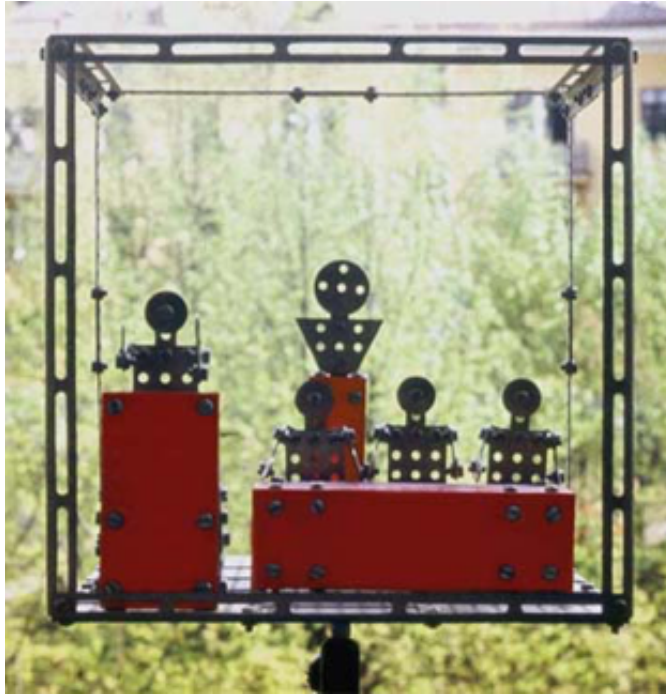


Figure 2.109. Valeriy Gerlovin, *A Party Meeting*, 1975
Collection of The Museum of the Berlin Wall, Kunsthaus Museum archive, Berlin

One of the first examples in the genre of installation was Yankilevsky's *Door* dated the early 1970s. Although it was one of the first examples of architectural reinterpretation of the communal room, Yankilevsky preferred to build an installation on the outside of the room, the corridor. His continued involvement with installations, which was rare for underground artists before the 1970s, made Yankilevsky's studio particularly crowded. The *Door* is a structure built out of two sets of doors, and the installation is of a male inhabitant of a communal apartment returning home after shopping facing the door. For Yankilevsky, his workshop space acted as the communal corridor when he installed his doors facing the wall of his workshop. Although Irina Nakhova claims that it was one of the first examples of transforming the artist space as a part of the installation,¹⁸² Yankilevsky's door, in terms of its architectural interpretation, was still conceptual and singular.

¹⁸² Nakhova, I. "Recycling", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyie, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.108.



Figure 2.110. Vladimir Yankilevsky, “Doors”, in his workshop
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art Institutional archive

Looking back at the earlier works of Nonconformist circle, and the formation of a genre on communal living, we can see a variety of individual works were produced. However, in spatial terms, they lacked a coherent whole to be analyzed as a spatial construct. Although the first generation of the artists personally experienced the communal living and was born before Khrushchev's Thaw, their take on communal living and communal everyday life were still singular and individualistic. This fact was partly a result of the shift in the use of artists' spaces.

Although the first generation of Nonconformists lived in communal rooms, their "professional" lives as artists were shaped in workshops since most of them had their own space in basements and attics, as mentioned in the previous section. Meanwhile, the artists of the second generation, although they did not personally experience life in communal rooms, their perception of collectivity was shaped through collective exhibitions and collective practices. Once the artists formed a unified network and used the room itself as the space of production and exhibition, their perception of collective living has shifted.

The artists of MANI circle did not only use the once-communal room as their playground, but they also used it relatively appropriate to its design-purpose: that is a collective living unit. Although this collectivity mostly did not include the sharing of domestic life, it certainly included sharing the domestic space as a gallery, especially after the formation of the AptArt gallery. The collective artistic practice that was born in rooms took the room as its point of attention. For MANI circle, their art was produced in rooms, exhibited in those rooms; and finally, was produced on rooms.

2.2.3.3 'Room Inside a Room': The Soviet Room as an Art Product

In a conversation with Victor Tupitsyn, Ilya Kabakov said: "The communal apartment is a good metaphor for Soviet life because you cannot live in it, but you cannot live differently either, because it is almost impossible to leave the communal apartment."¹⁸³ The Soviet communal room (kommunalka) was a cipher for installations produced in Moscow in the 1980s. By recognizing the conditions that they inhabited as material for art, Nonconformist artists of the second generation, following the footsteps of Kabakov, started working on the concept of the communal room.

Ilya Kabakov built his first room in 1984 in his attic on Sretensky Boulevard, on one of the characters he used for his albums. The project was later titled "The Man Who Flew to Space From His Room." It was based on the story of a communal dweller who stuck in his communal

¹⁸³ Ilya Kabakov quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Vis-à-vision: Conversations with Russian Conceptual Artists, 1978–2013", London: Spector, 2018, p.40.

room for so long that he built a catacomb to throw him to space. In 1985, MANI artists compiled a MANI Folder dedicated to "Rooms," where many of them wrote critics on the latest installations of the circle taking the room as their subject. The folder titled "Komnata" (Room) and included works of Kabakov's *The Man Who Flew to Space From His Room*, Nakhova's project *Three Rooms*, Kiesewalter and Zakharov's documentation of artist rooms. In a conversation recorded and published in the "Komnata" folder, Andrei Monastrysky and Joseph Backstein discuss Kabakov's room. The dialog goes as:

Monastrysky: This room grew out of communal object [...] If you could enter the room, it would be just like an Ethnographic Museum of History.

Backstein: It is the mummification of life.

Monastrysky: ...a garbage of personal history. It is a model of a totalitarian world, a totalitarian space. It is a general mise-en-scene of Soviet life, a room inside a room.¹⁸⁴

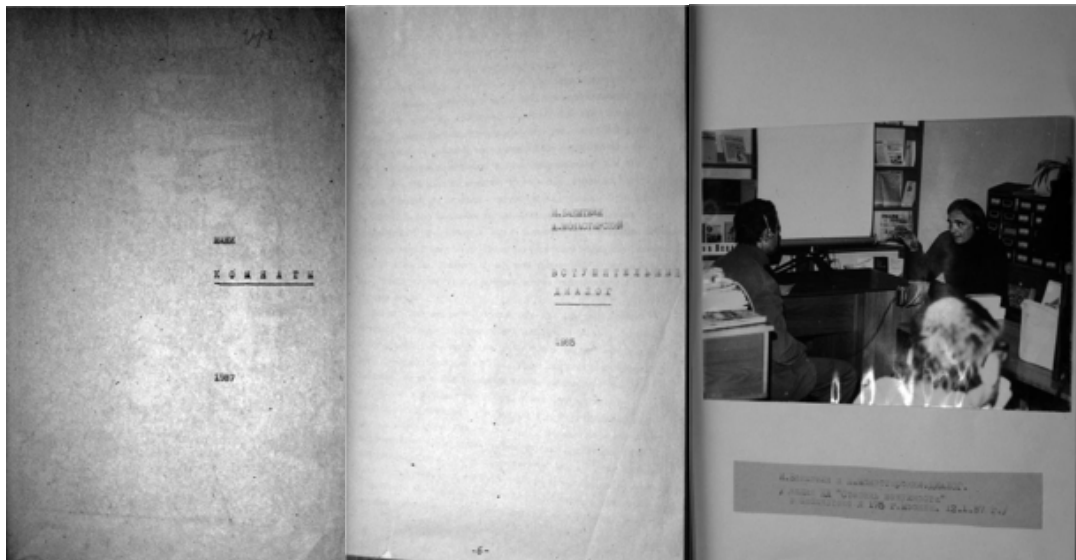


Figure 2.111. Sborniki MANI, No:2, "Komnata", (left) Cover page, (right) Monastrysky and Backstein recording their dialog on Kabakov's Room
Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov personal archive

¹⁸⁴ Andrei Monastrysky & Joseph Backstein, "Preliminary discussion on Kabakov's Room", in Sborniki MANI, No: 2, "Komnata", 1985.

The Nonconformist practice of building rooms took its architectural character from various references found in the Soviet context, the first of which was 'uplotnenie'. The practice of installing a room in a room is an idea derived from the formation of the Soviet communal apartment since the configuration of kommunalka initially started as installing rooms in rooms.

2.2.3.4 “National in Form, Socialist in Content”: ‘Uplotnenie’ as an Installation Practice

Pre-revolutionary apartments in Russia were designed and built-in four categories, according to architectural historian T.I. Timokhovich: luxury apartments; "mid-level" (srednei ruki) apartment houses; cheap apartments and furnished rooms; and attics, basements, and flophouses.¹⁸⁵ Most of Moscow's pre-Revolutionary apartments belonged to the second category, which was designed and built for either middle or upper-class, offering means of comfort and convenience. Moscow architects adopted a new stylistic tendency and new construction methods for the apartment built at the turn of the century. What has been referred to as Style Moderne, combining undulating metal cornices, curved windows, and sculpted figures, gothic pinnacles, and a characteristic projecting tower usually exploited at the corner. Apartments designed with style moderne started appearing in central areas like Tverskaya Ulitsa, Sadovyi-Kudrinskii Street, Garden Ring Boulevard, Vvedenskii (Podsosenskii) Lane and Sadovyi-Spasskii Street? The garden ring was the central area for the newly emerging bourgeois. The eclectic facades differed from building to building, unlike their interiors, which typically had three or four main rooms overlooking the street, and the bedrooms and service areas (kitchen, storage, bedroom) were relegated to the building's interior.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ From the lecture by S.I. Timokhovich at the Second Congress of Russian Architects: “Proekt blagoustroennikh kvartir v gigienicheskom i sanitarnom otnosheniiakh” [“The project of comfortable apartments in hygienic and sanitary relations”], in *Trudy II s’ezra russkikh zodchikh v Moskve* [Proceedings of the Russian Architects in Moscow], Moscow, 1899, p.179-185.

¹⁸⁶ Vladimir Kirillov provides a detailed analysis of the typical arrangement of apartment space in the fashionable buildings of the period in *Arkhitektura russkogo modern*, Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1979, p.90-93. A more general survey can be found in Goldenberg, I. *Planirovka zhilogo kvartala Moskvyy* [Layout of the residential quarter of Moscow], Moscow: Stroitel’naia Literatura, [Building’s Literature], 1935, p.136-139; and Kirichenko, I.E. “O nekotorykh osobennostiakh”, *Arkhitekturnoe Nasledstvo*, 1963:5, p.167-169.



Figure 2.112. Moscow, Tverskaya Ulitsa, 1901
Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

Originally these spacious apartments were constructed based on individual blueprints and were based upon a mix of the 19th-century load-bearing structures with non-load bearing partitions to accommodate traditional bourgeoisie family spaces and activities. In the 1920s, following the regulation of condensation, the floor plans were altered in order to fit many more families and people. Non-load bearing walls were dismantled or incorporated together with the load-bearing structures forming "a new matrix of spatial organization."¹⁸⁷ Space division in

¹⁸⁷ Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.125.

'consolidated' apartments was quite arbitrary and followed only two main conditions: the space of each room was subdivided according to the sanitary norm of a prescribed number of square meters per person, while each room must open onto a communal corridor. Partitions divided each room according to the precise number of square-meters, sometimes non-load bearing walls were torn down to create a communal corridor against all the odds. In the Soviet Union, this specific typology of communal living was so peculiar because it was not constructed anew but rather restructured already existing architectural spaces. Katerina Gerasimov defines 'uplotnenie' as: "the shunting of the urban population of Stalinist Russia into the honeycombed cells of the communal room."¹⁸⁸

The added partitions gave a temporal and flexible character to the rooms, and it fit the early Revolutionary ideal of creating an open plan. The flexible plan was, in a way, referred to the later modernist open plans embodied in the spatial reconfiguration of once coherent blueprints of 19th-century apartments. The reason for this study to analyze the 'uplotnenie' as an installation practice is firstly the character of temporality and flexibility. Since the Soviet government had foreseen further reductions of the sanitary living area would be necessary as the industrial areas in Moscow will continue to grow, the architectural solution for condensation of the apartment had to be flexible, allowing changes in the future. The walls had to be mobile and could be rearranged at will. As expected, through the 1930s to 1950s, already installed rooms within once-bourgeois rooms were re-installed to host more rooms. There appeared increasing numbers of partitions and dividers that recursively separated functional areas within one room. Thus, the space of a communal apartment was always in flux: dividing, uniting, fragmenting, changing shape, and bifurcating. This arbitrary division of space produced a curious effect of space 'being taken away.' The space of one's room could disappear overnight, sliced off by an added partition to satisfy the decreased distribution norm.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Gerasimova, K. "Gilje v sovetskom gorode" (Housing in the Soviet city), *Sotsiologicheskii Zhurnal*, 1998:1, p.25.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.25.



Figure 2.113. Installation of partitions in a Moscow apartment
Russian State Film and Photo Archive (RGAKFD / Rosinform)



Figure 2.114. An installed room in Kommunalka
Russian State Film and Photo Archive (RGAKFD / Rosinform)

Meanwhile, every time a new sub-space was added, a new space within the existing space was created. Hence the partitions acted more than surfaces to separate one void from another; they were spatial elements used for zoning. They defined the boundaries of the 'individual private zones' within one room. Therefore, they were facades of installed communal rooms within communal rooms. However, condensed bourgeois living quarters complicated the task of creating a uniform language in interiors. Walls and ceilings retained elements of wealthy neo-classical décor; ceilings were as high as 4 meters and had large windows, meanwhile, the partitions, for cost-efficiency, were built with plywood. The material input only strengthens the appearance of rooms inside rooms as installed units. The rooms were installed as alien forms within the existing bourgeois quarters. The former Kommunalka on Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, Quarter No:5, sets a typical example for how the communal room installed as an outsider within the flamboyantly decorated interior. A photograph from the 1990s shows the remains of the communal installations after the partitions were demolished, and the original bourgeois quarter hidden behind it was revealed. While the traces of former bourgeois ornaments are visible on the left, on the right side, where the additional communal unit is installed, the visual language suddenly shifts.

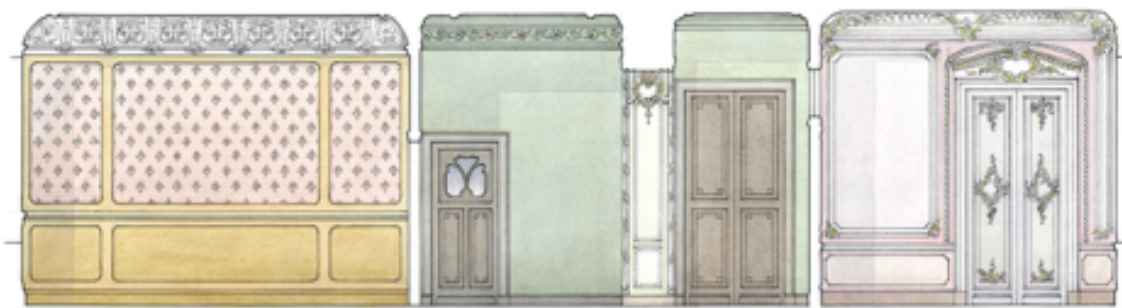


Figure 2.115. The section of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, Quarter No:5, before uplotnenie (1905)

Center for Historical and Urban Studies under the leadership of B. E. Pasternak. 1997, Bulgakov Museum Archive



Figure 2.116. The photograph of Bolshaya Sadovaya, 10, Quarter No:5, 1997
Bulgakov Museum Archive

While the interiors of communal apartments were built to be aliens to bourgeois quarters, the city space presented a more coherent appearance. During the first years following the Revolution, the primary concern of Soviet city planners was the question of what to do with the existing texture of the city. Although earlier attempts searched for ways to build the capital of Socialism from scratch, the 1935 Master Plan for the Reconstruction of the City of Moscow¹⁹⁰ embraced the existing bourgeois texture to become the nucleus of urban social and political life. By 1935, the State had already established Socialist Realism as the official style in art and architecture, and the newly emerging style embraced the Neo-Classical topography the historical center has. It was explained in the report on the Master Plan for the Reconstruction of the City of Moscow that the new additions would create unified and uniform architectural ensembles. As a result, superstructures, numerous decorative colonnades, and porticoes, and other architectural excesses, borrowed from the past, have become a mass phenomenon in the construction of residential and public buildings during Stalinist years. The dichotomy between interior plywood installation of rooms, and flamboyant facades serving to

¹⁹⁰ The 1935 Master Plan for the Reconstruction of the City of Moscow was designed by Vladimir Semenov and Sergei Chernishev. In 1932, GosPlan and the Central Committee of the CPSU organized a competition for the Master Plan for the Reconstruction of Moscow. Seven regional and international architects and planners were invited to the competition. And as a result Central Committee issued a report stating all presented plans will be rejected for the ignorance of the historically developed structure of the city.

massive avenues soon found a catchy slogan to justify this contradictory architecture: the new Moscow was advertised to be "National in form, Socialist in content."

As once Kabakov said during a conversation with Victor Tupitsyn: "The world beyond the walls of the communal apartment is beautiful and whole. Only we lived divvied up; we were shit. That is the way it was under Stalin."¹⁹¹ The slogan "national in form, socialist in content" is the best way to explain the practice of 'uplotnenie' as an installation. The Nonconformist artists of the 1980s focused this bizarre practice, and in reference to uplotnenie, they started building their own rooms.

The kommunalka presents a specific collective image, in which the ill-sorted and polyphonic aspects of our reality are concentrated and vividly revealed [...] Our Soviet life seems the same: it gravitates toward places that are zones of collectivity.

Ilya Kabakov

"Uplotnenie" was referred in various ways in installations of Nonconformist artists. However, the concept of partitioning, temporality of partitioning, and the room inside a room as a closed zone of individuality were their primary interest.

Before Ilya Kabakov built his room in 1985, the Mukhomors group formed by Sven Gundlakh, Mironenko brothers, and Kostyra Zvezdochetov built an installation in Vladimir Mironenko's room. They called this installation "Drainage" and exhibited it on July 7, 1981. In the installation, they divided the room with a white partition with holes on it. Mironenko's room was cut in half with the partition leaving the kitchen appliances and a table with chairs around on one side and the rest of the furniture on the other side. By installing a dull white surface, they created two rooms but each carrying different functions. The holes, as Andrei

¹⁹¹ Ilya Kabakov quoted in Tupitsyn, V. "Vis-à-vision: Conversations with Russian Conceptual Artists, 1978–2013", London: Spector, 2018, p.40.

Monastyrsky wrote to Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn in a letter, were not to tear up the separation; they were to form an "emanating stream of bright, almost blinding light"¹⁹² for the lightless installed room. For Mukhomors, the dismantling of the partition itself did not change the separation of functions between the rooms. Their comment on the communal room was criticism towards the multi-functionality of the communal room. The partition was not only an attempt to recreate the communal room but form criticism on its current condition. In the 1980s, Vladimir Mironenko was living in a room very similar to the rooms of any other individual: a multi-functional room clustering kitchen, bedroom, study, and living were clustered in a 12 square meter space. Although for the Soviet context, the room offered privacy, it was still far from being defined as an apartment. Mukhomors' installation, in this sense, was a criticism against the normalization of a multi-functional room.



Figure 2.117. Mukhomors, installation view of “Drainage”, 1981
Victor and Margarita Tupitsyn personal archive

¹⁹² Andrei Monastyrsky quoted in Tupitsyna, M. & Tupitsyn, V. (eds.), “Moscow-New York”, Moscow: WAM 21, 2006, p.181.

Following Mukhomors' "Drainage," Irina Nakhova started working a project on rooms. Between 1982-1983 she built three different rooms by covering every surface in her room with textured paper. For her own first experiment with the installation art, called Room No.1, Nakhova entirely covered her room, which was 3.9X4.2X2.6 m in size, with sheets of white paper, creating an "empty white space...that had no visual borders."¹⁹³ For her Room.2, she pasted "pronouncedly bright, shiny and colorful" clippings from Soviet fashion magazines on surfaces. For Room.3, she left a table inside instead of working on an empty room and painted all surfaces to black. To be able to install her rooms, Nakhova removed all of her furniture and organized one-day exhibitions. When the exhibition is over, she dismantled them and re-installed her domestic setting. Two factors are significant about Nakhova's rooms: The first is the differentiation of the room's function between day and night: the room became an installation during the day and transformed into a domestic space at night as Nakhova dismantled her installation. The second, and most significantly, is the act of dismantling of her installations. When Monastyrsky and Backstein documented Room.2 from Nakhova's Rooms series for MANI Folder dedicated to rooms, upon Nakhova's request, they both documented the installation and the process of dismantling.

The dismantling of Nakhova's Room was, of course, out of necessity for the artist to be able to use her living space again. However, the documentation of the dismantling purposefully transformed the deconstruction of the rooms into a performance. Nakhova's performance underlined the temporality of the installation. This temporality reflects itself in two layers.

The first layer is a reference to the temporality of soviet domestic space. Nakhova's performance carries very similar traces with the act of 'uplotnenie' and the space of communal room being always in flux: The room can be divided, united, fragmented, and finally can be sliced off, disappear and taken away. While Nakhova dismantles her room, the revealing of the "old room" behind it resembles the constant reconstructions in the communal room, commonly revealing traces of bourgeois elements of its interior architecture.

¹⁹³ Irina Nakhova, "Chetyre komnaty" (Four Rooms), in Sborniki MANI, pp.254.

The second layer is a comment on the artwork for the underground artist, always being a temporary act. The dismantling of an artwork, especially when the artwork requires an overall transformation of the domestic sphere, requires a subconscious acceptance to use the space either as a home or an exhibition space. Thus, the documentation of the temporary artwork was crucial and necessary for archiving. Erik Bulatov called Nakhova "a heroic woman" for her Room "will have to be dismantled, and cannot be reconstituted."¹⁹⁴ Moreover, the documentation of the room's dismantling itself was an artistic performance documenting the reveal of the domestic space hidden behind it step by step to show the dichotomies in unofficial artist's domestic life and space.

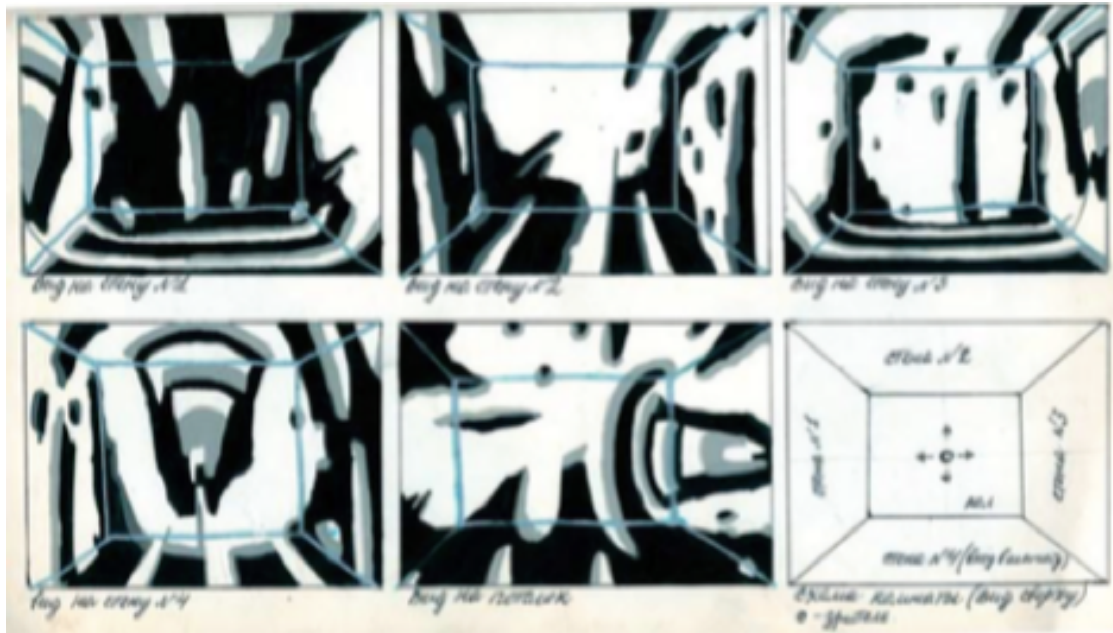


Figure 2.118. Sborniki MANI, No:2, “Komnata”, Nakhova’s sketches on Room.2
Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov personal archive

¹⁹⁴ Erik Bulatov in Joseph Backstein, “Interviews with Moscow Artists in Room No.2”, in Irina Nakhova: The Green Pavilion, Margarita Tupitsyn (eds.) (Moscow: Stella Art Foundation, 2015), pp.55



Figure 2.119. Sborniki MANI, No:2, “Komnata”, Dismantlig of Room.2 documented by Backstein and Monastrysky
Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov personal archive

Kabakov's seminal installation, *The Man who Flew into Space from His Room*,¹⁹⁵ followed Nakhova's and was built in 1985. Revealing a kinship with Nakhova's Rooms, Kabakov built a tall, freestanding shack out of plywood in the back of his studio. The entrance was boarded up with wooden planks.

¹⁹⁵ His use of the word “room” (komnata), which has been wrongly translated as “apartment” to Western literature, as the title has been repeatedly translated as *The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment*, whereas in Russian, Kabakov called this installation “Chelovek, kotoryi uletel v cosmos iz svoei komnaty”, which refers to a room in communal apartment.

Kabakov constructed a closed space, which he later called "total installation."¹⁹⁶ The "total installation" genre, created by Ilya Kabakov, dictates the installation should be created as an overall space. It should allow the viewer to dive into a unique atmosphere created by the interaction of images, texts, objects, and sounds to imitate the context the installation references to. Instead of individual objects representing and reminding communal everyday life, Ilya Kabakov persists on the construction of an overall alternative reality, where the objects, images, texts, and sounds together with the "structure of installation" recreate the spatial configuration of a communal room.

What is significant about Kabakov's room is that he built the room to the smallest detail. Every small detail referenced to space of a standard communal room from the furniture inside, to use of plywood, from the sizing of the room to images used inside the room and the choice of kitschy wallpapers, the installation was. The installation worked as a coherent whole and was a perfect replica of a standard communal room. Later, Kabakov wrote a text for MANI Folder of "Komnata" describing the room from his perspective as:

The "room" is one of the rooms in a large overpopulated communal apartment. The door of the room faces to the corridor; hence one facade of the installation is a fragment of this corridor. The facade looking to the corridor [as would be in a communal apartment] was occupied with belongings of other tenants: hats, jackets. However, there are no doors on this facade, the opening is hammered in with coarse-grained boards, only letting a passer-by catch a glimpse of the inside. Inside the room, everything is in utter chaos: there are rolls and cans interspersed; belts and newspapers on the floor. Walls are covered with all sorts of posters placed in a ridiculous composition so that together they form an incredible absurdity and a mess. In the middle of all this, a machine hangs in the air, consisting of a saddle for a chair, a spring, and rubber bands.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Kabakov, I. *On the Total Installation*, Cologne: Hatje Cantz: 1997, p.9.

¹⁹⁷ Ilya Kabakov, "Room", in *Sborniki MANI*, No: 2, "Komnata", 1985.

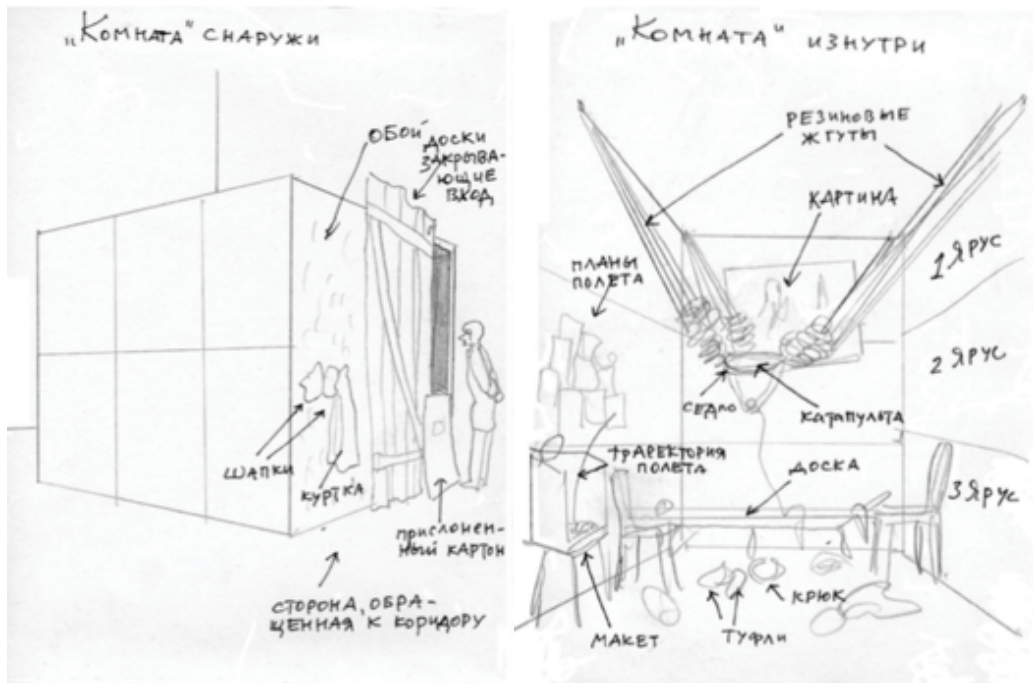


Figure 2.120. Ilya Kabakov, "The Man who Flew into the Space from His Room", Sborniki MANI, No:2
 Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov personal archive



Figure 2.121. Ilya Kabakov, “The Man who Flew into the Space from His Room”, Sborniki
MANI, No:2
Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov personal archive

The design of the room is a significant reference to a Soviet interior and also a brilliant interpretation of the mix-match eclecticism of Soviet domestic space. The interior of the room, which was 1.4X3X2.5 m, was covered with Soviet propaganda posters mixed with old photographs Kabakov found in various communal rooms. Kabakov also added images from pre-Revolutionary Russia, including portraits and reproductions of well-known nineteenth-century paintings, which he called as elements from "bourgeois taste." For furniture, Kabakov placed three battered chairs, a cot with a blanket and a pillow, and a pair of worn-out shoes. On one of the chairs, there stands a brightly lit model of a utopian city designed and executed by Kabakov.

Kabakov started his project firstly by collecting what he called "Soviet litter," chairs and shoes were the pick-up objects he found lying in the staircase of his apartment. Margarita Tupitsyn states: "As Kabakov climbed up a long set of stairs to his studio every day, he passed discarded toilets, stoves, refrigerators, cupboards, and garbage cans - a collection of unwanted objects whose constant presence made him into their regular spectator. Thus, he learned how to perceive Soviet mundanity."¹⁹⁸ In the case of his room, by invading the installed room, which was covered in Soviet images with very bourgeois imagery and everyday objects, Kabakov refers to the ideological battle with "poshlost" while acknowledging poshlost is a part of Soviet domestic reality. There is one aspect to Kabakov's room installation, which makes it a subject of architectural and historical analysis: its reliance on the architectural context and the intend to reenact that context more vividly than any other form of artistic expression. Kabakov's room forces the viewer to step into a built space where the artist re-designs, in our case re-creates, an artificial surrounding in the image of an existing architectural phenomenon.

The first generation of unofficial artists belonged to the last generation who experienced the *kommunalka*. Meanwhile, the later generations, this unique archeology of communal living took the form of a hear-say, passed on through generations through story-telling. Therefore, interpretations of the MANI circle on the room, domesticity, and privacy were based on past realities and present vague definitions of the room. While the room as the domestic place was private for the second generation of Nonconformist artists, the room as the artist place, the

¹⁹⁸ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.146.

exhibition hall, and the workplace was very collective. Their idea of *kommunalka* life was simply created as a result of their unofficial characters, and the collective they live in was formed by themselves. Although the "ideal" of communality and collectivity, was still dictated during the late 1970s and 80s in everyday life, the dissolution of privacy in the domestic sphere was already lost its "fever" during the late 1970s. Giving up their privacy in the domestic sphere was a choice for Nonconformist artists. The collectivity and giving up on their privacy for Nonconformist artists started by organizing collective underground exhibitions in their domestic space. Therefore, the room became a space of exhibiting, in addition to being an object of their artworks.

2.2.4 In Rooms

Very often, people come to the workshop and regret that pictures and albums cannot be exhibited in our conditions [...] What is essential is that the picture is made and exists. It is nothing that she stands in the workshop facing the wall.

Victor Pivovarov

Victor Tupitsyn states that "the failure to obtain a museum niche made artists feel anxious and prompted them to compete collectively for inclusion, thereby triggering the formation of a compensatory space, "which he calls "museological unconscious."¹⁹⁹ One of the hallmarks of Nonconformist artists was their ability to turn their domestic space into a space of exhibiting. The exhibiting practices in artist rooms had been common among unofficial artists even in the 1960s; however, what differentiates the period between 1975-1985 was the use of the room as a collective exhibition space. The Soviet room, which was once multi-functional and collective, transformed into a private space of relatively mono-functionality. This section analyzes the revival of the room as a multi-functional and communal space through Nonconformist artists' collective exhibitions.

¹⁹⁹ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press: 2012, p.21.

Before the October Revolution, rooms in bourgeois apartments were organized according to the primary uses of the family: they were bedrooms, salons, dining rooms, study spaces, libraries, kitchens, and rooms for servants.²⁰⁰ The wealthier the inhabitants were, the more rooms for specific functional specialization they would have.²⁰¹ As Jean Baudrillard articulates in his description of traditional bourgeois interiors, primary emphasis was placed on uni-functionality, immovability, and hierarchical presence. According to Baudrillard, bourgeois apartments were somewhat anthropomorphic, as they represented an image of an individual “as a balanced assemblage of distinct faculties.”²⁰² However, when large bourgeois apartments were 'consolidated,' rooms that were mono-functional before were turned into multi-functional spaces. As was noted above, a wealthy apartment "was one in which the number of rooms is equal to or exceeds the number of persons permanently living there," and mono-functional spaces were considered clearly over reasonable needs.²⁰³ Thus, communal apartments' rooms were reconfigured to accommodate several functions and people at various points of time. They were simultaneously bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms, study rooms, and children playrooms. They had storage spaces and occasionally even kitchen and bathing facilities.

The Khrushchev private apartment claimed to provide a mono-functional apartment. Although even in the newly designed Khrushchevki, the kitchen was included in the living space, it was the most mono-functional setting in the domestic sphere in the Soviet context in comparison to earlier living situation. This relative mono-functionality was disturbed with the formation of underground culture when the artists of the 1960s started using their apartments for underground gatherings and showings.

²⁰⁰ Gerasimova, K. “Public Privacy in Soviet Communal Apartment”, in Crowley, D. & Reid, S. (eds.) *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life*, London: Berg:2002, p.213.

²⁰¹ Boym, S. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994, p.214.

²⁰² Baudrillard, J. *Le Système Des Objets* [“Structures of Interior Design”], Paris: Gallimard, 1978, p.13.

²⁰³ Ikonnikov, A. *Russian Architecture of the Soviet Period*, New York: Raduga Pub, 1988, p.75.

Through the 1960s and even after the formation of the Nonconformist art circle in the early 1970s, artist apartments were used to organize one-day events of individual showings. Photographs taken in the first half of the 1970s would typically show Nonconformist artists in their workshops displaying paintings to a guest who was rarely included in the picture. Sometimes paintings are stacked against a wall, while others are placed on an easel. This form of events was more like home vernissages: they could take place both in workshops where there were a maximum table and sofa from furniture, and in apartments, against the background of the lives of their inhabitants.



Figure 2.122. Eduard Steinberg in his workshop/apartment
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive

By the mid-1970s, the first generation of Nonconformists had lost hope of accessing public exhibition spaces and felt burdened by domestic showings.²⁰⁴ The chronic inaccessibility to authorized exhibitions stimulated artists to rethink their forms of production and display and led artists to invent a new type of display. This new form of the display was a collective exhibition using the apartment space as a gallery in which the artists acted as curators and interpreters of their work and each other. The year 1975 marked the changing the status of domestic space from the artist's space to a space of the exhibition. The tradition of a collective exhibition in the room was firstly formed by seven artists who grouped around Gerlovins and Leonid Sokov, who came up with the idea of organizing seven consecutive group exhibitions in each of the artist's apartment. This earlier attempt on the collective use of domestic space

²⁰⁴ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.138.

later evolved into an unofficial institutional gallery under the name of "AptArt" in 1982 in Nikita Alekseev's apartment.

Before the artist's domestic space was transformed into a space of group exhibitions, Komar and Melamid started experimenting on using their apartment as exhibition space. However, their version of a group show was in form of a permanent exhibition. They began to install their project "Paradise/Pantheon" in their apartment at the end of 1972, and it stayed intact until the beginning of 1975. Paradise/Pantheon differed from other apartment exhibitions at the time since it formed a total environment within the apartment. The overall transformation of their domestic environment was an outstanding example for the Moscow counterculture to liberate themselves from the binary thinking of the house could be either a domestic space or an exhibition space. Komar and Melamid's work was a new step towards a new definition of multi-functionality of the Nonconformist artist apartment, as well as an attempt on collective exhibition.



Figure 2.123. Installation view of "Paradise/Pantheon", apartment of Komar and Melamid, 1973

Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

2.2.4.1 Artist Rooms as an Underground Museum

One of the distinguishing features of apartment exhibitions in the first half of the 1970s was their lack of an exhibition plan. "In the second half of the 1970s, this situation of individual expositions stopped satisfying artists. They believed there was a need to build expositional intelligible space and a zone of alternative art," says Sasha Obukhova, head of the art department of the Garage Museum of Modern Art.²⁰⁵

The first attempt to make a meaningful exhibition was made during a collective display of works in the workshop of Leonid Sokov, which was part of the Spring Apartment Exhibitions, held in 1975. Seven artists took part in it, who carefully approached the choice of their works so that they would correspond with each other.

In May 1975, during one of the reading sessions in the apartment of Rimma and Valery Gerlovin, Leonid Sokov offered the group of artists he had been working with to organize a collective exhibition in his apartment at Bolshoy Sukharevsky Pereulok, 7, apartment 16. He states that the primary reason behind his concern was for "this exhibition to not be a protest at all, but rather a display in Moscow of works that could not be officially put on display."²⁰⁶ Sokov invited Igor Shelkovsky, Ivan Chuikov, Gerlovins, Sergei Shablavin, and Sasha Yulikov. Leonid Sokov describes the exhibition as:

...exhibition in my workshop in Bolshoy Sukharevsky Pereulok 7, Apt. 16, was one of seven apartment exhibitions held at that time in Moscow. It opened on May 10. People from Bolshoy Sukharevsky Lane poured into the workshop. A huge number of visitors visited me. It was a fresh, and a qualitatively new show for Moscow. As an artist and as a curator of the exhibition, I realized that I got

²⁰⁵ Interview with Sasha Obukhova, for the article "Adresa: gde i kak prokhodili kvartirnyye vystavki v 1970–1980-ye", ArtGuide magazine, 03.12.2014, extracted from <http://artguide.com/posts/704>.

²⁰⁶ Sokov, L. "Moscow, the seventies ...", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyie, ili Poterya nevinnosti. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.]* Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.154.

to the point that I received approval from those whose opinion was appreciated.²⁰⁷

The exhibition in Sokov's apartment stayed open for three days until KGB agents came and took Sokov for questioning. As a result, Sokov lost his membership in the Union of Artists and soon after he emigrated to New York. The significance of the apartment lies in the collective attempt to exhibit. Although Sokov's apartment was a workshop that he was able to get through his membership of the Union of Artists, and the collective exhibit was more of a workshop exhibit rather than an apartment exhibit.

The works exhibited in the apartment/workshop was placed on the part Sokov built his sculptures; therefore, the exhibition area was separated from Sokov's domestic setting. The separation of artworks from domestic features makes this event an exhibition in the artist's apartment, rather than an apartment exhibition. Although Spring Apartment Exhibitions set the first step towards forming an alternative zone of creativity, the domestic space was still separated from that of the 'gallery space'. The separation of domestic space from the space of exhibiting artworks was, of course, has been a common, global, ideal as well as a traditional setting of a proper workshop for every Soviet or non-Soviet artist. However, the significance of Soviet Nonconformists lies in what first collective apartment exhibitions had evolved into during 1980s.

This study defines Nonconformist "room exhibition" as a practice of curating the domestic space together with/ as a part of the artworks. In the apartment exhibition, domestic objects, personal belongings, and furniture of the artist are reconfigured together with the artworks to become a part of the exhibition. The domestic objects can even, as in the case of AptArt gallery, be transformed into an artwork.

²⁰⁷ Sokov, L. "Moscow, the seventies ...", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, pp.155.



Figure 2.124. Installation view of “Spring Apartment Exhibition”, in the apartment of Leonid Sokov, 1975
“Fragments from life”, 2015, Moscow Museum Archive, Materials from the exhibition



Figure 2.125. Exhibition view of “Spring Apartment Exhibition”, the apartment of Leonid Sokov, 1975
“Fragments from life”, 2015, Moscow Museum Archive, Materials from the exhibition

So the room is now essentially turned into a work of art.

Eduard Gorokhovskiy²⁰⁸

This event is not an exhibition, and certainly not a private showing. This is an artist's room, where several artists have gotten together to do collaborative work.

Abalakova - Zhigalov

During the 1980s, when MANI circle was formed, the Nonconformist perspectives on the appropriation of domestic spaces as exhibition space began to shift, as they started to come to terms with their unofficial status within the cultural and artistic system of their context. In 1981, the second-generation Nonconformist artists became involved in the creation of an extensive photographic archive by documenting the events of alternative art life under the title the Moscow Archive of New Art [Moskovskiy Arkhiv Novogo Iskusstva or MANI]. The first edition of the Moscow Archive of New Art (MANI) was published as samizdat [trans.: Self-published] in February 1981. Three more folders followed it between 1981-1985. The second volume of MANI folders, circulated in 1982, included the photographic archive of George Kiesewalter titled "Around the Workshops," in which he documented rooms of fifteen artists from the Nonconformist art circle. The album was introduced as follows by the artist:

There is no need to expand on the importance of a person's room - the place where he sleeps, eats, and simply rests. Everyone, of course, treats to the room in their own way, and the room, in turn, can somehow determine the character traits of the owner. ... In our case, our rooms become "exhibits,"; exhibits that fall into three categories.

The first is an "institution." Here the "educational work" is continuously conducted, readings and discussions are held, which forms the foundations for

²⁰⁸ Eduard Gorokhovskiy on Irina Nakhova's Room.2, in Sborniki MANI, No: 2, "Komnata", 1985.

MANI. The second is an "academy," which holds the receptions at the highest level. The third is a "museum," in which the exhibitions were held, and comprehensive research and archival work are conducted.²⁰⁹

This awakening in perception brought awareness for artists that not only the act of self-exhibiting but also self-documenting, self-publishing, and self-archiving were necessities rather than a choice for Moscow Nonconformists. As a result, the un-officialdom of their practice created an organization scheme where they were the artists, historians, archivists, curators, and reporters of themselves, and for themselves.

For the MANI circle, the early examples of apartment exhibitions lacked the necessary spatial planning, curating, and afterward documenting. Although the previous attempts on exhibiting in apartments had a collective spirit, they were labeled by MANI circle as "experimental, processual, and on-hierarchical." Throughout the 1970s, individual meetings at artist apartments were "presentations rather than exhibitions," according to Sven Gundlakh. He states that the main reason these showings could not become exhibitions was that the artists were still making artworks to be exhibited in official spaces, which according to Gundlakh were "part necessity, part foolery, a heroic pose, a challenge to authorities and of course, a very Russian kind of special suffering." He adds that: "...when we prepared works for our first exhibition, we tried to create an exposition that was actually meant to set for a room."²¹⁰

The parasitic gatherings in artist apartments later transformed into well-organized individual apartment exhibitions in artists' rooms during the 1980s by MANI artists. The apartment exhibitions throughout 30 years of its existence was labeled as a "working exposition," an "anti-show," "exhibition-nonexhibition," "a wonderful can," "a peculiar mastering of the

²⁰⁹ George Kiesevalter, opening note, "Around the Workshops" ("Po Masterskim"), 1982, MANI:2.

²¹⁰ Gundlakh, Sven. (1983) "Show Must Go On". This manuscript was originally written for the opening of "APTART plein air", the openair exhibition after the second APTART exhibition was raided by KGB. Courtesy of Tupitsyn archive.

artistic environment" and an "orgy in minimal space"²¹¹ and finally it was transformed into AptArt. This section concerns the unique experience of communal interiors of Soviet rooms in Moscow between 1982-1984, in their use as exhibition spaces for underground Soviet art. AptArt exhibitions included an overall transformation of the communal rooms to the extent of transforming all surfaces and furniture into museological objects and artworks.

In 1982, Nikita Alekseev and Mikhail Roshal, came up with the idea of a cooperative gallery. The Nonconformist circle at the time, compared to their predecessors, had a better understanding of how a gallery should operate, but it was still a foggy idea developed around the bread crumbs they collected from coffee table books on Western art. Alekseev states: "We did understand two things. First, in a gallery, there must be a program of constantly changing exhibitions, and second, a gallery must have a name."²¹² From this conversation, the name AptArt emerged, which is an abbreviation for "apartment art." Alekseev offered to use his apartment as the exhibition space, and in order to rise above this enforced situation, Alekseev gave his apartment institutional status by calling it "the avant-garde gallery on 1/6th of the globe."²¹³

The decision to organize the non-exhibitions at Alekseev's home was rather practical. Unlike most of the artists involved, he lived alone. Therefore, the AptArt gallery was formed in Alekseev's room located on 48 Vavilov Street, number 433. The AptArt gallery commenced two weeks before Brezhnev's death in November 1982 and was disbanded by the end of Andropov's rule in February 1984, which had reactivated KGB agents from their tamed stagnation during the Brezhnev era. Over two short years, the artists organized over ten shows, and performances in Alekseev's room.

²¹¹ The labels were derived from the interviews conducted with the APTART artists for the book Tupitsyna, M. & Tupitsyn, V. (eds.) *Anti-Shows: APTART 1982-84*. London: Afterall Books, 2017.

²¹² Nikita Alekseev, "Into the Void", Interview for Smengazeta, September 12, 2006.

²¹³ Ibid.

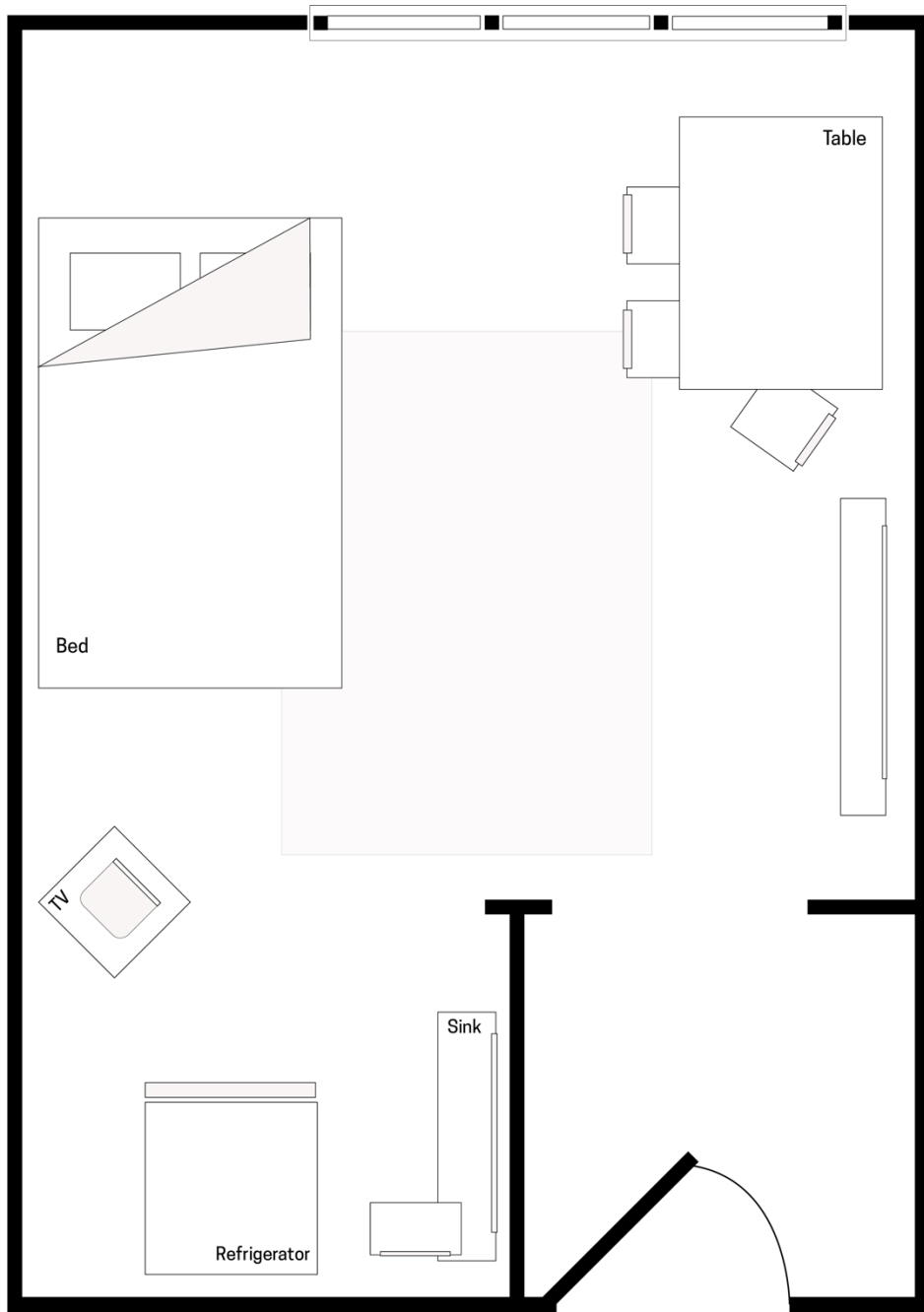


Figure 2.127. Schematic plan of Alekseev's room
Drawing by author, On the description of Alekseev in his book "Ryady pamyati" [Rows of Memory], New Literary Review: 2008



Figure 2.126. Alekseev's room before AptArt Gallery opened
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

The core of the gallery was formed by artists Mikhail Roshal, then Vadim Zakharov & Victor Skersis, the Mukhomors group, Natalya Abalakova & Anatoly Zhigalov, Georgy Kizevalter and the founder of the gallery, Nikita Alekseev. At different stages, other authors joined them, including Andrei Monastyrsky and Nikolai Panitkov. In almost two years of its existence, from September 1982 to May 1984, the gallery hosted eighteen group and personal exhibitions, which usually lasted seven to ten days. Thus, by joint efforts, APTART formally became the first private gallery in the Soviet Union. However, they had to pay for this success: the state security organs became interested in the artists, some of the participants began to be called up for interrogations, others were taken into army.

The first showing of APTART, called "Autumn Exhibition," opened on October 20, 1982, and lasted for twelve days. Its participants included Andrei Monastyrsky, the Mukhomor group, Nikita Alekseev, Natalya Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Vadim Zakharov, Victor Skersis, Mikhail Roshal, George Kiesewalter, and Lev Rubinstein. Nikita Alekseev, in his book "Rows of Memory," writes that the main room was only eighteen square meters, with two large

windows, so there were not enough exhibition walls; therefore, all the surfaces in the apartment were used, including the ceiling.²¹⁴ The artists covered sealed the windows with whiteboards in order to maximize the surfaces to work on.



Figure 2.128. Installation view from AptArt Gallery
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

²¹⁴ Nikita Alekseev, “Ryady pamyati” (Rows of Memory), Moscow: New Literary Review, 2008, p.9.

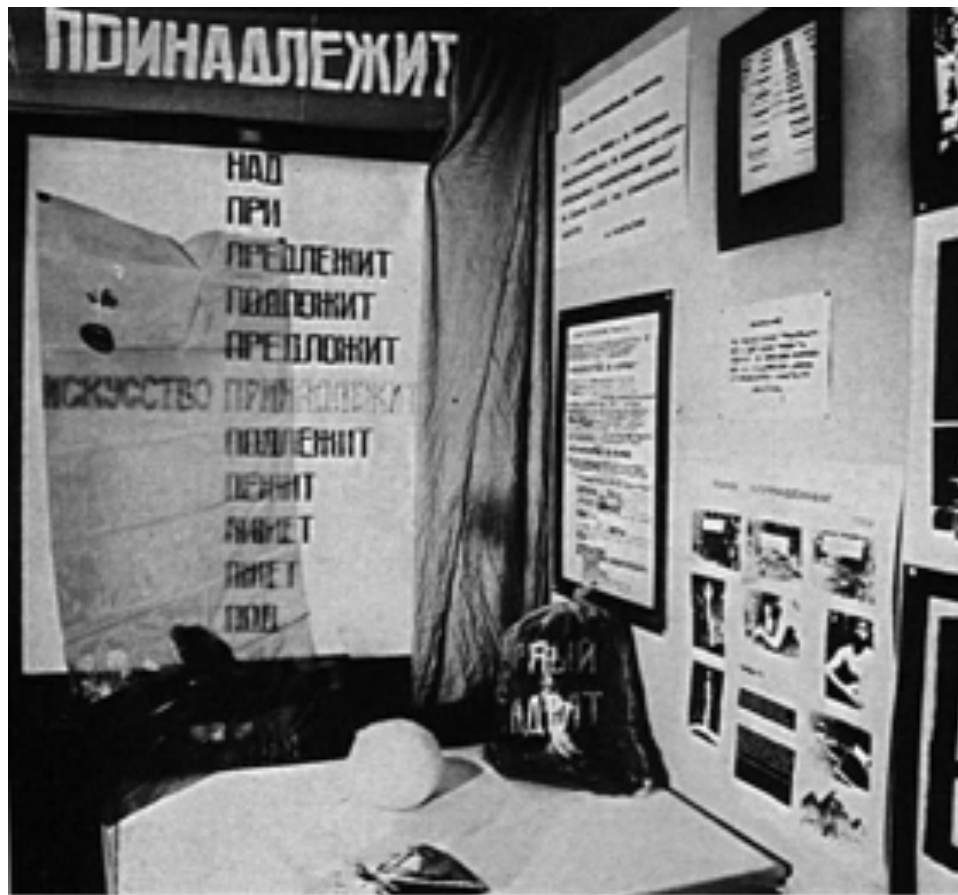


Figure 2.129. Installation view from AptArt Gallery
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Alekseev's apartment became the embodiment of the Nonconformist artists' discussions, comments, and concerns on both Soviet domestic spaces, and the domestic space of the

unofficial artist. The most significant part of the AptArt gallery was the artists' take on the re-appropriation of existing domestic features in Alekseev's apartment. Unlike in the apartment/workshop of Sokov where the artist purposefully separated the space of exhibiting from his domestic unit, Alekseev's apartment was wholly transformed into a space of exhibition down to its last detail. Even Alekseev's furniture is used, covered, and even transformed into artworks. For Zhigalov and Abalakova's installation "Book-Object," the artists covered Alekseev's bed with a shiny metallic surface on which they installed 15 double-sided frames containing collages of "the history of Moscow unofficial art in pictures." Since the exhibition stayed open for 12 days, Alekseev stated that he had to sleep on the frames. His bed, while became an artwork, still preserved its functional value as a piece of furniture, which makes the AptArt gallery one of the most curious architectural interpretations in the history of Moscow's unofficial art.



Figure 2.130. Installing of Zhigalov & Abalakova's work "Book-Object" on Alekseev's bed
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.131. Installing of Zhigalov & Abalakova's work "Book-Object" on Alekseev's bed
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Alekseev's bed was not the only domestic feature that was transformed. One significant case in this regard is the refrigerator installation of the group Mukhomors. The Mukhomors took over Alekseev's Север (Sever) brand refrigerator in its entirety to produce their installation "The Novel." "The Novel" was a made-up story about the Turkish-Russian war. Its epigraph and title page are painted on the door of the refrigerator, while the inside was reserved for plot

points and the protagonists' inner monologues, written and placed in boxes, while objects, colors, and images structure other aspects of the plot.

There is one unique fact about the AptArt gallery that puts Alekseev's apartment somewhere in-between a gallery and a home, a domestic space still public, an unofficial space but still Soviet: that is the stilled but continuing domestic existence of Alekseev in the apartment. Aside from the fact that many objects were made accordingly to leave Alekseev life-sustaining functions, the fate of the Novel-Refrigerator signified a unique case of how the expositional surrounding mingled into the Soviet everyday life of the artist.

The Novel-Refrigerator was in flux for some time during APTART shows—artists added to and subtracted from it, Alekseev continued to use it for food, and finally the KGB confiscated most of the textual components in a raid on the apartment. However, during the album shoot of George Kiesewalter for the album "Komnata" documenting artist rooms, it is seen at the corner of the apartment, that Alexeev uses "The Novel," or at least what is left of it- as a daily object. Kiesewalter, while describing the room of Alexeev, states:

Room Alekseev is familiar to many Muscovites and not Muscovites. Many who are in the same nuisance with Alekseev understands the peculiarities of his psyche and are happy to accept his room as it is. This is what his room looked like: In the bedroom "alcove," a desk and a bedside table are located. There is a column perched on it. A bookcase full of books stands in the corner. To the right of the desk is the Mukhomor refrigerator, which Alekseev uses as a cabinet. To the right of the camera is an old peeled, but sturdy table, used for all needs. In the corners of the room are a pair of nightstands with various household trivia. The walls are decorated with various objects, drawings, photographs, etc. On the left of us on the wall is another "oilcloth" in work: Recently Nikita fell in love with drawing on an oilcloth - alas, in official circles no one shares this love ...
Well, Nikita, God help!²¹⁵

²¹⁵ George Kiesewalter on Nikita Alekseev's room, in Sborniki MANI, No: 2, "Komnata", 1985.



Figure 2.132. “The Novel” by Mukhomors, in AptArt Gallery Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 2.133. Nikita Alekseev’s room with refrigerator marked “Komnata”, Sborniki MANI:2

The case of refrigerator was almost a direct reference to the avant-garde ideal of "art into life," especially since it was exhibited side by side by the banner designed by Zhigalov and Abalakova saying "Art Belongs...", which was a reproduction of a famous slogan of avant-garde "Art Belongs to People" used in the campaign for art into life.



Figure 2.134. Installation view “Art Belongs”, by Zhigalov and Abalakova
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

After the first two shows were held in Nikita Alexeev's apartment: "The Autumn Show" in 1982, and "The Spring Show" in 1983, KGB agents raided Alekseev's apartment and confiscated the artworks, pushing AptArt artists to organize shows in open fields outside of Moscow. Although, they returned to Alekseev's apartment for the other exhibitions, increasing pressures from State agents required artists to give up on exhibiting at Alekseev's apartment, and they announced that AptArt ceased to exist in early 1984. Even though the APTART gallery was short-lived compared to the overall existence of underground artists in Moscow for almost 30 years, the gallery left significant traces for the discussion of museology of Soviet domestic interior. Victor Tupitsyn states that even though there had been various apartment

and workshop shows earlier, exhibiting under the aegis of APTART "became a style, and not simply a grudging necessity," as was the case in the 1960 and 1970s.

AptArt also manifested a desire to reenact the *kommunalka*. however, this reenactment was "as a playground instead of a platform for philosophical investigation."²¹⁶ Alekseev's room as a macro-context became a collective and multi-functional unit. Moreover, the practice of AptArt signifies an essential shift in context-dependent artworks of MANI artists. The artworks designed for the gallery did not only reference the broader Soviet visual terminology, but they were also designed specifically for Alekseev's room. All artists had a specific space saved for them in the room, a particular section to work on; therefore, the artworks exhibited was not only designed to be exhibited in a room but also designed to be exhibited in Alekseev's room. The architectural and spatial limitations were the determining factor for artists in deciding the size, the character, even the content of their works. Together, AptArtists conceived a new form of collective installation that blurred individual authorship and achieved a unified, whole spectacle. As Yuri Albert puts it: "Born in private apartments, private heads," this was nonetheless "collective curating—curated collectively and also curated as an expression of a group."²¹⁷

A good collection not only speaks of its time but also predicts the future.

J.J. Borges

...In the '80s, art became more and more narrative.

Francisco Infante

²¹⁶ Tupitsyn, V. "Vis-à-vision: Conversations with Russian Conceptual Artists, 1978–2013", London: Spector, 2018, p.18.

²¹⁷ Tupitsyn M. & Tupitsyn V. (eds.) *Anti-Shows: APTART 1982-84*. London: Afterall Books, 2017, p.26.

While the spatial dynamics of the once-communal and newly private domestic sphere changed and re-appropriated into a collective space, the role of the artist-tenant had been redefined as a curator, an art critic, collector, and later an archivist in their living spaces. The practice of collective exhibitions brought the end to build an archive of these collective actions and artworks. Vadim Zakharov states that the role of the underground artist was not limited to the production of the work. The underground artist was also responsible for curating, critiquing, collecting, and archiving the underground art, too.

We could allow ourselves to be curators, art critics, collectors, archivists. At the same time, they actively included themselves in the creative process. All of them were rightful coauthors of created artworks, exhibitions, actions.

We, perhaps on the sublime level, preserved our personal freedom, the taste of which we inoculated ourselves for many years [...] I never could understand when people treated me only as an artist because for me it always was the norm to be a union of an artist, a collector, a curator, a critic, and a publisher in a single person.²¹⁸

The need for collecting gave way to the need for archiving. The first examples of archiving were, as stated before, was in the form of albums documenting the everyday life of Soviet Nonconformist artists. George Kiesewalter states: "Since I constantly visited the workshops of artists collecting materials, over time I had a desire to illuminate, capture and museify the miserable infrastructure of our then life." The first examples of documenting included, besides individual artworks of the artists, workshops, and apartments of the artists, "their beds, families, home libraries and family archives, portraits with animals and loved ones, or events such as joint trips around the country, birthdays, readings, concerts, and dancing in snow..."²¹⁹ These particular forms of archiving seemed to be the only possible way to understand the

²¹⁸ Vadim Zakharov, "Interview with the Underground Artists", published first in album "Around the Workshops", 1982.

²¹⁹ Kiesewalter, G. "Introduction", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.21.

individual artistic approaches of artists at the time. However, as the circle became more unified, and started acting collectively, the need for a more organized and institutional archive came to be discussed; therefore, the MANI was born.

Between 1980-1982, artists of the second generation of Nonconformists assembled the Moscow Archive of New Art (MANI) to document their activities and support creative dialogue. MANI contains theoretical texts, documentary photographs, original works of art, handmade books, and exhibition materials related to the founders and participants of this movement - artists, poets, and theorists. The artists, by recording their conversations, collecting and publishing letters, conducting surveys among them, designing photo albums, and making video documentations built themselves a massive archive.

Since there were no other channels and institutions to collect and publish their work, artists took the responsibility to build a collective archive. Collecting and archiving became one of the hallmarks of the time. It is no coincidence that in the name "Artists of the MANI Circle," the emphasis was placed on the Archive, and not on the proclamation.

The project of documenting and archiving soon transformed into publishing and the first samizdat of Moscow unofficial artists was released under the name of MANI. The MANI Folios became the first crucial collective publication of the Moscow Conceptualists despite a run of only five copies. The distribution process was primitively simple: after an artist pored over the materials, he handed the folio to another artist. The best artists and poets of the Moscow underground took part in this unique endeavor. Although it was an archival project, it simultaneously acquired the significance of a particular work of art. Five "MANI Folders" were released and distributed in a limited number of copies, followed by another series of materials covering 1986–1991 titled "MANI Collections," and a collection of "self-documentation" from 1988 to the present titled MANI Museum. Andrei Monastyrsky spearheaded the publication, later continuing it under a different name: the MANI Collection. Although Monastyrsky was the chief editor who set the tone for every issue, each MANI Folder had a different editor who collected the works, designed the outline of the samizdat, published, and circulated the issue. MANI was an example of a museification characteristic of

Moscow conceptualism. It was also an artist book, combining literary, literary, archival, artistic, and performance activities. However, more significantly, it was a product of collective practice.

The second chapter analyzes the shift in collectivity, collective culture, and exhibition practices of the third generation of Nonconformist artists after the advent of Perestroika. The study will discuss the condition of unofficialdom under Perestroika while tracing the artist spaces and the changing definitions of Soviet domestic interior under the falling Soviet regime.



Figure 2.135. MANI Folders
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

CHAPTER 3

REFORMATIONS

In February 1983, KGB agents came with a search warrant and raided Alekseev's and Roshal's apartments simultaneously. Following the raid, Alekseev wrote a letter to Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn who had emigrated to New York almost a decade ago:

I am informing you with sincere regret that AptArt ceased to exist on February 15, 1983. Early in the morning of that day, the employees of a "well-known" organization came with a search warrant and smashed the exhibition of [Victor] Skersis and [Vadim] Zakharov, confiscated some of the works along with other materials which were in no way anti-Soviet. On the same day, Mikhail Roshal's apartment was searched, and his works and those of Mukhomors were expropriated. From the "employees" remarks, it was clear that they tend to interpret all works if not as anti-Soviet, then pornographic or both ... Most likely, this signals the beginning of a new campaign for complete extirpation of new art. If this is true, it is terrible. What shall happen next is unclear, but to expect anything good is unrealistic. It looks like we have become an eyesore to them since they seriously warned us back in September ... I am not trying to "bury" myself and my friends yet, but the atmosphere here is pretty awful.²²⁰

When Alekseev sent this letter, the odds did not seem high for the unofficial circle. The AptArt soon came to an end in 1984; therefore, the tradition of apartment exhibitions was doomed to be over. However, just four years later, on April 20, 1987, Alekseev sent another letter to Tupitsyns. He stated:

What is going on now is very interesting. It has never been seen before, not even during the days of Khrushchev. [...] As far as art is concerned, there have been many changes. There is virtually no such thing as unofficial art. Practically

²²⁰ Nikita Alekseev, letter to Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn, 18 February 1983.

anybody can exhibit. Before New Year's, there was an exhibition of young artists on Kuznetsky Most, where everyone hung works [...] The exhibition broke all the attendance records. In February and March, there was a great show in the exhibition hall on the Kashirsky highway [...] Prigov, who just a few years ago was harassed by KGB for his poetry, recited it through a microphone before a broad audience.²²¹

This chapter traces the last five years of the Soviet Union during the years of Glasnost and Perestroika, which coincided with the last years of the second generation and the formation of the third generation of Nonconformist artists. Glasnost and Perestroika will be analyzed in terms of the surfacing of underground art, the reformation of Nonconformist artist networks, especially concerning changing exhibition practices and spaces of once-underground art.

The term "glasnost" in Russian translates as "openness," "transparency," or "publicity," however, for the Soviet context, Glasnost referred to the "freedom of speech." In March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the Communist Party General Secretary. Soon after, Gorbachev launched a campaign introducing new terminologies to the political dictionary of the country. The word "acceleration" ("uskoreniye") has gradually started appearing in main media organs. New concepts such as "democratization" ("demokratizatsiya"), "braking mechanism" ("mekhanizm tormozheniya"), and "deformation of socialism" ("deformatsiya sotsializma") had appeared in various official media organs.²²² Soon after, at the April Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, many questions regarding current social, economic, and political issues were posed in a new way. A course has been proclaimed on accelerating the country's socio-economic development, later to be known as Perestroika.

²²¹ The letter published in Tupitsyna, M. & Tupitsyn, V. Moscow-New York, Moscow: WAM, No:21, 2006, p. 231-232.

²²² Gorbachev acknowledged the failure of the reform efforts of the previous years and saw the reason for these failures in the deformations that occurred in the USSR since the 1930s. In the second half of 1980s, the failures of 1930s were acknowledged causing "the deformation of socialism". The solution was determined to go back to the era of early revolution. So the slogan "Back to Lenin" began to appear. In his speeches, the Secretary General of the CPSU Central Committee argued that there were deviations from the ideas of Leninism. The Leninist concept of the NEP became especially popular. Publicists spoke of the NEP as the "golden age" of Soviet history, drawing analogies with the modern period of history.



Figure 3.1. Pravda, Information Message on The April Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU
 New York Public Library, Pravda Digital Archive

Following the April Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, three slogans promoting Gorbachev's campaign to reform the Soviet Union were introduced: "glasnost" as restoring the freedom of speech, "perestroika" as restructuring in the economy and political system, and

"novoye mneniya" (new thinking) in foreign policy.²²³ Already by the summer of 1986, Gorbachev called for the radical restructuring of all the institutions within the Soviet system. A total transformation of the economic system initiated together with the social and cultural sphere. The radical transformation finally ended up with the advent of Perestroika in 1987. The three concepts introduced by Gorbachev became faltering steps toward a civil society. The period of two years between 1985-1987 was a period of controlled, but continually expanding publicity. Glasnost and Perestroika were widely celebrated by the public and advertised through official printed media.



Figure 3.2. “Perestroika -Continuation of the Great Achievements of October!”, Moscow 1987
Russian State Film and Photo Archive (RGAKFD / Rosinform)

In the cultural sphere, two of the earliest outcomes of Glasnost were the proliferation of media outlets and the reduction of censorship. These developments, in turn, gave way to formations of zones of liberty in every field of art. Already on October 7, 1986, at the annual celebrations

²²³ See: Gorbachev M.S. Speech at the plenum of the Central Committee, February 18, *Communist*, 1988: 4; Gorbachev M.S. *Perestroika and new thinking for our country and the whole world*. Moscow: Politizdat, 1987; Volobuev P.V. *The choice of ways of social development: Theory, history, modernity*. Moscow: Politizdat, 1987; Dedkov I. *Together yesterday, together today and tomorrow*, *Communist*. 1988: 8.

for the October Revolution, Secretary of Ideology Yegor Ligachev used art as a cautionary example of the perils of taking too much creative license with the truth:

Currently, the issue of the truthfulness with which reality is reflected in art is at the center of discussion. Soviet people are in favor of truth, but this must be the whole truth and not a one-sided truth; the truth of life in all its variety.²²⁴

Following the statement of Ligachev, at the Communist Party of the Soviet Union plenum in January 1987, Gorbachev also focused on art, stating:

The ideology and mentality of stagnation were also reflected in the sphere of culture, literature, and the arts. [...] Criteria for assessing artistic creativity declined. [...] Along with works that raised severe social and moral problems and reflected real-life conflicts, there appeared a good many mediocre, faceless works that provided nothing for either the mind or the senses.²²⁵

By dismissing the creative climate of pre-glasnost culture, Gorbachev edged open a door through which many intellectuals were able to step. In the art world, the variety of approaches were encouraged by the new state policy. This encouragement resulted in recognition of a greater variety of artistic practices that went far beyond the previously imposed canon of Socialist Realism and initiated the surfacing of previously disparaged art of the underground. Following the change in the aspect of art, the rigidity of exhibition policies finally began to crumble, and accordingly, starting from 1986 through the early 1990s, it set off an explosion of activity and change in contemporary art, especially for Nonconformist art.

²²⁴ Gibbs, J. "From the Cultural Debate to the Yeltsin Affair," in *Gorbachev's Glasnost: The Soviet Media in the First Phase of Perestroika*, Eugenia & Hugh M. Stewart '26 Series on Eastern Europe, College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999, p.45 (quoted on Moscow television, November 6, 1986, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Daily Report Soviet Union*, November 7, 1986, 0–12).

²²⁵ Quoted in "O perestroike i kadrovoy politike partii: Doklad general'nogo sekretarya TsK KPSS M.S. Gorbacheva na plenum TsK KPSS 27 yanvarya 1987 goda," (On "the restructuring and personnel policy of the party": Report of the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPSU M.S. Gorbachev at the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on January 27, 1987), *Pravda*, January 28, 1987, 1–5.

On the one hand, this newly flourishing artistic environment resulted in increasing the numbers of artists practicing "alternative art" outside of official canon. Margarita Tupitsyn characterizes the period between 1986-1991 as marking an evolution, from "a close-knit community into an eco-system," in which different versions of contemporary art could exist independently of "historical allegiances."²²⁶ While Konstantin Zvezdochetov explained the aura of Glasnost as "if AptArt was one kind of socio-cultural psychopathology, the glasnost period created a different type;"²²⁷ Vadim Zakharov stresses the difference between the two epochs of late Soviet alternative art as:

The fact is that three years ago, there were only thirty of us in the whole Soviet Union. Now the situation has radically changed. A period of seduction has set in. A mass of new names has appeared, people of a completely different formation.²²⁸

On the other hand, the loosening on the rules of exhibition practices allowed alternative artists to get out of their apartments and find alternative places to exhibit. As Margarita Tupitsyn states: "...by late 1986 former AptArtists were faced not with the questions of where to exhibit, but rather with the dilemma of where to produce their large-scale works."²²⁹

The period between 1986-1991 not only witnessed the shifts in Nonconformist artist networks, and in their exhibition practices as the spaces for alternative exhibitions were changing, the period also witnessed the increasing openness of the country to the outside world. The gradual openness made the involvement of Russian art in the global art markets possible, while further

²²⁶ Tupitsyn, M. "U-turn of the U-topian," in Ross, D.A. (ed.) *Between Spring and Summer: Soviet Conceptual Art in the Era of Late*, Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1990, p.35–36.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, p.38.

²²⁸ Zakharov, V. "The Necessity of a Museum of Contemporary Art Out Of Town," in Barzel, A. and Jolles, C. (eds.) *Contemporary Russian Artists*, Prato: Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, 1990, p.69.

²²⁹ Tupitsyn, M. "U-turn of the U-topian," in Ross, D.A. (ed.) *Between Spring and Summer: Soviet Conceptual Art in the Era of Late*, Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1990, p.35–36.

challenged previously existing norms and hierarchies in Soviet artistic organizations and caused the reconsideration of Soviet art structures and the functioning of those institutions.

Developing interconnections with the West also dropped a spotlight on Nonconformist art and artists, later resulted in international connections, events, and exhibitions held in the West. While Perestroika allowed the freedom of travel, which once was impossible for Nonconformist artists, their newly built connections in the Western art world, together with the preserved connections with the Nonconformist emigres of the previous generations, an international network for Nonconformist actors had formed. This chapter will trace the reformations in Nonconformist artworks, networks, and spaces in Moscow during the times of Glasnost and Perestroika, while Chapter 3 will focus on moving actors and international networks, as well as Nonconformist practices, spaces, and relationships shaped in the Western geographies.

3.1 Reformation of Networks

In September 1983, when KGB agents raided the AptArt gallery, the circle decided it was too risky to continue showing in Alekseev's apartment and organized an open-air show in Mukhomors' dacha in outskirts of Moscow. They called the event "AptArt Behind the Fence."

By that time, the fame of the AptArt gallery surpassed the borders of Moscow. A young artist from Odessa Yuri Leiderman, who had been studying at the Moscow Institute of Chemical Technology, heard about the event and invited two artists who had located in Odessa: Sergei Anufriev and Larisa Rezun. Anufriev and Rezun traveled to Moscow to take part in "AptArt Behind the Fence." "AptArt Behind the Fence" was a real revelation for the Odessa artists. There they met with Alekseev, the Mukhomors, Monastyrsky, Zakharov, Prigov and even Kabakov who although did not participate in AptArt exhibitions was still kept mentoring the artists. When the exhibition was taking place, Odessa artists stayed in Gundlkah's apartment for five days.

One year later, Odessa artists Rezun and Anufriev came back to Moscow, but this time permanently. In 1984, it seemed for AptArtists that the node around them was not as tight as two years ago. Therefore, they returned to Alekseev's apartment, this time by the contribution of Odessa artists: Anufriev, Rezun, and Leiderman. The exhibition was called "The Soul and the Little Body." During the exhibition, Sven Gundlakh and Nikita Alekseev proposed to arrange another exhibition to be titled as "Odessa-Moscow." This exhibition, which was held between May 20 and May 30, 1984, in Alekseev's apartment, was the last exhibition of AptArt. Following the exhibition, while three Odessa artists joined the circle, the AptArt gallery came to an end in 1984.

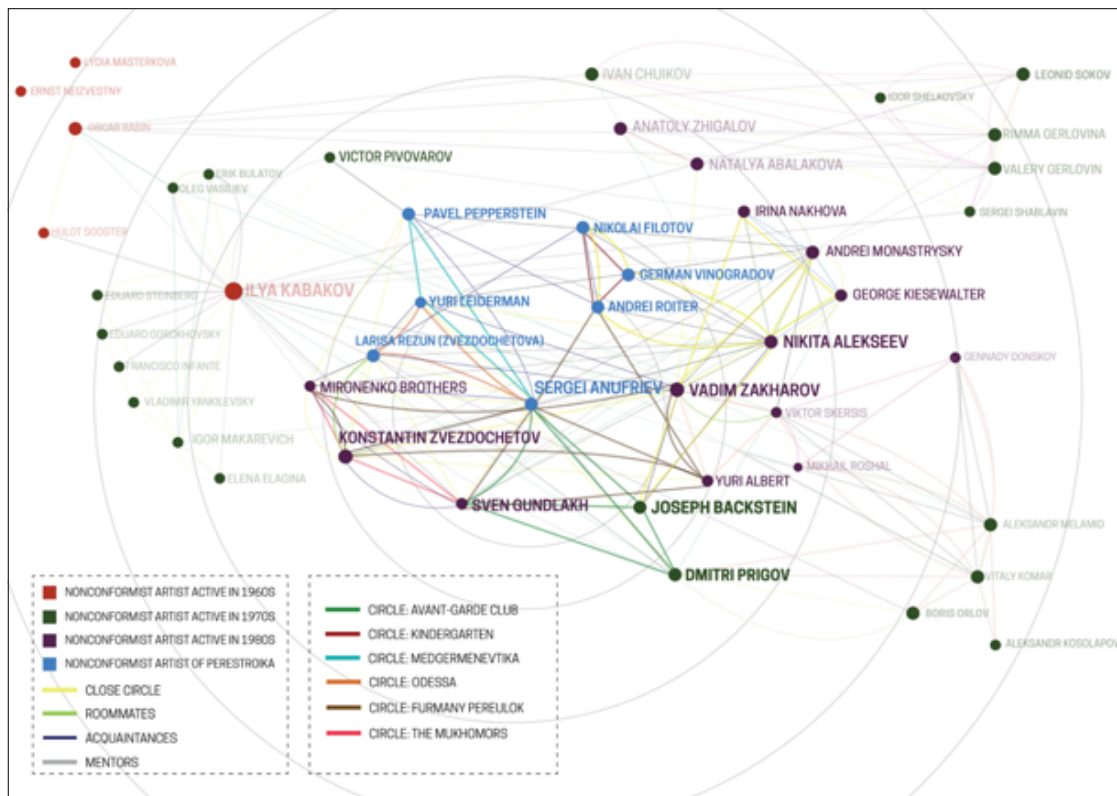


Figure 3.3. Graph showing networks of third generation of Nonconformist artists: 1986-1991
Figure by the Author



Figure 3.4. “Good Exhibition, Right?”, “AptArt Behind the Fence”, 1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.5. “AptArt Behind the Fence”, Abalakova & Zhigalov, 1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.6. “Odessa-Moscow”, Nikita Alexeev’s apartment, 1984
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.7. Larisa Rezun and Yuri Leiderman, “Odessa-Moscow”, Nikita Alexeev’s
apartment, 1984
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

The scattering of the second generation of Nonconformist artists began right after 1984, after Odessa-Moscow exhibition. The members of The Mukhomors were firstly sent to "correctional facilities" ("psikhushki"),²³⁰ and later to the army for correction.

While the Mukhomors were in the army, and MANI circle was relatively silent, three young artists, German Vinogradov, Nikolay Filatov, and Andrei Roiter, who visited the last AptArt exhibition started forming a group themselves under Alekseev's mentorship. Vinogradov, Filatov and Roiter were working at a kindergarten as watchmen, each having eight-hour shifts. In 1984, the Kindergarten was evicted for repairs. Three artists saw this as an opportunity to form a zone for exhibiting unofficial art, organize meetings and even concert. They re-appropriated the basement of the evicted building of the Kindergarten in which they also had apartments on the second floor, and there they established the unofficial exhibition hall to be named as "Kindergarten." Kindergarten quickly became the center of Nonconformist art starting from 1984. While Soviet Union started to conduct a policy on strengthening international relations, Moscow as the other big cities of Soviet Union began to host Western visitors. Many of the visitors were curators and art critics interested in Nonconformist art. The artists of the "Kindergarten" knew how to use this interest. Vinogradov once said: "If AptArt was a gesture of collectivity, "Kindergarten" was a particular product for the individuality of the artist."²³¹

Other artists joined three central figures. Soon after, Nikita Alekseev held a one-person exhibition in Kindergarten, and introduced Anufriev to the circle of three. Although

²³⁰ During a speech in 1963, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev said, "A crime is a deviation from the generally recognized standards of behavior frequently caused by mental disorder...To those who might start calling for opposition to Communism on this basis, we can clearly say that... the mental state of such people is not normal." In 1968, Soviet newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda published a paper listing the symptoms of psychiatric illness as "an exceptional interest in philosophical systems, religion, and art." See: Komsomolskaya Pravda, July 15, 1968.

According to the research of the Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law on the memoirs of "dissident artists" and "dissident intellectuals", people of alternative culture were incarcerated in mental institutions without any medical justification. Under Soviet law, if such persons were found nonimputable, they could be placed in maximum security hospitals, also called "special hospitals" or "mad house jails" (in Russian, psikhushka, or little psych wards).

²³¹ German Vinogradov quoted in Solomon, A. The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.124.

Gorbachev had already declared it was the time of Glasnost, the freedom of act and speech was yet to come for Nonconformist artists, since their freedom and opportunities for exhibiting was still limited, and much unofficial during 1985. While Kindergarten becoming the center of attention for Nonconformist artists, it also became noticeably disturbing for authorities. In 1986, the KGB more and more often began to disperse "Kindergarten" gatherings and to intimidate artists individually who were somehow connected with the "Kindergarten." The pressure on artists of Kindergarten, and their visitors, including Anufriev, Alekseev, and later Zakharov continued until 1987 when the building was demolished, and the artists were given only twenty-four hours to take out their belongings.



Figure 3.8. German Vinogradov and Andrei Roiter in front of “Kindergarten”, 1986
Andrew Solomon, Photographs from the book “The Irony Tower,”1991.

During the heydays of Kindergarten, in 1986, Ilya Kabakov emigrated to New York. Around the same time, The Mukhomors came back from their exile after serving for two years. Shortly after, Konstantin Zvezdochetov married Larisa Rezun, and Sergei Anufriev introduced the couple to Kindergarten artists. Meanwhile, Vladimir Mironenko started working at the Moscow Land-Surveying College, where he met with Vinogradov, who was studying

architecture at the time. Mironenkos introduced Sven Gundlakh to the young artists of Kindergarten, as a result, the Kindergarten artists and The Mukhomors got acquainted.

In parallel to the formation of Kindergarten, Sven Gundlakh created a rock band as a joke, which he called "Middle Russian Elevation." Sergey Anufriev immediately joined the band. They started organizing "shows" at Alekseev's apartment. During one of these shows, Anufriev met with Joseph Backstein, one of the master chroniclers of MANI and the current director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow. Backstein, who was married to Nakhova at the time around 1986, started participating to group activities rather than just documenting them. Through Alekseev and Backstein, Anufriev also got acquainted to Dmitri Prigov. Backstein and Prigov joined the band because, in Backstein's words, he "always thought it was probably fun to be a rock star."²³² Although it started as a joke, the band brought together Backstein, Prigov, Gundlakh and Anufriev. They started organizing reading sessions at Prigov's room as a tribute to the first generation of Nonconformist artists. In 1986, these sessions were still considered to be "parasitic" in the official structure. Prigov, during one of these sessions, read his final piece of text: "Citizens! If you have flattened the grass and destroyed the nests of birds, how can you honestly look into your mother's eyes?"²³³ The piece was signed as Dmitry Alexandrovich. Later that week, Prigov tells:

One day I was walking along in the street, a man came up to me, showed me some papers and took me to the KGB. There they immediately called a car and took me to a psikushka. The year was 1986; it was under Gorbachev. I was the last mental prisoner in the Soviet Union.²³⁴

Prigov was released a week later; however, this event fumed the organization of the need of the small circle of four to organize a legitimized exhibition space.

²³² Joseph Backstein quoted in Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.132.

²³³ Prigov, D. "What the future is preparing for us", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.335.

²³⁴ Dmitri Prigov quoted in Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.125.



Figure 3.9. “Middle Russian Elevation” show at Alekseev’s apartment. Sven Gundlakh and Nikita Alekseev, 1986
Andrew Solomon, Photographs from the book “The Irony Tower,”1991.



Figure 3.10. Reading session at Prigov’s room, Dmitri Prigov and Sven Gundlakh, 1986
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

After the regulation "On the Amateur Association and the Interest Club" adopted in 1986, Backstein, Prigov, Anufriev, and Gundlakh decided to benefit from what the regulation offered to legitimize the activities of Nonconformist circle. The regulation allowed the establishment of amateur associations on common creative interests and granting each club a space from public funding. Four artists benefitted from the newly issued and established the Club of Avangardists (KLAVA) based at the regional exhibition hall in Peresvetovy Pereulok near the Avtozavodskaya metro station. After registering officially, they could hold entirely legal and authorized exhibitions. Between 1987-1988, several exhibitions were held in KLAVA with the participation of almost every artist from second and third generation of Nonconformists. The exhibition "Retrospective" became the first collective show since Autumn Show at Alekseev's apartment and held with the participation of AptArtists, Kindergarten artists, and Odessa artists. Artists of the first generation who still based in Moscow did not join the Club activities articulating the growing sense of discomfort they experienced when they saw a noisy commercial bias in the activities of their friends. Even so, KLAVA represented an essential shift in collective-exhibiting practices for Nonconformist artists.



Figure 3.11. The opening of Club Avangardists (KLAVA), Vadim Zakharov and Sven Gundlakh, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

While KLAVA was being established, Anufriev also was in close contact with Odessa artist Yuri Leiderman. Leiderman was rather close to Andrei Monastyrsky, and there he met Pavel Pepperstein, the son of Victor Pivovarov, who was considered to be the child prodigy among Nonconformist artists. Leiderman introduced Anufriev to Pepperstein, and together they formed a group they named "Medgermenevtika" under the mentorship of Monastyrsky. Pepperstein, on the other hand, was maintaining close ties with Konstantin Zvezdochetov together with other members of The Mukhomors whom he met through his father, and after the advice of Monastyrsky. Like Mukhomors, Medgermenevtika openly stated that they are students of Monastyrsky. The group recorded long conversations on the tape recorder, inspiredly wrote incomprehensible texts, and sometimes made installations. The practices of the group resembled that of MANI circle.

Around the same time in 1987, when the circle of third-generation Nonconformists was unified, Nikita Alekseev left for Paris. Alekseev states: "I left when no one left when there was no reason to leave when there were many different reasons to stay. So many friends left in the seventies, [the idea of] leaving for me was like a slow poison."²³⁵ Alekseev's departure created a void within Nonconformist circles. With Alekseev's absence, the apartment gatherings also seemed to come to an end. However, Sergei Mironenko took up the task to preserve the tradition of producing, meeting, and exhibiting in rooms. Mironenko got acquainted with a person whom Soviet people called as Mafiosi. The term was used for people with underground connections to representatives of local authorities through whom ordinary people could obtain things in short supply or urgently needed, of course in exchange for favors. Since the times of Thaw, a mutual understanding developed between Mafiosi and ordinary people. The man Mironenko acquainted with needed an official title to rent a place in the city center, meanwhile he had contacts in a local ZheK committee giving him enough power to arrange a space for artists of official title. Sergey Mironenko asked his brother, Sven Gundlakh, Kostya Zvezdochotov, Vadim Zakharov and Yuri Albert to make drawings to be signed by this man so that he could join the Union of Artists. In return, they were able to rent four workshops, two of which were handed over to the artists at a reasonable price, at a communal apartment complex on building No.49 on Furmany Lane. The building was planned

²³⁵ Alekseev, N. Ryady pamyati [Rows of Memory], Moscow: New Literary Review, 2008, p.74.

to be demolished in 1989, therefore, soon after five artists moved in, ZheK committee allowed other artists to settle in the complex including Larisa Rezun (Zvezdochetova), Sergei Anufriev, Nikolai Filatov, Yuri Leiderman, and Pavel Pepperstein. The building soon became an artist squat. The Mukhomors and Kindergarten artists came together and organized joint showings in their rooms, while Zakharov, Albert and Anufriev used their rooms for both solo exhibits and group meetings. Furmany Lane came to be known as a workshop/apartment, and the case is significant to trace the transformation of individual room gatherings to workshop gatherings as well as the formation of a new "artist town."

A new generation of artists started appearing right before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kabakov and Bulatov were holding exhibitions in Switzerland, and Alekseev was working his new workshop in France. Eventually, the Nonconformists did not communicate with emerging artists. They already had the freedom to travel abroad, so their new networks were formed with Western actors. Soon after, Sotheby's auction was held in Moscow in 1988, and the artists started facing the challenges of marketing and advertising their works, which brought a new level of transformation, however, indeed not of an underground one. While the Union collapsed, the Nonconformist tradition ended. A new era of internationality began for the artists, in which "officialdom" was identified with "recognizability."



Figure 3.12. Pavel Pepperstein, Yuri Leiderman, and Sergei Anufriev, KLAVA, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.13. Medgermenevtika at Furmany Lane, workshop of Anufriev, 1987
Pavel Pepperstein personal archive



Figure 3.14. Sergei Mironenko, Andrei Roiter, Vadim Zakharov, Pavel Pepperstein, Sergei Anufriev at Furmany Lane, workshop of Mironenkos, 1987
Pavel Pepperstein personal archive

3.1.2 Networks of Places



Figure 3.15. Locations of unofficial Nonconformist networks: 1986-1991
Figure by the Author, On General Plan of Moscow, Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

As the Soviet Union was going through reforms, Nonconformist practices of using the artist's space went through a reformation. For five years between 1986-1991, the Nonconformist artists had three major places to practice art; each had been transformed by artists' as alternative zones for producing and exhibiting Nonconformist art.

This section traces the shift in the use of artists' space when locations for alternative use diversified after the semi-freedom Glasnost brought, and artists did not limit themselves with their living space to perform art. The chance of existing, performing, and exhibiting outside of their living space brought a double-sided effect: firstly, on the potential of any space to be transformed into a place for underground to practice and exhibit art; secondly, on the potential of the living space being separated from the space of exhibiting art, while the newly emerging notions of "artist workshop" and "artist squat" adding a new layer to the changing the notion of domesticity, and collective living.

In parallel to the change in the role of the domestic space on the Nonconformist practice followed by a shift in using the room as the subject of Nonconformist art, this section will examine:

1. The reformation of the room into the artist workshop. While the newly emerging "artist workshop" found itself a separate place in Nonconformist terminology, it also brought a new architectural formation not only separating domestic space from the space of producing and exhibiting art but also separating the space of producing art from that of exhibiting it.
2. The reformation of the understanding of collectivity, collective living, and collective working. While the semi-freedom provided by Glasnost made it possible to bend the strict regulations on the distribution of housing units, it also made it possible for Nonconformist artists to get rooms in a single housing complex, which eventually was transformed into an artist squat. The artist squat emerged not only as an example of the separation of artist room and artist workshop but posed as an architectural complex hosting many workshops and rooms, which made the squat a zone of alternative use. While the room and the workshop are

separated, the artist squat brought a new definition of collective living and collectively working.

3. The reformation of the underground zone to an official zone. Following the regulation "On the Amateur Association and the Interest Club," the artists finally had the opportunity to organize regular exhibitions in the spaces which were initially designed to be exhibition spaces. However, they were in the form of "creative clubs." These creative clubs not only provide a separate place for solely holding exhibitions, separating the space of producing art from that of exhibiting it. It also brought a level of recognizability and acceptance for Nonconformist artists in the official artistic scene. Eventually, the process initiated by creative clubs led to the officialization of Nonconformist artists.

3.1.2.1 Kindergarten

"The exact date of the formation of the Kindergarten," states German Vinogradov, "on November 7, 1984, according to the entry in my logbook."²³⁶ Vinogradov, who had been living in a communal flat while studying architecture, expelled from the Moscow Land-Surveying College and started looking for a room of his own to transform into a workshop to "work and live independently." Eventually, he found a room on the second floor of a corner building at the intersection of Khokhlovskiy Lane and Kolpachniy Street. The stone chambers of the XVII century building had a semicircular plan and a significant history.

During the 1960s, the building functioned as a kindergarten of the Central Committee of the CPSU for former party functionaries. Later, in the 1980s, the building was transformed into an orphanage. The ground floor served as a kindergarten for children. However, its history went back to the 17th century. Originally designed as a residence for the clerk Emelyan Ignatievich Ukraintsev (1641-1708), a famous diplomat from the time of Peter I, in the 17th century, it was used by diplomats of the Tsarist regime until 1770. In December 1770, the Archive of the

²³⁶ Vinogradov, G. "Around the Kindergarten", in Kiesevalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.119.

College of Foreign Affairs moved to the chambers. In his memoirs from the beginning of the 19th century Philip Filippovich Vigel (1786-1856) wrote, "on the archive of the ancient Khokhlovsky Lane: Charters and copies of contracts could not have been found safer and more decent place than this ancient cabinet with iron doors, shutters and the roof."²³⁷ The diplomatic Archive became one of the most important buildings of Moscow in the 19th century. In the first half of the 19th century, the Archive was managed by the famous diplomat and historian Alexei Fedorovich Malinovsky (1762-1840). Under his leadership, the first publication of a masterpiece of ancient Russian literature - "Words on Igor's Campaign" was prepared, historical documents of Russia — letters and treaties — were regularly published. It was a very prestigious place for the noble youth, who were not particularly thirsty to put on a military uniform. The Kireevsky brothers, Turgenyev, I.A. Musin-Pushkin, and A.K. Tolstoy served there, together with many other prominent representatives of Russian culture. Pushkin himself knew these chambers well. He frequently visited the Archive for the search of documents for his prose "History of the Pugachev Riot." In 1874, the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire was transferred to Mokhovaya Street (to the Streshnevkykh-Naryshkin manor).

At the end of 1875, the chambers were transferred to the Moscow branch of the Russian Musical Society for classes of the newly created conservatory, which did not yet have its own premises. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky himself has been performed in the building and even dreamed of settling. "I terribly love your retired archive with its phenomenally thick walls, with its picturesque position and character,"²³⁸ he wrote. In 1895, a 3-story building was added to the mansion for the new factory building. In 1903, the building was nationalized, and the publishing house "Music" was created on its basis. The building transformed into a kindergarten eventually, until, in 1984, it was closed for restoration. It is around that time Vinogradov found a room on the second floor of the building, one of 11 rooms with a balcony attached. During the restoration, three of eleven families living on the second floor left, and the building manager

²³⁷ Vigel, F.F. Zapiski [Memoirs], Volume:1, Moscow: Zakharov, 2003, p.206.

²³⁸ Tchaikovsky, M. (ed.), The Life and Letters of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky, Chicago: University Press of the Pacific, 2004, p. 640.

settled Vinogradov to the room, "where Trotsky's nephew lived shortly."²³⁹ Soon after Andrei Roiter, whom Vinogradov got acquainted with through architectural institute, and Nikolai Filatov moved into the vacant rooms. After the artists moved into the rooms, they found jobs as watchmen for the Kindergarten. Since one wing of the building they have been living was mostly vacant during the time, they came up with the idea of transforming the space as an underground place for artists, of course, illegally.

This transformation of space was firstly initiated with the occupation of the building. Reformation of the artist rooms as exhibition spaces, at first, was similar to the Alekseev's example, it became a nucleus of collective exhibitions. However, while in the AptArt gallery, artists transformed the elements in space, including the domestic features within the room, Kindergarten artists transformed the space itself. Two architecture students, Vinogradov and Roiter, firstly started re-forming the space they had by cutting a passageway from one room to another on the plywood partitions added to partition the rooms during the uplotnenie. Therefore, they reversed the partitioned interiors, transforming the room back to its pre-Revolution planning scheme.



Figure 3.16. Building of “Kindergarten”, Moscow, 1970s
Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)

²³⁹ Vinogradov, G. “Around the Kindergarten”, in Kiesevalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.120.



Figure 3.17. Building of “Kindergarten”, Moscow, 1970s, with the rooms of the artists marked
Central State Archive of the City of Moscow” (“TsGA Moskvi”)



Figure 3.18. German Vinogradov’s room in Kindergarten with the passageway open to Roiter’s room, 1985
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Garage Institutional Archive



Figure 3.19. German Vinogradov in Kindergarten, communal kitchen, 1985
German Vinogradov personal archive

While expanding the area of exhibiting, there was a significant architectural interference to the communal room. The act of cutting through partitions had a practical side, of course, but it had an artistic and architectural stand as well as a symbolic one. On the one hand, cuts on the partitions were done in a very Nonconformist fashion, almost as a reinterpretation of the Soviet way of building the interior: they were random, they were not precise, and purposefully left unfinished exposing the discolored and plastered wall. On the one hand, the Kindergarten artists re-enacted the Mukhomors' installation Drainage (See: Fig. 113); however, by using the original architectural elements to cut through randomly. On the other hand, this very architectural interference to the space gave the artists a chance to explore the possibilities of producing and exhibiting art in a larger setting, whose blueprints became a playground for them to experiment: following the first expansion, they found a room in the same row and enlarged their area of exhibiting, while further expanding their passageway between rooms. Vinogradov states: "There were two adjacent rooms with fireplaces. We thought the space would be nice

to exhibit in. We used to lock the doors facing the corridor, and the neighbors did not know that we had settled there."²⁴⁰

"Kindergarten" became a unique phenomenon in the mid-1980s, and its significance goes beyond the cooperation of three artists. Benefitted from the gradual evacuation of the building, the Kindergarten group occupied almost all of the second floor. During the two years of its existence, the two-story building was immediately occupied by art workshops. Artists built permanent installations and held temporary exhibitions. The artists did not only transform the space into an exhibition hall, and a workshop; some of the artists started staying in the vacant rooms without the permission of the ZheK committee. Therefore, the first artist squat in Moscow was born. However, Vinogradov states this parasitic formation was more than an artist squat:

You cannot even call it a squat; it was ultimately a different form of living since we had been living there on the payroll of the Central Committee of the CPSU! It was pure surrealism. It was only a squat in the sense that we had to keep the doors [of exhibition rooms] closed and leave one of us as a guard in front of them.²⁴¹

Kindergarten was a bizarre form of collective living and collective exhibitions, while also was a unique case referencing to the underground tradition of parasitic gatherings, only to transform into parasitic living. An essential feature of the Kindergarten was its general artistic pluralism. All of the artists, despite the artistic and linguistic differences, were open to artistic and cultural polyphony. Kindergarten was an unprecedentedly open system. In addition to the artists who practiced and produced art, there were many other representatives of the semi-artistic world in the squat for whom Kindergarten cultivated an environment of a carnival pluralism.

²⁴⁰ Vinogradov, G. "Around the Kindergarten", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.120.

²⁴¹ Ibid, p.121.



Figure 3.20. Sergei Anufriev at an exhibition in Kindergarten, 1985
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.21. Vladimir Mironenko and Nikita Alekseev at an exhibition in Kindergarten, 1985
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.22. Exhibition in one of the two rooms with the fireplace, “Kindergarten”, Moscow, 1986
Margarita and Vivtor Tupitsyn Personal Archive

On the one hand, Kindergarten served as a bridge between the older generations of Nonconformists and the new generation. Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Yankilevsky, and Nikita Alekseev frequently visited the exhibitions. During an interview with Victor Misano in 1988 after his emigration, Ilya Kabakov states: "Kindergarten is the most important event of the 1980s."²⁴² On the other hand, Kindergarten became a bridge for contacting with international actors from Western art world who started visiting Moscow following 1985. Emissaries of the international art system, art dealers and gallery owners, figures like Phyllis Kind from New York and vice president of Deutsche Bank Klauke visited Kindergarten. For guests coming from afar, exhibitions were quickly organized, for the decade was more and more becoming a time of "recognizability" not yet in the domestic sphere, but an international one.

However, this level of international attention alarmed KGB, and the last straw was when Vladimir Vasilyev, the choreographer, came up with the idea of making a film and requested

²⁴² Viktor Misiano quoted in *Durch*, Volume:2, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1987, p.74

ZheK committee to allow the film to be shot in Kindergarten since he would like to tour of the workshops. The day after the request, the artists were fired from their jobs as watchmen and given twenty-four hours to evacuate the premises.²⁴³

3.1.1.2 Furmany Lane Artist Squat

In the early 1900s, at the intersection of Furmany Lane and Sadovaya-Chernogryazskaya Street, once was the land belonged to the Yusupov estate during 19th century, where wooden huts stood behind his front garden, the construction of "Moscow Eye Hospital" was completed, which was a design of architects A. Y. Minervin and M.N. Ghishkin. The hospital was planned to be a modern medical institution equipped with the latest technology. The Institute was later named "the Helmholtz Research Institute of Eye Diseases" in 1908.

Gradually, residential buildings started being built around Furmany Lane at the turn of the 20th century, mostly to serve as patient rooms for the hospital. The first residential buildings in Furmany Lane were sponsored by the entrepreneur F.I. Von Meck, who was responsible for the designs of many residential buildings in the Garden Ring of Moscow. One of those buildings in Furmany Lane, whose construction started in 1878 and served as the premises for Diocesan Philaret College, was connected to the Helmholtz Research Institute of Eye Diseases in 1914, just before the Revolution. The building was distinguished by large bay windows, beautiful patterns of balcony bars, and with their classic decor - pilasters and ribbon a bas-relief above them. After the Revolution, when the Institute was renamed as "Institute for the Blind," and as a result of the increasing need for residential units, the former house of Diocesan Philaret College was transformed into a residential complex and came to be known as House No:18.

²⁴³ Years later in 1991, the gallery "259 Agey Tomesh" opened in the same building, and organized a re-enactment of one of the Kindergarten exhibitions. For a broader discussion on the subject, see: Terekhova, S. "Soyuz individualistov v Khokhlovskom" [The Union of Individualists in Khokhlovsky], *Dialog iskusstvo*, 2008: 3, p.112-116.

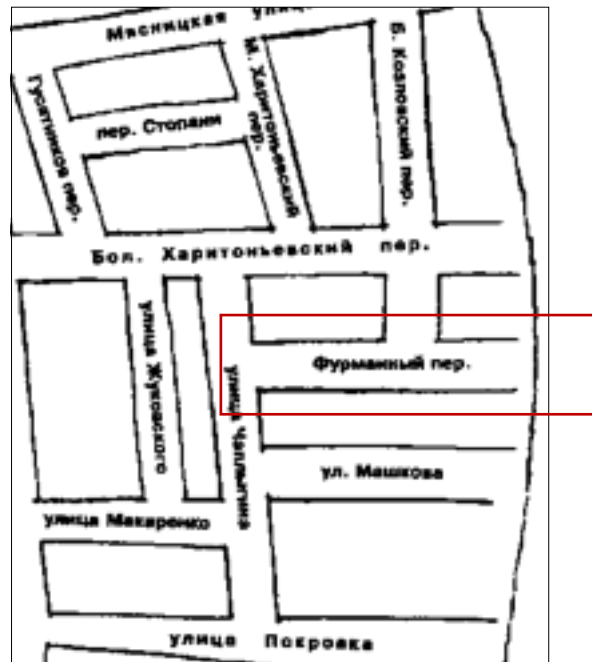


Figure 3.23. Schematic drawing of Furmany Lane, early 20th century
 Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (RGANTD)



Figure 3.24. The Helmholtz Research Institute of Eye Diseases, early 20th century: The
 intersection of Sadovaya-Chernogryazskaya Street and Furmany Lane, No: 14/19, Moscow
 Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

By the mid-1980s, however, Furmany Lane, together with the House No:18, became a deserted landscape. Dmitri Kantorov, one of the new generation of artists, practiced during the last years of Soviet Union describes the Lane as: "hosting a ridge of collapsing buildings and a soaked skeleton of a bathhouse the corner with broken glass, salt stains on broken plaster and a garland of rusty air ducts."²⁴⁴ As such was the scene of Furmanny Lane, or rather, the backsides of Von Meck's former apartment buildings. Once where the Helmholtz Institute was located, there stood half-vacated buildings waiting to and planned to be destroyed within the following years. House No:18 has been one of the buildings listed to be demolished by 1989.

In 1987, with the attempts of Sergei Mironenko, Vladimir Mironenko, Sven Gundlakh, Kostya Zvezdochotov, Vadim Zakharov and Yuri Albert got their rooms in this building, which they later transformed into workshops. Soon after, Larisa Rezun (Zvezdochetova), Sergei Anufriev, Nikolai Filatov, Yuri Leiderman, and Pavel Pepperstein were allowed to have rooms, since ZheK committee thought it was harmless to distribute the vacant rooms in a building which was already planned to be demolished. Therefore, in this building, which is art nouveau from the outside, partitioned with plywood panels on the inside, Moscow Nonconformists formed their artist squat in 1987.

Konstantin Zvezdochetov describes the Furmany Lane squat as "pure fiction," simply because, in a very underground manner, artists occupied a building which was already cleared from the map of Moscow, from the lists of housing committees, and that was in the paper non-existent.

Although Furmany squat is a fiction, the Lane itself, of course, is not. For more than a hundred years in a quiet Moscow lane, there stood this modest five-story building. ... Once Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky walked here. [...] and the artist A. Vasnetsov good-naturedly glanced from the window of a neighboring house, wherein one of the apartments he was considered a responsible tenant. Furmany remembers a lot [...] no matter where you look, our Soviet heritage seems adjacent to that of classicism.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Kantorov, D. "Rakurs-13", *Dialog Iskusstvo*, 2012: 4, p.7.

²⁴⁵ Zvezdochetov, Z. "Po-chestnomu" [To Be Fair], *Dialog Iskusstvo*, 2012: 4, p.32. The text was originally drafted by Zvezdochetov in 1987.



Figure 3.25. Furmany Lane, House No:18, view from the street, from the stills of George Kiese-walter, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiese-walter archive



Figure 3.26. The facade and entrance of House No:18, from the stills of George Kiesewalter, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.27. The Institute of the Blind, view from Sadovaya- Chernogryazskaya Street, from the stills of George Kiesewalter, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

The artists, who had been well aware of the Tsarist legacy of the building as well as its Soviet reality. The architecture of the decaying building, the falling apart partitions, and the presence of vacancy of once-communal rooms reflected the practice as well as the artistic terminology of third-generation Nonconformist artists. As Pavel Pepperstein stated:

In the stream of art products produced in the workshops of Furmanny Lane, one can feel the reflection of the household becoming not a stylistic or psychedelic, but a concrete everyday background, on which artistic production unfolds. We are talking about the very space of the rooms abandoned by the tenants where the artists work now, about the acoustic space of devastated and decaying communality, saturated with everyday realities that are losing their identities before our eyes, about sets of objects, items, things and gizmos with their crumbling functionality, with their "rotten" and blurry appearance.²⁴⁶

The Furmany squat was significant, not only because of the possibility for artists to experiment with the architectural space. It was also significant for the works produced about and together with the rooms of House No:18. The vacancy of the building gave the artists the freedom to transform the entire building into their playground. Their intervention to the building was

²⁴⁶ Pepperstein, P. "13-ya kvartira" [The 13th apartment], *Dialog Iskusstvo*, 2012: 4, p.21.

different from that of Kindergarten. Theirs was a "respond to their background in an unconventional order."²⁴⁷ While, as gradually occupying every vacant room in House No:18, artists owned up a total transformation of the building, separating rooms for living, working and exhibiting. Pepperstein likens the artists in Furmany squat to Kabakov's "garbage," "covers, furnishes and equips it the domestic space, nourishing to a point where it causes the space's permanent collapse."²⁴⁸ Therefore Furmany Squat became the installation to the artists' garbage, something to occupy and transform until its decay. The artists firstly transformed the various spaces, including rooms, backyard, communal kitchen, and even staircases as workshops, meeting places, and exhibition spaces. Therefore, they could experience separating the practices of domestic life, exhibiting, and producing art. Andrew Solomon describes the atmosphere of this newly emerging separate workshops as such:

The building we were in was falling. We had climbed up flights of stairs which stank and then entered artists' workshops, large rooms with big windows at one end. However, no-one sat in these open rooms. The room they spend time was tiny and had a small window at one hand and was so dirty.²⁴⁹

Naturally, the artists were using the bigger rooms, partitions of which fell apart and revealed the larger plan of the original blueprint inside, as workshops. Strangely, however, they were using the partitioned rooms as meeting spaces or as their rooms. This form of usage may be analyzed as a result of the sanitary norms and ideal living units imposed on them for decades. It could also be analyzed as an ironic stand to the Soviet sanitary living norms by re-appropriating/accepting them. Regardless, using the partitioned space as a presumed living space was a learned act and legacy of the Soviet culture.

²⁴⁷ Pepperstein, P. "13-ya kvartira" [The 13th apartment], *Dialog Iskusstvo*, 2012: 4, p.21.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.21.

²⁴⁹ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.7.



Figure 3.28. Artists workshops in Furmany Squat, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.29. Artists rooms in Furmany Squat, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.30. Furmany Lane, House No:18, staircase and the entrance of rooms, from the stills of George Kiewalter, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiewalter archive

The Furmany squat was, on the one hand, was a new form of transforming space, and on the other hand, was a continuation of the Nonconformist tradition of collectively producing and collective exhibitions, while curating the exhibitions themselves and for themselves. Moreover, it was a significant case to trace artists' take on the communal room, both while using it and representing it.

House No:18 was demolished in 1989. Like the apartment, which became a massive installation, and artwork for artists that they labored for over two years, its decay and destruction were made into an artwork. Just like Nakhova's documentation of dismantling of Room No.2 became an artwork, artists of Furmany transformed the destruction of the House No:18 into an artwork by documenting it. In a joint project, Furmany artists turned the dismantling of House No:18 into an artwork by composing a series of photographs. These photographs were later collated into an album.

The photographs almost made the destruction look like it was a process of dismantling of a temporary artwork. The artists started shooting frames from the interior at first. In the first frame, we see the building of one of the "Seven Sisters," a group of skyscrapers built between 1947-1953. The interior was presented to be left with nothing but structural elements as the exterior of the building was stripped off. The structural elements left acted like a picture frame bordering the image of Seven Sisters posing in the distance, while also showing the decayed and destructed interior.

The second picture captures the dismantling from outside. While a bulldozer stripping of the exterior shell of the building, we start to see the plywood partitions once installed to form the communal rooms revealing themselves. While on the right side, three jars of dirt were placed by the artists as memorabilia of Soviet "garbage" rescued from the apartment.

In the last frame, we see the exterior was mostly dismantled, revealing the structural elements of the apartment, while on the third floor, there remains of plywood partitions visible. On the remaining bricks of the exterior, the spray-painted words are visibly seen: "МО ИС": the

initials used for Moscow Central Station (Tsentralnaya Stantsiya), reference to the central status of the Furmany Squat.



Figure 3.31. Destruction of Furmany Squat, 1989
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Until the building was demolished in 1989, Furmany Lane Squat became a critical place for foreign dealers who saw Soviet art as a profitable product for the Western art market, for "collectors bewildered by Sotheby's triumphant auction,"²⁵⁰ for curators asked to put together hasty exhibitions, and for artists who would like to gather, exhibit and produce art.

By the end of 1988, about fifty artists were working in Furmany Squat. Most of them were Muscovites, but artists from Kyiv, Odesa, Kazan, Lviv, as well as from Texas and Berlin, also came there. The Furmany Squat was the embodiment of the utopia of forming an artist town, which was a Soviet Avant-Garde project.

In 1925, at a general meeting of Moscow artists, a proposal was put forward to build a cooperative artists' house in Moscow. "It all started more than modestly. In 1928, artists E. Katsman, V. Perelman, and P. Radimov decided to build the first House of Moscow artists and applied to the Council of People's Commissars on this subject."²⁵¹ Moscow City Council supported the idea. According to the memoirs of the artist T. Khvostenko:

...the people's commissars Lunacharsky and Bubnov stood up for the artists, who agreed that, despite the complete devastation in the country, this idea was astonishing. They decided to build a house of artists with workshops. Started to make sketches, choose a place. The first construction projects of the town provided for the future development plan of the Upper Maslovka, where there were ancient wretched houses, doomed to demolition.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Tupitsyn, M. *Moscow Vanguard Art: 1922-1992*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 2017, p.154.

²⁵¹ Krinsky, V & Rukhlyadev, A. Explanatory note to the construction project "Town of Artists". - 2nd Design Workshop of the Moscow Council, 1934.

²⁵² Khvostenko, T.V. "Iskusstvo: problemy, istoriya, praktika" [Art: problems, history, practice], Gosizdat, 1985, p.72.

See also: Khvostenko T.V. *Evenings at Maslovka near Dynamo, Moscow*: Olympia Press: 2003.

In the late 1920s in Verkhnyaya Maslovka, the construction of the architectural ensemble of an artists' town began on the wasteland chosen from the burned-out pavilions of the Mezhrabpom-Rus factory in the Maslovka area, which at that time was built up with wooden houses, was chosen as the place for construction. "Dwarf and dilapidated mansions of the Upper Maslovka are gradually being destroyed. Nothing will remind here of the wooded outskirts of Moscow [...] Soviet artists conquered the former philistine of Moscow streets,"²⁵³ writes journal *Tvorchestvo*. Moscow artists at the time put together an idea of a collective environment in which the living units would be merged with workshops.

The initial master plan for the development of the section between Verkhnyaya Maslovka and the Petrovsko-Razumovskaya alley was developed by a group of Constructivist architects named ASNOVA. The town included a complex of monumental buildings of different heights with travel arches and open galleries. The redesigned building project of 1934 was partially implemented. In the period from 1930 to 1954, four buildings were erected: in 1930, House 9 in Verkhnyaya Maslovka; in 1931-1932, House 2 on the Petrovsky-Razumovskaya alley; in 1935-1937, House 1 on Verkhnyaya Maslovka; and next to it, in 1954, House 3 was built.

The planning scheme of the town consisted of two volumes: U-shaped and rectangular. The U-shaped building was intended for apartments, and the rectangular one - for workshops and living quarters for single people. Initially, 90 workshops and 24 separate apartments were designed in the house. The main facade had an asymmetric composition with protruding balconies on one side and corner balconies on the other.

Quickly enough, the first house was overpopulated. Not everyone used both the workshop and the apartment. Some of the artists moved into workshops with their families, others, with their easel. Single artists were collectively housed in the apartments of their comrades. After 1954, while the political climate was changing, the project of Artist Town was suspended, and between the 1960s-1970s, the workshops in the area were transformed into residential units.

²⁵³ Anon. "Town of Artists", *Journal of Creativity*, 1934, No. 5.

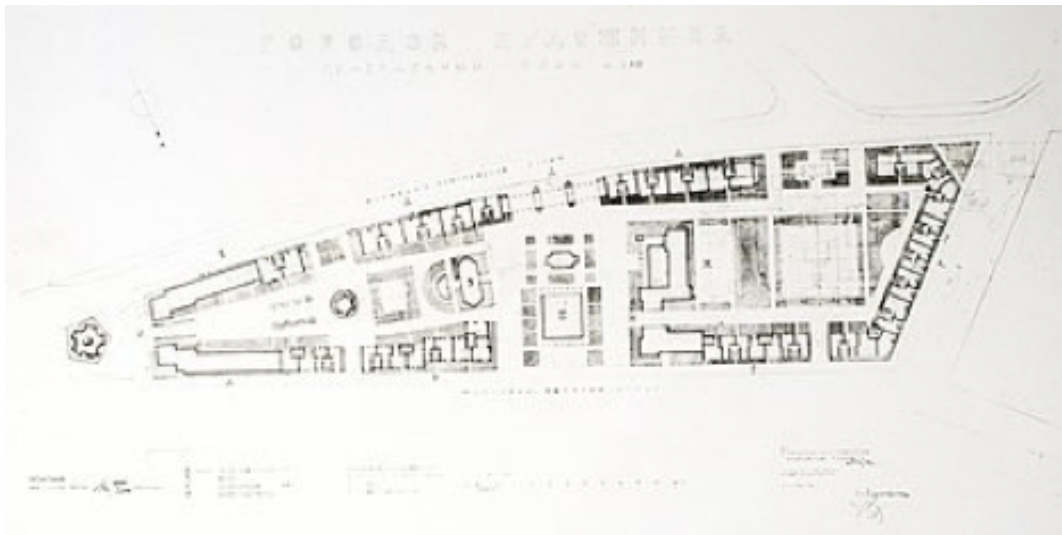


Figure 3.32. Plan and aerial view of Artist Town at Verkhnyaya Maslovka, 1934
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)



Figure 3.33. Photograph of House 9, Artist Town at Verkhnyaya Maslovka, 1960s
Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

Although Furmany squat was semi-illegally formed, it acted like a scaled version of the Artist Town of Verkhnyaya Maslovka, an embodiment of a neighborhood in a single building. Although George Kiesewalter once pointed out the resemblance of Sretensky Boulevard workshops with the Artist Town of Verkhnyaya Maslovka, based on the geographically closed placement of the Nonconformist artist workshops, the main difference between two cases was the lack of collective working between Nonconformist artists, that could only be achieved during the 1980s.

The utopia of gathering similar-minded artists under the same zone, therefore, happened for Revolutionary artists of the 1920s in Verkhnyaya Maslovka, while it could only be possible for Nonconformists in Furmany. Similar to Verkhnyaya Maslovka, Furmany artists met, worked, dined, read and lived in the same place. The difference was the artist town was explicitly designed for artist workshops, houses, diners and to embody spaces to hold any other everyday activities; while Furmany which was designed to be a residential unit was transformed into a building of workshops, domestic units, and embodying spaces to hold any

other everyday activity of the artists. However, the ideal was the same to form a utopian space for artists and artists only, and it was achieved more than 50 years later in Furmany.

By 1989, Furmany was not only an 'artist town,' but also a center for international representatives of Western art dealers. German Vinogradov mentions that since Furmany was operating post-Sotheby's Moscow, it was "very strongly impregnated with commerce," and unlike Kindergarten, "most of the exhibitions were held in Furmany were organized to export the works abroad." The recognizability of the Nonconformist artists in the Western eye preceded their recognizability in the eyes of official artistic organizations. Even in the late 1970s, Western bureaucrats were smuggling Nonconformist artworks in their suitcases. However, during the days following Sotheby's auction, the dealing of Nonconformist artworks was not only living its heydays, but the agreements and sales were done legitimately under State approval as a result of the new decade of commerce and freedom introduced by Perestroika.

While their international recognizability was booming, to practice legitimated art under an official umbrella, in a State-sanctioned space. The next section discusses Nonconformists' road to officialdom while tracing their experimentation of exhibiting in the official gallery spaces.

3.1.2.2 Club Avant-Garde (KLAVA)

The influence of Gorbachev's reforms on the Soviet art world and its institutions were very significant and affected the practices of Nonconformist artists. The possibility of exhibiting outside of the rooms was the first change in their practice. Moreover, the transformation of social and political life under Gorbachev had an undeniable effect on the course of Nonconformist artistic life, which became characterized by as Jamey Gambrell calls as "urgent optimism" about the possibility of restructuring and renovation of existing art institutions.²⁵⁴

The first attempt of Nonconformist artists going official during Perestroika happened after the statute "On amateur associations" introduced in 1986. The regulation "On the Amateur

²⁵⁴ Gambrell, J. Notes on the Underground, in *Art in America*, November, 1988, p.25.

Association and the Interest Club" was issued and published on May 13, 1986, in *Kulturno-prosvetotelskaia rabota*. The regulation allowed the establishment of interest clubs "based on voluntary involvement, common creative interests, and individual membership for the satisfaction of spiritual needs and interests of people."²⁵⁵

Following the regulation, a variety of such clubs mushroomed, ranging from a club of chess players to a club of environmental activists. Nonconformist artists also used this opportunity to officially register their own club to practice 'legitimate art' and also to use the opportunity for allowance of a place which the regulation guaranteed under State sponsorship. Joseph Backstein, Dmitri Prigov, Sven Gundlak, and Sergei Anufriev formed an amateur association themselves. Under their initiative, the first Nonconformist official organization was established under the name the Club of AvanGardists [Klava] in 1987.

The regulation, in actuality, was a re-appropriation of the Revolutionary tradition of Kruzhok. The practice of forming a Kruzhok [a circle], a union of like-minded people, had been a central phenomenon of Russian intellectual life from the late eighteenth century well into Soviet history.²⁵⁶ Since the early days of the Soviet Union, Kruzhki was a primary part of children's education. The clubs for children were not only a form of leisure but also helped them decide on the choice of a profession. There were Kruzhki mainly on math, art, biology, and chess so that those who dreamed of practicing specific interests would get to spend time with other like-minded children.

The Nonconformist circle itself had been an unofficial Kruzhok, and their private clubs were their domestic spaces, and Kruzhki gatherings had been a significant form of existence for

²⁵⁵ Regulation on amateur association, interest club of 13.05.1986, in *Kulturno-prosvetotel'skaia rabota* [Cultural and educational work], no. 5 (1986), 26-28.

²⁵⁶ For more on the importance of kruzhok see, for example: Walker, B. Maximilian Voloshin and the Russian Literary Circle: Culture and Survival in Revolutionary Times, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004, p.5; and Gough, M. The artist as producer: Russian constructivism in revolution, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004, p.18-25.

their practice of alternative art.²⁵⁷ However, as a result of the regulation Nonconformist Kruzhki was provided an official title, and it was the beginning of the dissemination of alternative art in the Soviet Union while providing a semi-private and semi-public arena for artists' recognizability.

The statute granted certain rights to the association, including some financial support from the State, and access to State exhibition venues. While the previous habitat of alternative art was artists' apartments and rooms between 1975-1985, after KLAVA, Nonconformist art found its way to the local exhibition halls. For KLAVA, the State gave the ground floor of a building local on the Proletarsky district in Peresvetov Lane in the southeast of Moscow, No:4k1. Later, in 1987, the building was named as Galery "Peresvetov Pereulok,"²⁵⁸ and had been the base of KLAVA between 1987-1988.

When KLAVA was established, the group of artists involved quickly developed an organization scheme for the administration of their new institution. Joseph Backstein was selected as executive director and curator while Dmitri Prigov, Sergey Anufriev, Sven Gundlakh, and until his departure Nikita Alekseev actively participated in the organization activities. The opening and the first exhibition of KLAVA was on November 14, 1987. From the posters of the exhibition to curating and documenting were done by Nonconformist artists. Vadim Zakharov prepared hand-drawn invitations for the opening event, Backstein curated the space, Gundlakh, Anufriev, and Zakharov designed the Club signboard and even hung it on the entrance of the gallery. (Figure.140)

²⁵⁷ Jackson, M.T. *The Experimental Group: Ilya Kabakov, Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet Avant-Gardes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010, p.2.

²⁵⁸ The Peresvetov Pereulok Gallery of the Moscow Exhibition Halls Association is located near Avtozavodskaya metro station. At the end of the 80s and through 1990s, after KLAVA ceased to exist, the gallery continued hosting underground actions, conceptual exhibitions, performances and impromptu shows mostly of the group of artists went by the name "Order of Courtyard Mannerists". Over the years, the Peresvetov Pereulok gallery has become a platform for artists and still actively operates today.



Figure 3.34. The entrance of Galery “Peresvetov Pereulok”, poster for Mukhomors exhibition,1999
Galery “Peresvetov Pereulok” archive

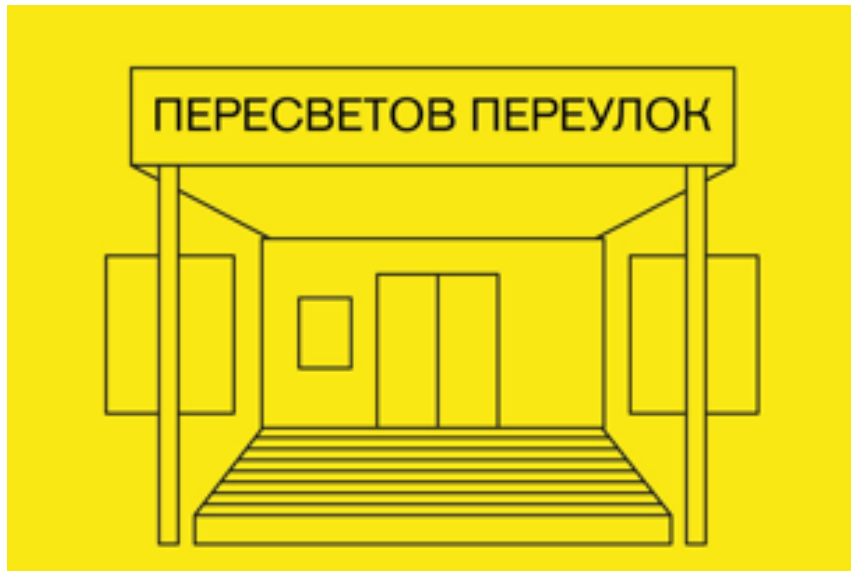


Figure 3.35. The entrance of Gallery “Peresvetov Pereulok”, drawing Gallery “Peresvetov Pereulok”archive

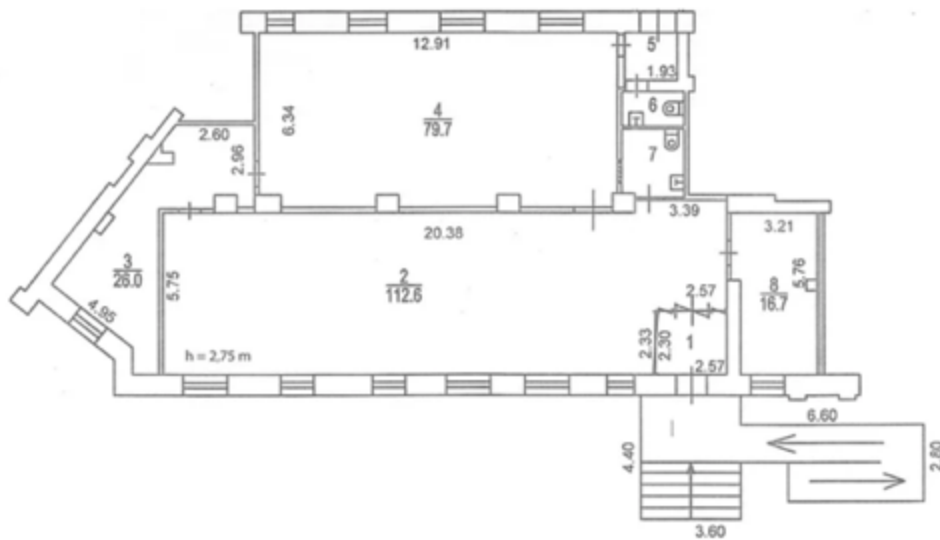


Figure 3.36. The plan of Gallery “Peresvetov Pereulok” Gallery “Peresvetov Pereulok”archive



Figure 3.37. Poster for the opening exhibition of KLAVA, by Vadim Zakharov
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Therefore, Although KLAVA seemed more professional in its organization scheme, the club still preserved its amateur and underground soul. The events in KLAVA, although it was open to the public spectatorship, the primary intent was to bring Nonconformists from different generations together. The works of artists from the second generation of Nonconformists, including George Kiesewalter, Igor Makarevich, Elena Elagina, Andrei Monastyrsky, Irina Nakhova, and Lev Rubinstein were curated together with the works of third-generation Nonconformists including Anufriev, Pepperstein, Leiderman, and Rezun. Russian art critic Yevgeny Barabanov stated: "Here [in KLAVA], conceptualists of different generations were

composed objects, texts, installations together. They showed the spirit of collectivism and condensed co-textuality."²⁵⁹



Figure 3.38. Exhibition view, KLAVA, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

²⁵⁹ Barabanov, Y. "Before the end of the century", Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovetskimi iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.74.



Figure 3.39. Exhibition view, KLAVA, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Despite moving from artists' studios to public venues, their exhibitions maintained the atmosphere of a sect, or of an exclusive club which did not welcome external interaction, although it did allow external spectatorship from the viewers. While preserving the collective spirit of the underground, KLAVA was also respecting the Nonconformist tradition of alternative exhibitions, mainly exhibiting in alternative spaces. Although, KLAVA had a decent exhibition hall, and the Nonconformists finally had a gallery space of their own, one significant aspect in the case of KLAVA was their continuing attempts to organize exhibitions outside of Galery "Peresvetov Pereulok."

The choice of location for exhibitions illustrates the desire of the Moscow Nonconformist circle to limit their audience, going back to the idea of a closed, semi-private display, while they preserve the tradition of experimenting with non-traditional exhibition spaces. As an example of the semi-private displays, in 1987, they staged an action-exhibition for the dwellers of the nether world, during which the selected works were buried underground. Joseph Backstein states: "No public was invited to the event, and the intended audience was humorously defined as those living in hell, under the surface of the earth."²⁶⁰ As an example of experimenting with alternative spaces, two of the phenomenal exhibitions organized by Club Avangardists could be named: the exhibition at Sandunovsky baths and Butyrskaya prison.

In 1988, Joseph Backstein and Konstantin Zvezdochetov came up with the idea to hold an exhibition in an unusual, unpredictable place. Backstein states: "It was a reaction to the new situation of perestroika when it became possible to make exhibitions, but there were no premises, no contacts with museums or large exhibition halls for we can do them."²⁶¹ Therefore, they wanted to hold the exhibition in the Men's section of the Sandunovsky Baths.

²⁶⁰ Backstein, J. *Vnutri kartiny: Stat'i i dialogi o sovremennom iskusstve* [Inside the picture: Articles and dialogues about contemporary art], Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.53.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.62.

Sandunovsky Baths are one of the oldest baths of Moscow and have been a popular meeting point for Muscovites for over 200 years. A popular actor coming from a noble Georgian heritage commissioned the building. Sila Nikolaevich Sandunov owned a plot of land in the area of the Neglinnaya River on which the Bath was built on in 1808. The Bath, as well as the street crossing the Bath got their name from Sila Nikolaevich Sandunov himself. The building has three floors and an eclectic facade with elements of Baroque, Rococo, Renaissance, and Gothic, while interiors had two Pompeii-style pools under a glass dome framed with columns and Art Nouveau decorations.

Exhibition in the Men's section of Sandunovsky baths was organized with the participation of Sven Gundlakh, Konstantin Zvezdochotov, Vladimir Mironenko, Sergey Mironenko, and Dmitry Prigov on January 12, 1988. Backstein and Zvezdochotov asked the director of the baths for permission to hold an exhibition, and to their surprise, they got a positive response very quickly. Backstein states: "It was such a crazy time when any absurd ideas were possible. The director of the Bath did not even understand the degree of extravagance; he was simply flattered that we decided to hold an exhibition there."²⁶² Another layer added to the whole absurdity of the situation was the general atmosphere inside during the exhibition. Although the opening of the exhibition was a theatrical performance for Nonconformist artists, it was a typical day for the visitors. While the artists were hanging and instilling works on every available surface and space of the luxurious, albeit heavily dilapidated interior of the Art Nouveau style baths around one of the pools, they were sinking in the water on floor while naked men who also happened to be their spectators were showering, swimming and passing by with their towels. Backstein states that it was an actual "Russian exhibition: a combination of absurdity and ominous aestheticism."²⁶³

²⁶² Backstein, J. *Vnutri kartiny: Stat'i i dialogi o sovremennom iskusstve* [Inside the picture: Articles and dialogues about contemporary art], Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.62.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, p.63.



Figure 3.40. Sandunovsky Baths ad and interior view, early 1900s
Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)



Figure 3.41. The exhibition view, KLAVA exhibition in Sandunovsky Baths, 1988
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.42. The exhibition view, KLAVA exhibition in Sandunovsky Baths, 1988
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

The exhibition had references to some of the critical aspects of Nonconformist tradition. Firstly, it was assumed that the work hung there would be damaged by steam, which actually happened. The deformation of the works was a part of the performance of the artists. Just like Nakhova dismantled her room, and Furmany artists documented the destruction of their squat,

KLAVA artists composed their work both as temporal, disposable, and transient. The transiency of Nonconformist work was its most significant reference to the communal room and communal space that was specifically designed not to last, to transform, and in Soviet case mostly destroyed and demolished.

Secondly, Nonconformist exhibitions had always been a kind of adaptation to the proposed conditions. The Nonconformist practice was the art of acting "in place." While the artists of the previous generation created site-specific works for their rooms, they created a legacy for the upcoming generation to have the ability to transform a random circumstance into an aesthetic regularity. The Nonconformist artists of Perestroika, benefitting from the increasing variety of spaces to exhibit, continued the tradition of producing site-specific works. However, this time instead of relying on one typology to exhibit in, they built and transformed the spaces themselves. The case of Sandunovsky, in this sense, resembles the transformed space of Kindergarten. Both cases included the artists' attempt to experimenting in an 'alien' territory out of their rooms, workshops, and even out of the newly achieved club space. Although they physically transformed the baths, their intervention to the space was undoubtedly significant.

KLAVA was both a parody of the creative unions of the Soviet era, and a simulation art project that imitated either a military organization, a rock band, or a sports team. Even the title stressed the irony in its establishment. As Sergei Mironenko states: "The title 'Club of the avant-gardists' stressed the ironic attitude towards an outdated method. No one seriously considered themselves avant-garde, since the word was utterly indecent in everyday life, it was almost a curse."²⁶⁴

By the end of their short existence, KLAVA organized exhibitions transferring the Nonconformist milieu from rooms and workshops, and Kindergartens to the streets, to baths,

²⁶⁴ Mironenko, S. "Not currently", in Kiesevalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.276.

prisons, and zoos. While they have been experimenting with the boundaries of Nonconformist art, the activities of KLAVA also brought a new level of interaction, one with the society and ordinary individuals, and another with the international audience as alternative art became more easily accessible and open to wider audiences outside the profession.

The official recognizability of Nonconformist artists was fueled with the local public interest, rather than the international one. The growing exposure of Nonconformist artists after KLAVA led many people in the official artistic scene to believe that the experimental art and once-radical extreme practices could be included in official galleries and fully incorporated in the Soviet cultural scene. KLAVA acted as a bridge initiating the contact with the official art scene during Perestroika. Although it was not the first attempt to go official for Nonconformist neither underground culture in general, the year 1987 marked a turning point of interaction and networking with the official artistic organs for Nonconformist artists. The next section will trace the formation of two official exhibition spaces attempting to embody the Nonconformist artistic practices, together with the reformation of Nonconformist art from underground to the official.

3.1.3 Cross-pathing with Official Art Scene: Semi-Officialdom of Moscow

Underground

In 1987, three artists from the Moscow Union of Artists: Leonid Bazhanov, Andrei Eforeev, and Victor Misiano, who got acquainted with the Nonconformist milieu over the years, came up with the idea to open the first official Nonconformist exhibition hall. The exhibition hall was named "Hermitage" as a reference to the infamous Russian museum on the one hand, and three generations of Nonconformist legacy on the other. Hermitage was opened in 1987, only four years before the dissolution of the Soviet Union and changed the entire dynamic of the once underground artistic scene. The year 1987 marks the time Nonconformist art was recognized as an official artistic genre and not a club of enthusiasts and, more importantly, not as parasites to the art scene. Although the Nonconformist art practice became official once and for all in 1987, through the years between 1960s-a980s, the artists of the previous generations attempted

to interact, communicate and even collaborate with official channels in order to gain the official status for conceptual art. Before discussing the case of Hermitage, the study traces the attempts of artists to go official.

3.1.3.1 First Attempts of State-Sanctioned Practices of the Underground Artists

The foundations of the Soviet official art museum system were laid in 1932 after the decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, "On the restructuring of literary and artistic organizations." After the decree was issued, all museums and galleries in the Soviet Union started operating under the Union of Artists. However, historically, the artistic organization scheme of the Soviet Union can be traced back to the 19th century.

The Moscow Association of Artists was formed at the end of the 19th century and, in 1896, approved its charter. It mainly includes graduates of the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture subsequently also became the core of the wider society created in 1903, "The Union of Russian Artists." Many artists simultaneously joined the Union of Russian Artists and the Moscow Association of Artists. Regular exhibitions of the partnership of Moscow artists lasted until 1924. In 1922, the Association of Artists of Revolutionary Russia (AHR) was created, while other smaller associations were also operating, such as the Revolutionary Association of Proletarian Artists (RAP), the Society of Easel Artists (OSE), IZOBRIKADA, "Four Arts," the Society of Moscow Artists (OMK) and others.²⁶⁵ The first congress of Soviet artists convened in Moscow in 1928 was the first attempt to unify the artist associations. The speeches made at the congress confirmed the desire of the country's artists to unite.

By the decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of April 23, 1932 "On the restructuring of literary and artistic organizations," all creative associations were disbanded in the USSR, and unions of Soviet artists were formed at different times in the Union and Autonomous Republics, Territories, Regions, and Cities. On June 25,

²⁶⁵ See: Severyukhin D. Y., Leykind O. L. (eds.) *Zolotoy vek khudozhestvennykh obyedineniy v Rossii i SSSR (1820–1932)* [Golden age of art associations in Russia and the USSR (1820–1932).] Saint Petersburg: NLO, 1992.

1932, the Moscow Regional Union of Soviet Artists was created, which in 1938 was renamed the Moscow Union of Soviet Artists (MOSKh). Under MOSKh, numerous art groups that existed before were united under a single creative union that was operating under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat of the RSFSR.²⁶⁶ In 1933, the journal "Art," and a year later, "Creativity," was established as the organs of the Moscow Union of Artists, on whose pages the Union's artistic and organizational life was widely covered, art-critical analysis of exhibitions and discussion articles on the development of Soviet art were published. In 1934, "Socialist Realism" was officially approved as the official genre of the Soviet Union at the First Congress of Soviet writers.



Figure 3.43. "For socialist realism." Special issue for the First Congress of the USSR Academy of Arts, December 8, 1947
Russian State Archive of Literature and Art (RGALI)

²⁶⁶ Manin V.S. "Iskusstvo v rezervatsii" [Art of the Reservation], Severyukhin D. Y., Leykind O. L. (eds.) Zolotoy vek khudozhestvennykh obyedineniy v Rossii i SSSR (1820–1932) [Golden age of art associations in Russia and the USSR (1820–1932).] Saint Petersburg: NLO, 1992, p.177.

Changes in the practices of MOKSh began following the decree at the very beginning of 1936 when in January, the All-Union Committee for the Arts was established. Unlike the previous leadership, the new Committee took control of fine art in its own right, and the foundations of the Soviet art museum system were laid. In the years following 1936, the museum became the central organ of the Union of Artists, and therefore MOKSh, both to spread the State ideology and to impose the aesthetics of Socialist Realism. On the one hand, the exhibitions aimed to "educate" the general public on art, more specifically Soviet art. A significant role in the development of Socialist Realism as a style was played by the large thematic exhibitions of the second half of the 1930s. Igor Golomshtok claims that thematic exhibitions had become the main form through which any totalitarian regime brought to the masses the art that he supported.²⁶⁷ The leading indicator of the birth and flourishing of the art of Socialist Realism has been the newly established exhibition process. One of the first acts of Union of Artists following the establishment of the All-Union Committee for the Arts was to revise the exhibiting structure in main galleries, to hold thematic exhibitions advertising the new official style in arts, while forming a control mechanism over what the spectators were seeing, and where they saw it; and who was producing the art spectators were seeing.

On the other hand, the museum system put a set of parameters for artists to prove themselves and their works worthy, to be able to reach the ultimate place in the Soviet art world, that is, exhibiting in a museum. The process deification and ideologization of the museum itself were initiated with the design and construction of VDNKh.

VDNKh, short for Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy, was designed to be a unique architectural ensemble, which hosted large-scale pavilions built in the Stalinist Empire style where the former republics of the USSR were represented. VDNKh's plan was a reference to a typical Russian village on the one hand with its organic blueprints, and the ideal Soviet garden city on the other, with a pear alley framed by monumental buildings leading to gardens. The project for the design of the complex was initiated in 1935. The primary intention was building a showcase of economic, architectural, and artistic achievements of the Union. The land was a 'collectivized territory' of once an agricultural land belonged to 'kulak's (the

²⁶⁷ Golomshtok, I.N. *Totalitarnoye iskusstvo* [Totalitarian Art], Moscow: Galart, 1994, p.122.

bourgeois farmers). It was located on the outskirts of Moscow in Ostankinsky District, a marshland with ponds, a flower nursery, and vegetable gardens. The chief architect of the project was Oltarzhevsky. The opening was planned for the twentieth anniversary of the Revolution in 1937 but could only be completed in 1939. The exhibition complex was divided into sections as republican pavilions, the Soviet village, a livestock town, exhibition of crops and gardens, and a semi-close recreational area. It was an exceptional town with central avenues and side streets. After its construction, VDNKh became one of the main arteries of Moscow, and a dream house for artists of MOSKh as the honor of exhibiting in the complex was the highest accomplishment and required a complex and intricate selection process meant to go through the approval of the State patronage.

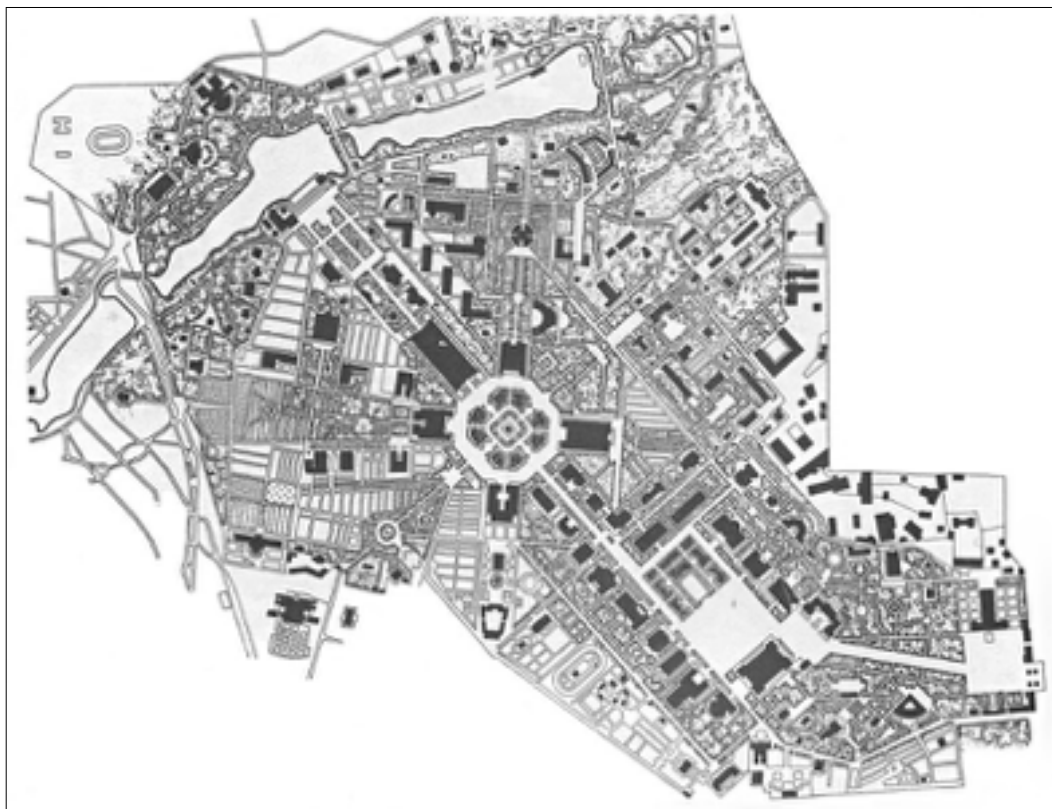


Figure 3.44. General Plan of VDNKh, 1939
Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (RGANTD)

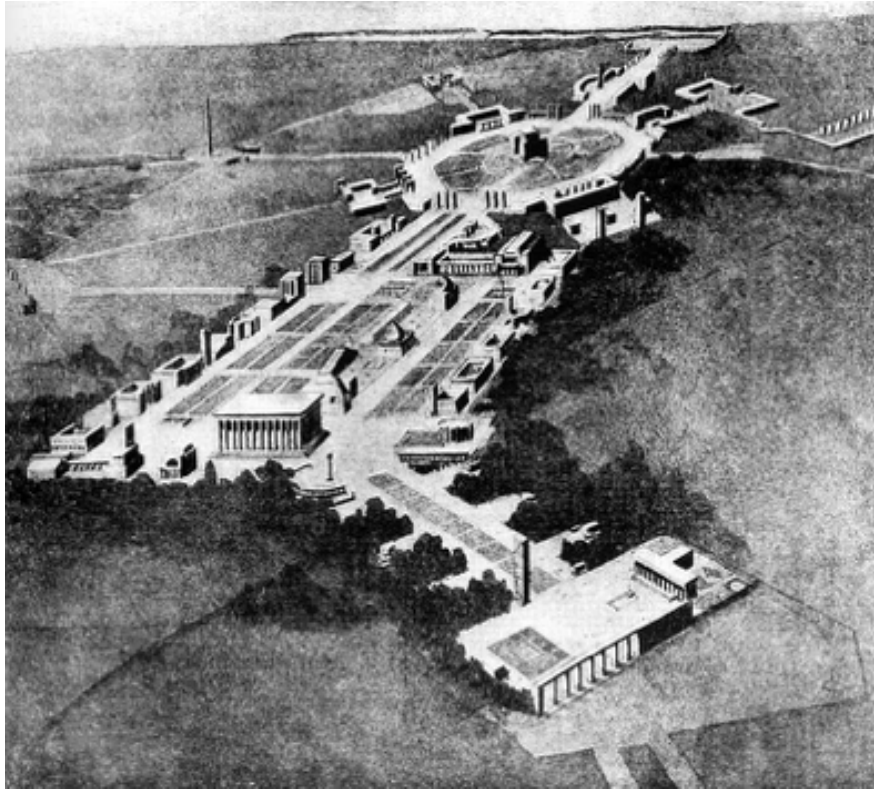


Figure 3.45. Aerial View of VDNKh, 1939

Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

The officialization of the museum and lending of the design, content, and curatorial decisions of the exhibition to the central administration of Union of Artists brought a new term to the art scene, which is the State patronage. Soviet official artists produced and exhibited for the State. Moreover, even when a particular artist is chosen to display in a museum, all aspects of that artist's work from the production process to final art displays were subjected to MOSKh's control and exercised through the numerous sub-institutions, specially appointed juries and committees. The adopted doctrine of Socialist Realism implied not only an art style, but also a set of "institutional structures and practices of the Soviet art world, including the system of State patronage, practices of hanging committees, and art criticism."²⁶⁸ Museums were to

²⁶⁸ Reid, S.E. "Socialist Realism in the Stalinist Terror: The Industry of Socialist Art Exhibition, 1935-41," in *The Russian Review*, no. 60, 2002, p.153-184.

collect and display works according to Marxist-Leninist ideals and educate the masses by presenting art and social history as the history of class struggle.²⁶⁹ Throughout the 1930s, the effective way of building and extending museum collections was by direct acquisitions from exhibitions. Their development, execution, and subsequent distribution of artworks among the museums were controlled by two major institutions: The Union of Artists and its regional branches including MOSKh, and the Ministry of Culture under which The Union of Artists operated.²⁷⁰ Through specially created sub-divisions, they commissioned artists to produce new works or acquired already existing pieces.²⁷¹ The selection of the art objects and artists was made by specially selected *vystavkoms* [exhibition committees]. These committees were appointed for each particular show and consisted of the artist-members of the Union. In the case of the more essential exhibitions, they consisted of the artist-representatives of the Ministry.²⁷² It was the task of the *vystavkom* to filter out all the art which was considered not good enough or, more importantly, was not following the principles of socialist education.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ Grinevich, K.E. The First All-Russian Congress of Museum Workers, on The New Ways of the Soviet Museum, in *Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi svyazi s zagranitsej* [All-Union association of cultural connection with foreign countries], vol.2:4, 1931, p.81; and Petrov, F.N. The New Ways of the Soviet Museum, in *Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi svyazi s zagranitsej* [All-Union association of cultural connection with foreign countries], vol.2:10-12, 1931, p.129.

²⁷⁰ Kornetchuk, E. The politics of Soviet Art, Ph.D. dissertation, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, 1982, p.54.
For more information on the institutional structure of Soviet art see, for example, on the Stalin period: Guldberg, J. "Artists Well Organised: The Organisational Structure of the Soviet Art Scene from the Liquidation of Artistic Organisations (1932) to the First Congress of Soviet Artists," in *Slavica Othiniensia*, no. 8, 1986; Valkenier, E. *Russian realist art: The state and society: The Peredvizhniki and their tradition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

²⁷¹ The financial organ of the Artists' Union was the Art Fund, established in 1940. In 1959 the Ministry of Culture established the Directorate of the art funds and heritage projects, which in 1977 was renamed into *Rosizopropaganda* [Russian Visual propaganda]. The organisation supervised the activities of the Art Funds and organised exhibitions of Soviet art in the USSR and abroad.

²⁷² Lazarev, M. "The vehicle of All-Union exhibition. Interview by Gleb Napreenko," in OS Colta. *Archeology of Soviet Art with Gleb Napreenko* (2011), available at [<http://os.colta.ru/art/projects/30795/details/31510/?expand=yes>].

²⁷³ *Vystavkoms* exercised the important role of selecting the works for the exhibitions, however, the contents of most of the shows, especially the large-scale ones were also controlled by other committees, such as city committees or inspectors from the Ministry.

The next stage in the artistic life of Moscow began after the death of Stalin in 1953. The period of Thaw for the official art scene was the period of change and semi-openness which was initiated with the reforms made in the organizational scheme of the Ministry of Culture of the USSR "to hold a more diverse view on arts."²⁷⁴ The reformation of the Ministry of Culture was a result of the increasing discomfort among the artists of MOSKh on the one unifying style in art, and one unifying association to gather under. Seeking relative freedom under the changing political climate of the Soviet Union, the first alternative voices in MOSKh belonged to the representatives of the USSR Academy of Arts. The claim of the academics was the elimination of any other styles than Socialist Realism caused isolation in culture and aesthetics. For the academics, by disregarding and repressing regional and individual stylistic differences among the artists, the Soviet culture has grown to be inwards and ignorant to the international art scene, or any alternative, creative style that could be emerged.²⁷⁵ As a result, the period of Thaw for MOSKh was a period of aggravating confrontation between the USSR Academy of Arts and the Secretariat of the Organizing Committee of Soviet and Moscow Union of Artists.

As a result of the duality between Academy and Ministry, the Academy became more dominant, and organizing committee of MOSKh began to organize trips from and to abroad to widen the perspective of Soviet artists on international art. Following the trend, in 1954, Youth Exhibitions began to introduce 'alternative voices' to the official art scene. Although various sources mark the series of the All-Union Art Exhibitions between 1955 and 1957 as the formation of underground art, the Youth Exhibitions were still lacking the participation of leading underground figures, or a coherent underground circle which was absent from the Moscow Underground Scene until after 1962. Two initial incidents were fueling the formation of underground art, and they both were related to the attempts of reformation of MOSKh into a more open-minded organization.

²⁷⁴ Reid, S.E. "Socialist Realism in the Stalinist Terror: The Industry of Socialism Art Exhibition, 1935-41," in *The Russian Review*, no. 60, 2002, p.153-184.

²⁷⁵ German M.Y., "Chetyre goda posle pobedy" [Four years after the victory], in *Voprosy iskusstvovznaniya*, 1995:1, p.186-212.



Figure 3.46. Board of the Moscow Union of Artists, 1954
Archive of the MOSKh library

The first is the foundation of Eli Belyutin's Studio for Advanced Studies at the City Committee of Artists of Books, Graphics, and Posters in 1958. Belyutin became a significant influence among the young artists of firstly the Studio School he had been teaching. Gradually, his then-revolutionary ideas of breaking through "the limits of Socialist Realism and even the boundaries of Soviet Union to search for diverse methods, principles and multiple aesthetic theories in art"²⁷⁶ spread among the young Moscow artists and Belyutin started being referred to as "the patriarch of the first underground school."²⁷⁷ The general aura of the MOSKh during the second half of the 1950s was leaning towards the necessity of interaction. The art of the Soviets could only be excelled through interactions of artists and of varying approaches towards art, not only in the local context but in the international context, too. USSR's participation in the World Exhibition "EXPO-1958" in Brussels fueled the artists' growing demand for international interaction. As a result, with the initiation of MOSKh, the American

²⁷⁶ Boris Zhutovsky, student of the first studio quoted in "Kursy povysheniya kvalifikatsii pri Gorkome khudozhnikov knigi, grafiki i plakata", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *A time of hope, a time of illusion. Problems of the history of Soviet unofficial art. 1950-1960 [Vremya nadezhd, vremya illyuziy. Problemy istorii sovetskogo neofitsial'nogo iskusstva. 1950–1960 gody]*, Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye: 2018, p.12.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p.15.

National Exhibition was organized in 1959 in Sokoniki Park, Moscow. The "free-spirit" of Academy nourished in MOSKh and dominated the traditionalist artist of the Ministry, especially after the American Exhibition. The triumph of this new level of alternative ideas was the exhibition held in the Manege Hall in 1962, which was the first attempt of newly flourishing Moscow underground art circle to be involved in the official art scene.



Figure 3.47. Belyutin's studio, 1958
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional Archive



Figure 3.48. USSR Pavillion at the "EXPO-1958" in Brussels, 1958
Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

The first attempt on officiality happened during the Manege Exhibition in 1962. The road paved for the Manege exhibition was a result of two recent developments of the Soviet Union under Thaw.

1. The process of political de-Stalinization that began after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU gave a moral impetus to the liberalization of society, and at the same time intensified the struggle for power and influence between the heirs of Stalin and the young generation in all layers of Soviet society especially in official art structure. Local officials were somewhat confused by new trends and did not know how to react to previously unthinkable publications of books and articles, to exhibitions of modern Western art. Yankilevsky summarizes the euro of the Thaw as: "What one hand forbade, the other allowed."²⁷⁸

2. The official art was growing to be more divided between the USSR Ministry of Culture and the Academy of Arts. Especially for the young members of the Union of Artists following the footsteps of Belyutin. This young generation, under the influence of the changing moral climate, began to look for ways to depict the "truth of life," which later became known as the "harsh style." Moreover, a generation of conceptualists was also spreading outside of their studios. They were hoping to perform an independent practice recognized but not controlled by authorities.

In an atmosphere of uncertainty about maintaining their dominant position, traditionalist was looking for a way to discredit forces that threatened their position. Meanwhile, the perfect case introduced itself. Ministry of Culture came up with the idea of organizing an event celebrating the upcoming 30th anniversary of MOSKh. An exhibition was decided to be held at the newly renovated central exhibition hall of Manege, and the Ministry of Culture gave the authority to Belyutin to organize and curate the exhibition. Later, the Manege exhibition was referred by Yankilevsky as: "The event that they [traditionalist artists] saw almost like the last bastion to fight the battle with their competitors [academy on the leadership of Belyutin]."²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Yankilevsky, V. *A Moment for Eternity*, New York: Palace Editions, 2007, p.21.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.21.

The tension reached its peak point before Manege when a semi-official exhibition of Belyutin Studio, which took place in the second half of November 1962 in the Teachers' House on Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya Street. To give this exhibition more weight and the character of an art event, Belyutin invited four artists who were not his students, and more importantly, some of which are not officially recognized, to participate in it. He asked Vladimir Yankilevsky, which he got acquainted with at Studio School, to introduce him to Ernst Neizvestny. Neizvestny later introduced Ulo Sooster to Belyutin, and three artists decided to participate in Belyutin's exhibition. By that time, in 1962, Studio School, specifically for Belyutin's studio, was given an exhibition hall on Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya on Taganka Street. The exhibition hall had 12 x 12 x 6 m. The exhibition took place for three days and became a sensation. The exhibition was visited by a variety of the Soviet intelligentsia: composers, writers, filmmakers, and scientists.

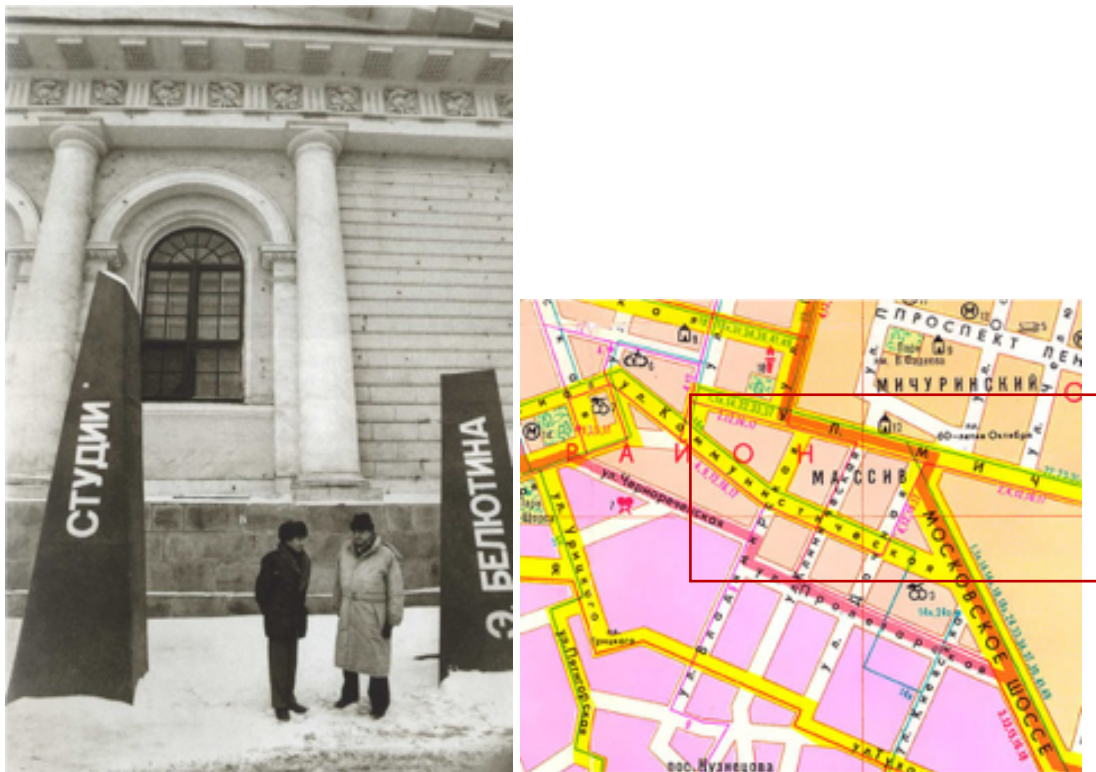


Figure 3.49. Belyutin Studio, Teachers' House on Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya Street
Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

The excitement around the exhibition of "amateur creativity," and the enormous attention of foreign journalists, was a complete surprise to the authorities, but the exhibition ended safely. Following the exhibition, during November 1962, Neizvestny, Sooster, and Yankilevsky were invited to make an exhibition in the lobby of the Yunost Hotel. Invitation cards were printed and sent out, and the works were hung; however, when the first guests began to arrive, people from the Komsomol city committee appeared at the exhibition. The committee members claimed that the content of the exhibition was debatable and too amateurish for artists who worked under MOSKh. Therefore, the exhibition was "temporarily closed" until an official meeting on the situation would be held. The next day, the entire delegation of Komsomol arrived, which, "after long and meaningless conversations," suddenly offered the artists a place where they "could organize a more meaningful exhibition."²⁸⁰

They immediately gave us a truck with loaders, loaded our artworks, and took us to our amazement [...] to the Manege, where we saw Beliutin with his students hanging their work in the next room for the exhibition '30 Years of MOSKh'. The day was November 30th.²⁸¹

On December 1, 1962, the opening of the exhibition "30 years of MOSKh" took place at Manege Exhibition Hall. However, few were prepared for the fact that the event would become a historical turning point for the artistic process in the country.

The Manege was built by order of Alexander I for the fifth anniversary of the victory in the Patriotic War of 1812. The original name of the building was called the Exercirgauz ("House for Exercise"), and it was planned to hold workshops and exhibitions together. The architect Augustin Betancourt was tasked with developing the design of the building, where an entire regiment could maneuver. Already eight months after construction started, on November 30, 1817, on the fifth anniversary of the victory over Napoleon, the Exercirgauz was opened with

²⁸⁰ Yankilevsky, V. *A Moment for Eternity*, New York: Palace Editions, 2007, p.22.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.22.

a parade in the presence of the Emperor. The design, innovative at the time, was not perfect: in July 1818, two farms cracked from the heat. A year later, the situation repeated. Therefore, by order of Alexander I, in 1823-1824, the Manege had to be rebuilt. The farms were slightly modified, and in August 1824, a ceiling was sewn to the roof of the building. Stucco moldings were designed by the famous Moscow architect Osip Bove were completed in 1825. The Manege served as an exhibition hall until 1917 when the building was transformed into a government garage. Throughout the following years, the condition of the building deteriorated. The plan and the structural system were redesigned to hold cars in, rather than artworks. In 1941, a high-explosive bomb hit the garage, but there was no severe damage. However, in 1953, the restoration work began in Manege conducted by Dmitry Kulachinsky to bring back its old Exercirgauz days. In 1957, Manege came back to life as the central exhibition site of Moscow.

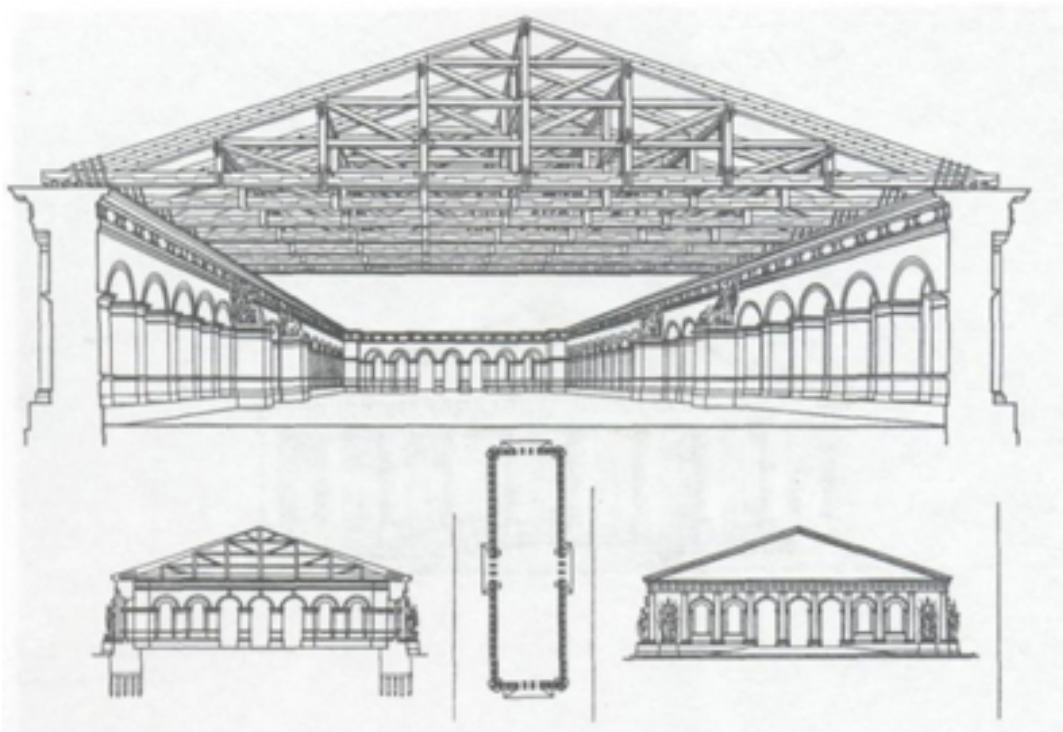


Figure 3.50. Manege, Perspective, Section, Plan and Facade, from the albums of Augustin Betancourt, 1819
Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (RGANTD)



Figure 3.51. View of Manege from Vozdvizhenki. Lithograph by Christoph Heitzman, drawing by Edward Gertner, mid-19th century
Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (RGANTD)



Figure 3.52. Manege during WWII, with anti-aircraft camouflage, 1941.
Manege Museum archive



Figure 3.53. Manege before the Exhibition in 1962
Manege Museum archive

Belyutin himself curated the exhibition in Manege. At Manege, the works of the "formalists" and Socialist Realists were presented together with works of the younger generation of Belyutin studio. Later, 'independent artists,' including Yankilevsky and Sooster were added to the artist list.

The country's leadership was expected to visit the exhibition; therefore, Belyutin came up with an organization scheme to promote the newly emerging de-Stalinist art, by firstly showing the reminiscence of the old and already-dead Stalinist examples. On the ground floor, Belyutin placed the traditionalist artists' works, which were mainly the continuation of the classical Socialist Realist genre, hoping to provoke an adverse reaction from Khrushchev to this "already dead and incompetent style."²⁸² He called the ground floor, "the historical part of the exhibition." The plan was to smoothly transfer this adverse reaction to a positive one as Khrushchev climbs the stairs to the second floor, where young opponents of traditional art placed their works.

²⁸² Yankilevsky, V. *A Moment for Eternity*, New York: Palace Editions, 2007, p.23.

Khrushchev was accompanied by the leading figures from the Board of MOSKh, and on the ground floor, playful banter between the Soviet leader and artists were accompanied by collective laughter. The warm atmosphere was abruptly cut when Khrushchev walked upstairs to the exhibition of alternative art. Ernst Neizvestny remembers the irateness of Khrushchev was a staged and scripted outburst. Entering the hall on the second floor, Khrushchev began yelling about the traitors of the motherland and specifically targeted Belyutin and Neizvestny as instigators of the anti-Soviet exhibit. At the end of his brief tour on the second floor, Khrushchev stated: "As for art, I am a Stalinist."

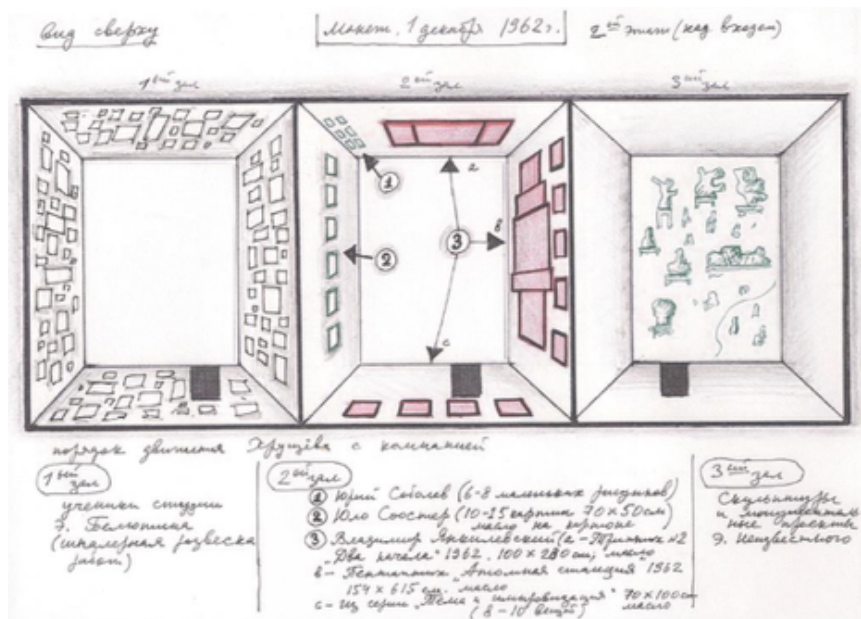


Figure 3.54. Exhibition scheme of the second floor of Manege, drawing by Vladimir Yankilevsky
Zimmerli Journal, Fall 2003, No.1

The Manege exhibition was referred to as the victory of traditionalist over revolutionaries inside MOSKh. Following the exhibition, there appeared several derogatory articles in mainstream media, on the leadership of Pravda. Eventually, a subsequent campaign was initiated in the official art scene against formalism and abstractionism in the USSR. Neizvestny soon emigrated, and Yankilevsky and Sooster withdrew to the underground. As for the official artists, a sub-section later to be called as "Left MOSKh" was born. A group of

reformists semi-secretly continued to teach the ABCs of contemporary art in art institutes following the footsteps of Belyutin. However, the left MOSKh has silently propagated the new trends in art semi-secretly until the mid-1970s that it revived.

After the incident at the Manege exhibition, the underground art circles retreated to their private sphere and started arranging meetings and showings in their domestic sphere, as discussed in Chapter 1. However, the culmination of the earlier attempts of forming an underground network encouraged artists to try and attempt to organize a collective exhibition in the public arena. This show happened on September 15, 1974, came to be known as Bulldozer Show.

Through the 1960s, following the Manege exhibition, Ernst Neizvestny, who was discarded from the Union of Artists, started organizing meetings at his apartment near Sretensky Boulevard, while another small circle of artists was forming their own underground network around Oscar Rabin. The group later was named as Lianozovo and the artists of the group Lydia Masterkova, and Vladimir Nemukhin started organizing meetings at Rabin's apartment near Bolshaya Cherkizovskaya Street. During the final years of the 1960s, a young mathematician named Victor Tupitsyn started visiting Oscar Rabin, and through Lydia Masterkova, he met Masterkova's cousin Margarita Masterkova to whom he got married a couple of years later. Until 1975, before their emigration to New York, Tupitsyns became the active participants of underground artistic events, and a vital part of the Nonconformist networks as historians, art critics, and chroniclers. After their emigration, they played a significant role in establishing connections between Nonconformist artists who emigrate to West and Western museums, art connoisseurs and collectors. They became the master chroniclers of the activities of underground artists of Moscow between 1970-1975 and of the activities of immigrant Nonconformist artists in especially the United States, after 1975.

To organize an open-air exhibition was initially the idea of Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid. Komar firstly visited Victor Tupitsyn with the idea in the summer of 1974; in return, get the answer: "We need to persuade Oscar Rabin." Komar remembers the idea flourishing at Rabin's apartment as:

I remember we were sitting at the apartment of Oscar Rabin after the police once dispersed our performance in an apartment exhibition. [...] And, I remember, I told Oscar, I read in a Polish magazine, that Polish artists regularly make exhibitions in parks, and that this is quite common. Of course, I was not the organizer of this exhibition, because Oscar Rabin was much more experienced and older and knew how to speak with the bureaucracy.²⁸³

Therefore, the idea of organizing a public show flourished. Tupitsyns, together with Rabin and Nemukhin, took a central role as organizers, participants, and chroniclers of the event. The artists from the group Lianozovo including Vladimir Nemukhin, Lydia Masterkova and Oscar Rabin visited Margarita and Viktor Tupitsyn on September 1, 1974, two weeks before the infamous "Bulldozer Show" and let them in on their plan to organize the exhibition the empty lot across their house. Tupitsyns were living in an apartment on Ostrovitianov Street at that time, and Lianozovo artists thought that the empty lot called Balyaev park seemed like the most suitable place. The artists' choice of this wasteland was not out of their intention to hold an unsanctioned exhibition. On the contrary, they thought if they would go to the MOSKh with a site outside of the city, not disturbing everyday city routine, it would be easier to get official approval for their exhibition. The exhibition was never intended to become an illegal showing but ended up being one of the milestones in the Soviet history of illegal exhibitions. Nemukhin states:

So, for the open air, we chose a wasteland in Belyaev so as not to disturb anyone. It was an open area, and there were no construction projects. Rabin tried to coordinate with the authorities in the right way, to get permission. The local authorities advised them to get approval from MOSKh. Therefore, Rabin brought the works to MOSKh for a board meeting. They did not give any written opinion on our work, but they called back and verbally conveyed that our works are not of cultural value.

²⁸³ Vitaly Komar, in the interview by Gavrilov, A. "The Alphabet of Dissent. Bulldozer exhibition. Program One: Event.", for Radio Svoboda (Radio Liberty), December 13, 2011. Accessed at <https://www.svoboda.org/a/24421758.html>

On the other hand, they did not give a direct ban. Only allegorically told us, 'we do not advise you.' Well, we reasoned: if you haven't banned, then you can.²⁸⁴

Following their plan, the artists designed and distributed invitations to other artists. Tupitsyns' apartment became a repository for works to be exhibited, and also a place for the artists to sleep the day before the show. On September 15, 1974, 20 Soviet underground artists, including Oscar Rabin, Vitaly Komar, Aleksandr Melamid, Lydia Masterkova, and Vladimir Nemukhin, took to the empty lot in Balyaev and opened what was originally called as "The First Fall Open-Air Show of Painting."²⁸⁵

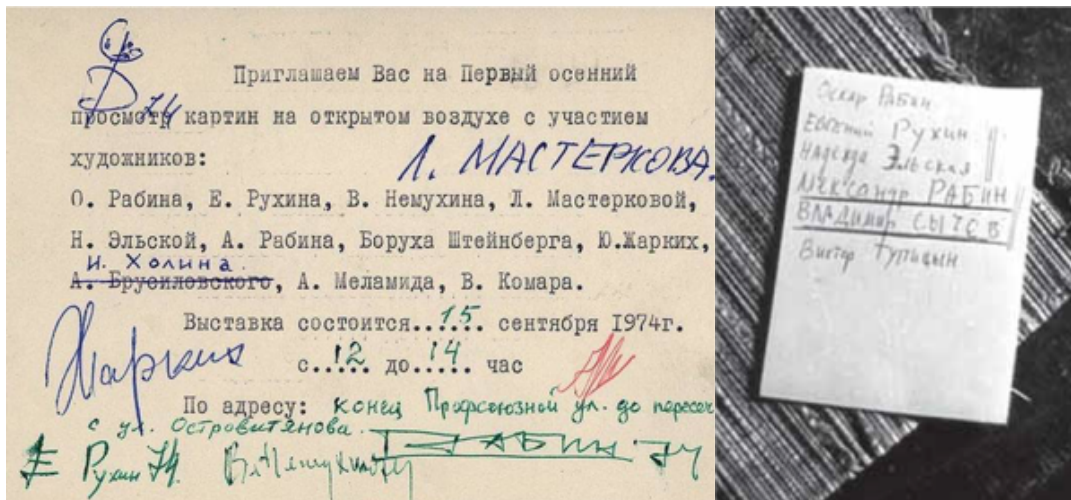


Figure 3.55. The invitation for “The First Fall Open-Air Show of Painting”, and the list of organizers of the open exhibition
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

²⁸⁴ Vladimir Nemukhin, in the interview by Bogdanov, V. “Today is the 40th anniversary of Bulldozer Exhibition”, for ARTinvestment.RU, September 15, 2014
Accessed at https://artinvestment.ru/invest/interviews/20140915_nemukhin.html

²⁸⁵ Some materials on the Bulldozer Exhibition are available in Glezer, A. Lianozovskaia gruppa: istoki i sud'by: sbornik materialov i catalog k vystavke v Gosudarstvennoi Tretiakovskoi galeree, 10 marta-10 apreliia 1988: Tabakman museum of contemporary Russian art (New York), 15 May–15 June 1998, Moscow: Rasters, 1998. For the Bulldozer Exhibition see also Solomon, A. The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.89–90.

Everything went forward as planned until the police arrived at the scene. In contrast to the primarily verbal confrontations of the Manege era, the show in the empty field on September 15 resulted in severe physical reprisals by the authorities, who used bulldozers and fire trucks to destroy the works, relegating the infamous name "The Bulldozer Exhibition." Many of the works on display were destroyed or confiscated. The artists and their sympathizers were beaten, arrested, or subjected to administrative sanctions.²⁸⁶



Figure 3.56. “The First Fall Open-Air Show of Painting” at Balyaev
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive



Figure 3.57. Margarita Tupitsyna, Vladimir Nemukhin and Victor Tupitsyn at “The First
Fall Open-Air Show of Painting” at Balyaev
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

²⁸⁶ For a detailed account of the exhibition and the following events see, for example, Agamov-Tupitsyn, V. *The Bulldozer Exhibition*, Moscow: AdMarginem, 2014; Glezer, A. *Art under Bulldozers (The Blue book)*, London: Oversees Publications Interchange Ltd, 1976; and Rabin, O. *Tri zhizni: kniga vospominanij* [Three lives. Book of memoirs], Paris: Tretja volna, 1986.



Figure 3.58. The Bulldozer Exhibition, 1974
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

The "Bulldozer" event, violating Helsinki Accords on Human Rights, severely damaged the already disputable reputation of the Soviet government in the West. The peaceful display in an empty lot being instantly destroyed by the authorities met with significant resonance in the foreign press, where a heated debate evolved on "how the Soviet State treated its artists and suppressed their creative expression."²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ Rabin, O. *Tri zhizni: kniga vospominanij* [Three lives. Book of memoirs], Paris: Tretja volna: 1986, p.44.



Figure 3.59. The Bulldozer Exhibition in the Western press: Die Welt, and New York Times on September 16, 1974
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art Institutional archive

In an attempt to improve its international reputation, but also trying to get a better grip on this growing artistic community, the Ministry of Culture and the Artists' Union started reconsidering their policies towards alternative art. This new policy briefly initiated a period of semi-official recognition of the first generation of Nonconformist artists. The Bulldozer exhibition initiated a series of events that seemed to be breaking the ice between Nonconformist artists and the official art circle.

The first of these events was organized two weeks after the Bulldozer Exhibition on September 29, 1974. Local officials from MOSKh approved an "official" open-air exhibition for unofficial artists, which was named as the "Second Fall Open-Air Show of Painting." The exhibition took place in Moscow's Izmailovo Park and was dubbed as the "Soviet Woodstock"²⁸⁸ in the Western press. "No provisions were made for censorship, and no

²⁸⁸ The term "Soviet Woodstock" originated with the publication of a TIME Magazine article. See "The Russian Woodstock," TIME Magazine, October 14, 1974.

limitations on the number of participants were imposed. As for viewers, the four-hour exhibition broke all attendance records."²⁸⁹



Figure 3.60. Eduard Gorokhovskiy, Ilya Kabakov, Pavel Pepperstein (at age 7), Viktor Pivovarov, and Eduard Steinberg at The Izmailovo Exhibition Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive

Two open-air exhibitions were a turning point for the journey of the first generation of Nonconformist artists through officialdom. It was also a significant turning point for the Left-wing at MOSKh to re-interact with unofficial artists for the first time after the Manege Exhibition. There happened two separate but inter-related developments following the open-air exhibitions that marked the breakthrough for both the unofficial and official art scene.

The first development was fueled within MOSKh, evolving independently but directly influencing the involvement of the unofficial artists within the official cultural network. In the mid-1970s, the balance of power in the Union of Artists shifted toward a moderate position. The long-silent group of "Left MOSKh" artists took courage from the stagnant and less harsh

²⁸⁹ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press: 2012, p.74.

atmosphere of the Brezhnev period and started showing signs of tolerance to modernist styles, and even began to appropriate various elements of the modernist vocabulary into their own art. One artist named Dmitry Zhilinsky was especially interested, including any alternative art movement in the official genre, and started getting support from his peers in the Left MOSKh circle. His influence was so strong in the MOSKh that following 1975, most Left MOSKh artists started calling themselves "the Zhilinsky group." Meanwhile, since Zhilinsky was a respected artist and a board member in MOSKh, the balance of the board committee started leaning towards a positive approach for Nonconformist art and changing its status towards officialdom following open-air exhibitions.

Individual board members of MOSKh were supporting the idea of including Nonconformist artists under official art, and the others stated the necessity of the liquidation of unofficial art and the establishment of control over alternative artists. The solution was founded in the formation of a separate committee under the jurisdiction of the Union of Artists to embody Nonconformists. The committee established was named as "Gorkom Grafikov," otherwise known as MOGKh (the Moscow Joint Committee of Graphic Artists). The decision to create the Moscow Joint Committee of the Union of Graphic Artists was made by the First Secretary of the CPSU MGK V.V. Grishin at the end of 1975. The Union of Artists provided an exhibition hall for Gorkom Grafikov located in the basement of the cooperative cinema house at 28 Malaya Gruzinskaya. Victor Tupitsyn describes the position of the Nonconformist artists regarding their inclusion in the official system as:

A decision was reached to do away with unsolicited and uncensored art, but by peaceful means. To this end, the artists were quite literally "shoved" into official creative organizations, one of which turned out to be the Gorkom [Grafikov]. An alternative to this type of job placement was the enforcement of the law on

"parasitism,"²⁹⁰ and therefore, few of the "venerable" unofficial artists were able to avoid recruitment into MOGKh.²⁹¹

On the one hand, the formation of Gorkom Grafikov was a turning point in the careers of Moscow Nonconformists as they, for the first time, gained access to an official space of the exhibition. On the other hand, joining the official circle came with restrictions on the contents of their artworks, limiting them within paradigms of Soviet official artistic discourse. Groom Grafikov actively worked until 1979 with the participation of Nonconformist artists, including Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Eduard Steinberg, Eduard Gorokhovskiy, and until his emigration Oscar Rabin. The artists also had the opportunity to have workshops along Sretensky Boulevard because of their ties to the Union of Artists, which, as discussed in Chapter 1, acted as meeting points for Nonconformist artists. Although Gorkom Grafikov gave a semi-freedom for artists to display their works at an exhibition space, the restrictions of MOSKh on how to produce their art started pushing their art towards the official aesthetics. Their workshops, on the other hand, gave them the freedom to form an original genre finally. The exhibitions held at Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28 were not scheduled to be very often. They were held twice a year and were named as "Spring" and "Autumn" exhibitions. The first exhibition was held in December 1977 and stayed open until February 1978. In the first year of Malaya Gruzinskaya, information about the exhibitions at the hall was distributed from mouth to mouth. A little later, the artists were allowed to put up posters, but only in the area on Krasnaya Presnya. Yankilevsky mentions that "the times of exhibitions were too important to miss out on."²⁹² As the word spread on "the exhibition hall of alternative art," Malaya Gruzinskaya started swarming with visitors, and soon after, the reputation of the exhibition

²⁹⁰ "In the Soviet Union, which declared itself a workers' state, every adult able-bodied person was expected to work until official retirement. Thus, unemployment was officially and theoretically eliminated. Those who refused to work, study or serve in another way risked being criminally charged with 'social parasitism' (tuneyadstvo) in accordance with the socialist principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution." Pavlov, B.G. Questions of criminal responsibility for the parasitic way of life, Saint Petersburg: Jurisprudence, Leningrad University, 2006.

²⁹¹ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press: 2012, p.74.

²⁹² Yankilevsky, V. *A Moment for Eternity*, New York: Palace Editions, 2007, p.34.

hall even reached the West. In the newspaper "International Herald Tribune" of April 1978, it wrote: "Tens of thousands of Muscovites come to see the works of artists, representatives of the underground in Moscow at Malaya Gruzinskaya Street, 28."²⁹³



Figure 3.61. Exhibition opening at Gorkom Grafikov, Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, 1978
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive

²⁹³ Florkovskaya, A. Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28. Zhivopisnaya sektsiya ob"yedinennogo komiteta khudozhnikov-grafikov 1976—1988 ("Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28. Picturesque section of the joint committee of graphic artists 1976-1988"), in *Monuments of historical thought*, 2009, p.14.



Figure 3.62. Ilya Kabakov and Vladimir Yankilevsky at Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, 1977
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive



Figure 3.63. Exhibition view at Malaya Gruzinskaya, 28, 1978
“Fragments from life”, Materials from the exhibition, Archive No: 1746, 2015, Moscow
Museum Archive.

The first development through the journey of post-Bulldozer attempts of Nonconformist officialdom was the establishment of Gorkom Grafikov. The second development was the series of permitted exhibitions under the aegis of Gorkom Grafikov, which gave Nonconformist artists access to the 'legendary' VDNKh.

The first permitted exhibition after open-air exhibits took place at the VDNKh's Beekeeping Pavilion in February 1975. An exhibition soon followed it at the House of Culture in the VDNKh complex in September 1975. As Victor Tupitsyn claims, the two exhibitions were examples of "successful assimilation of communal conceptualism within the framework of official institutions."²⁹⁴

The exhibition at the House of Culture, especially, was significant. The exhibition took place between September 20 to 30, 1975. Nikita Alekseev, who was an art student at the Polygraphic Institute at the time, describes his first contact with the underground art as:

By September 20 in VDNKh's House of Culture, 145 artists brought 650 works, 522 of which were shown [...] before the opening of the exhibition, some works were taken down [...] In a large nest woven from branches sat Mikhail Roshal, Victor Skersis, and Gennady Donskoy. They were hatching eggs and asked the viewers to do the same. This action caused an outcry from the KGB agents watching over the exhibition...The over-heated authorities decided that some works could not be displayed. Roshal, Skersis, and Donskoy were chased away, and the nest was removed as a 'flammable' object.²⁹⁵

Roshal, Skersis, and Donskoy's group NEST(Gnezdo) was formed under the mentorship of Komar and Melamid, who at the time were teachers of the three artists at Polygraphic Institute. Similar to their students, Komar and Melamid's work "Documents" submitted for this exhibition was not accepted to be exhibited by Soviet authorities.

²⁹⁴ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press: 2012, p.76.

²⁹⁵ Alekseev, A. "Vystavka dostizhenii sovetskogo nonkonfomizma" [Successful Exhibitions of Soviet Non-Conformism,] *Vremia novostei*: 178, September 27, 2005, p.6.

The installation/performance of Nest for this second "official exhibit" in House of Culture was not only essential to trace the official strategy that was not all-inclusive but selective about including individual Nonconformist artists in the official art world. It was also significant in terms of its architectural references. Nest's eponymous work was the first public installation in Moscow that grounded its meaning in encouraging viewers' participation. It was also a clever reference to the architectural planning of the VDNKh complex separating urban and rural settings. After they have been banned from the exhibition, the Nest continued their performance in the "urban setting of VDNKh. They sat in the same position, sometimes with a girl, as if her presence could protect them from the authorities' aggression. The installation itself ridiculed the exhibition venue of VDNKh, which was designed to display achievements in agriculture, that in spatial planning separated the urban achievements from that of rural achievements, which was symbolically designed as a Russian village at the far end of the complex.

The exhibition at VDNKh's House of Culture was as significant as the establishment of Gorkom Grafikov. The latter was an attempt to "liquidate" and, in the best case, "include" Nonconformist art into the official genre, while the former marked the ending of the attempt. What marks the ending, according to Nemukhin, "was not one exhibition, but the need for the artists [who became members of Gorkom Grafikov] to continuously prove their social and professional viability in the official eyes."²⁹⁶

The most active artists in the process of Bulldozer Exhibition, Komar, Melamid, Rabin, and Nemukhin were the center of special attention of authorities during the process of semi-officialdom. According to Nemukhin, this whole process of establishing Gorkom Grafikov was not to include Nonconformist artists, but to exclude and irritate the activities of four artists to "squeeze them out of the country."

²⁹⁶ Vladimir Nemukhin, in the interview by Bogdanov, V. "Today is the 40th anniversary of Bulldozer Exhibition", for ARTInvestment.RU, September 15, 2014
Accessed at https://artinvestment.ru/invest/interviews/20140915_nemukhin.html

Soon after, "the authorities diligently suggested that they leave: 'we will arrange it for you!' they said."²⁹⁷ The initial strategy was to include artists who could be more 'well adjusted' in the official circle. Nevertheless, after this brief attempt to hold collective Nonconformist exhibitions in official museums, as Octavian Eşanu states, "the emerging conceptualists were no longer 'underground' but rather 'unofficial.'"²⁹⁸

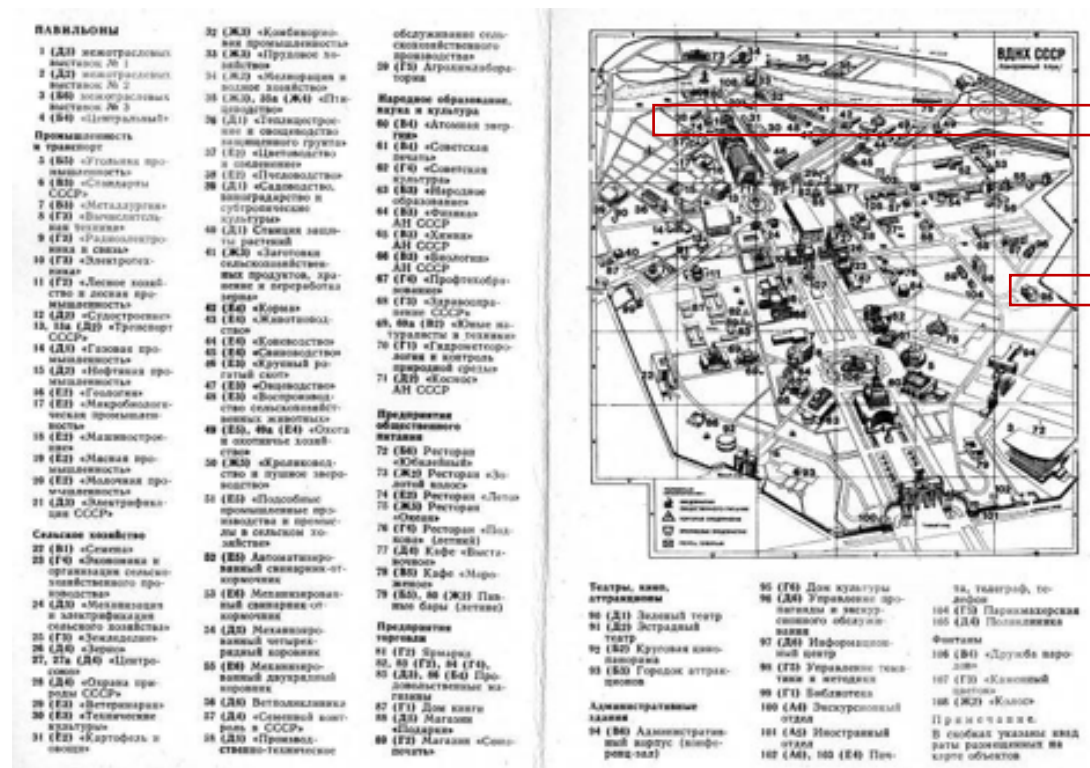


Figure 3.64. Map of VDNKh with the locations of Beekeeping Pavilion and House of Culture are marked
 Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation (RGANTD)

²⁹⁷ Vladimir Nemukhin, in the interview by Bogdanov, V. "Today is the 40th anniversary of Bulldozer Exhibition", for ARTinvestment.RU, September 15, 2014
 Accessed at https://artinvestment.ru/invest/interviews/20140915_nemukhin.html

²⁹⁸ Eşanu, O. Transition in Post-Soviet Art: Collective Actions Groups before and after 1989, Berlin: Central European University Press, 2013, p.64.



Figure 3.65. Exhibition view at Beekeeping Pavilion at VDNKh, 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive



Figure 3.66. Artists participating in the exhibition including Lydia Masterkova and Eduard Steinberg
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive



Figure 3.67. Exhibition opening at Beekeeping Pavilion at VDNKh, 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive



Figure 3.68. Exhibition view at House of Culture at VDNKh, 1975
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive



Figure 3.69. Exhibition view at House of Culture at VDNKh, 1975, and the performance of Nest
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive

The one legacy left to the official artistic circle following the brief encounter with the Nonconformist circle is the solidification of the place of Left MOSKh in the organization. Following the 1980s, the Union of Artists gradually became more open and less strict about the genre of official art, all due to the dominant place Left MOSKh had in the administrative structure. The Manege was the attempt of humiliation, Gorkom Grafikov was an attempt of liquidation of Nonconformist, conceptual and unofficial art. However, Perestroika was a time not to include the alternative art into to official structure, but to be included in the alternative artistic movements, as the official art structure was already crumbling. Therefore, during Perestroika, unlike the previous attempts, authorities, and artists from MOSKh tried to interact with the Nonconformist by attempting to involve in the Nonconformist network.

3.1.3.2 Nonconformist Art in Official Museum

Now, the Ministry of Culture is ready to buy works from artists. However, now the artists do not want to sell. Where do those works go? In the cellar! Therefore, it is necessary to find a contemporary art museum! Moreover, to open galleries!

I have spoken with the head of the fine arts department at the Ministry of culture. They are ready to support us. A year ago, they acted like they did not know who we were ...

Leonid Bazhanov²⁹⁹

In 1987, while the Moscow art scene was becoming more and more preoccupied with the ideas of establishing museum(s) of contemporary art, collector and archivist Leonid Talochkin mentioned in a letter to one of his émigré artist-friends "everyone seemed to have gone mad with all this museum business" and "various proposals were put forward almost daily."³⁰⁰ The period of Perestroika was a period turning every organizational scheme upside down in the USSR. So, the final stage of officialdom for Nonconformist artists and their journey to establish a museum of contemporary art was initiated by an artist who had initially been from left MOSKh.

Following the exhibitions in VDNKh in the late 1970s and the brief interaction of Nonconformist artists to the official circle, three figures emerged among the Nonconformist circle who had established the bridge between the Nonconformist circle and the official channels. Leonid Bazhanov, (now director of the city's National Center for Contemporary Arts), was an art critic officially registered to the Union of Artists and was working for the Publishing House with Kabakov and Prigov during the 1980s. He was acquainted with the artists of Left MOSKh on one hand and introduced to the circle of second-generation

²⁹⁹ Leonid Bazhanov, Regulation on the amateur association of artists Hermitage (Unpublished, Moscow: Media Archive of the National Centre of Contemporary Art, 1986).

³⁰⁰ Leonid Talochkin, to Vorobiev, V. Letter. 4 August 1987 (unpublished; Moscow: Archive of the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Section 2, Folder 5).

Nonconformist artists through Prigov and Kabakov on the other. During the early 1980s, Bazhanov got closer to the Nonconformist circle, especially Nikita Alekseev. Through Bazhanov, Nonconformist artists of second and third generation got acquainted with two other figures from the official circle: Andrei Erofeev and Victor Misiano. Erofeev was a researcher in the Central Research Institute of Architecture and had relatively close ties to the Ministry of Culture. He was introduced to Nikita Alekseev by Bazhanov; in return Alekseev introduced Erofeev to Zakharov and former SZ circle, and Odessa artists. Misano, another art critic and also a curator, was working at Pushkin Museum in the 1980s. He was introduced to the group through Alekseev and began forming close ties to the Nonconformists, especially after 1985.

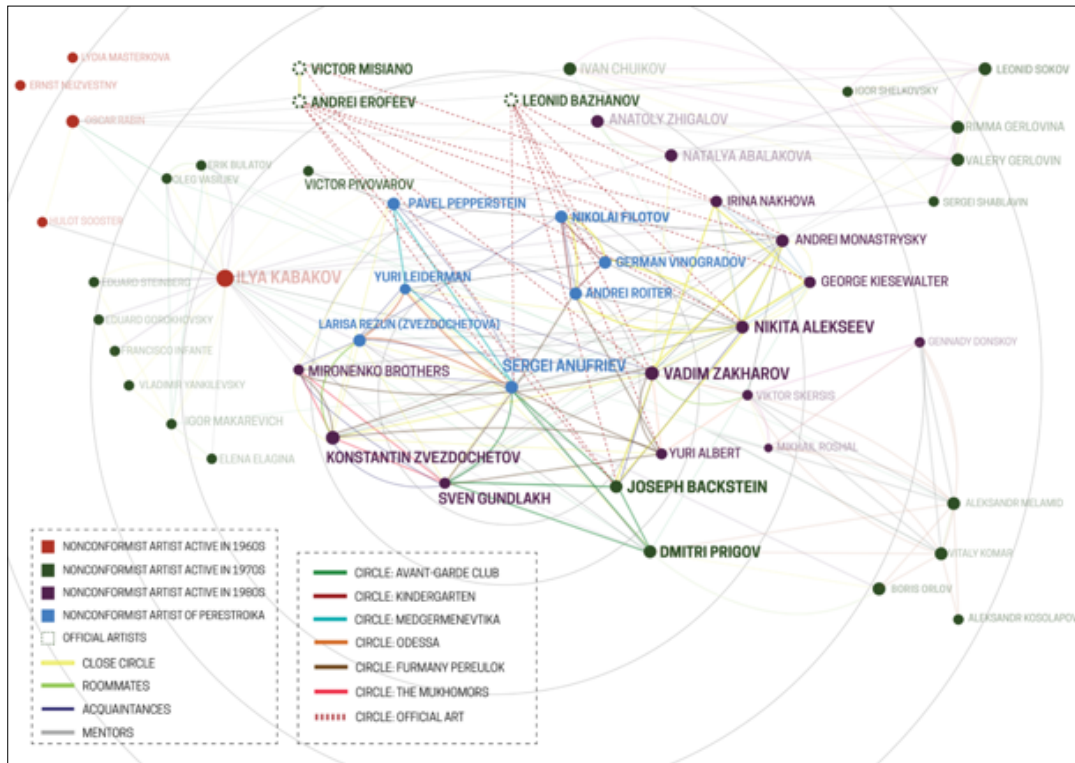


Figure 3.70. Graph showing networks of third-generation of Nonconformist artists and official artists: 1986-1991
Figure by the Author

This section will trace two case studies that completed the journey of reformation of Nonconformist practice started in rooms, and through alternative places: Kindergartens, old

Baths, and finally arriving at museums. On the examples of the 17th Youth Exhibition held at Kuznetsk Most, and the formation of the Hermitage Association and the exhibition "Retrospective: Works by Moscow Artists, 1957–1987." While tracing the new experience of curating and exhibiting in the museum space, this section also aims to look at official Soviet museums in Perestroika becoming the depository, archive, and the spaces of the re-enactment of Nonconformist artworks produced through three-generations.



Figure 3.71. Locations of official Nonconformist networks: 1986-1991
Figure by the Author

In December 1986, in the exhibition hall of Kuznetsky Most, 11, The 17th Young Moscow Artists Exhibition opened. The exhibition was organized by Moscow Unions of Artists, along with the Moscow committee of the Communist Youth League (Komsomol), and the idea behind it was "improving the effectiveness of artistic exhibitions." The exhibition included a special section for "unofficial" youth culture. It was the first time of the phrase "unofficial youth culture," making its way to the official documents; moreover, the exhibition was the first uncensored official exhibition hosting Nonconformist works.

The exhibition venue was as symbolic as the exhibition itself for Soviet artistic and intellectual history. The building on Kuznetsk Most, 11, was built in the form of several blocks on the merged plot in 1730. In 1883, by order of San Galli, an honorary member of the Council of Trade and Manufactures, the architect A. A. Martynov connected two previously existing one-story stone buildings with a glazed cast-iron arch and transformed them into a showcase for San Galli products and other stores. The building complex came to be known as the passage of San Galli.

In the summer of 1917, the building was acquired by a Moscow businessman, the famous baker ND Filippov, who transformed the place into a large bakery and a cafe named "Pittoresque." Many famous artists took part in the design of the cafe: the walls were designed by G. B. Yakulov, inspired by A. Blok's poem "The Stranger." E. Tatlin painted the ceiling, A. M. Rodchenko designed the unusual lamps. In the cafe, a stage was arranged, at which VV Mayakovsky, D. D. Burluk, VV Kamensky performed, and in March 1918, V. E. Meyerhold produced the "Stranger" by A. Blok. By the autumn of 1918, the cafe was transferred to the theater department of the People's Commissariat for Education and received the new name "Red Rooster." The cafe, which became a kind of club for artists, was visited by V.V. Mayakovsky, A.V. Lunacharsky, V. E. Meyerhold, and others. The "Red Rooster" did not last long and was closed in 1919. In 1930, the building was transformed into an exhibition hall under the jurisdiction of the All-Russian Union of Cooperative Partnerships of Fine Art Workers. The cooperative was liquidated in 1953, and the building was renamed as the "Moscow House of Artists." Throughout the 1960s, the building went through renovations, however, preserved its status as one of the main official exhibition halls in Moscow.



Figure 3.72. The passage of San Galli early 1900s, and the ad for Cafe Pittoresque for Mayakovsky’s reading session “Farewell Moscow”
 Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

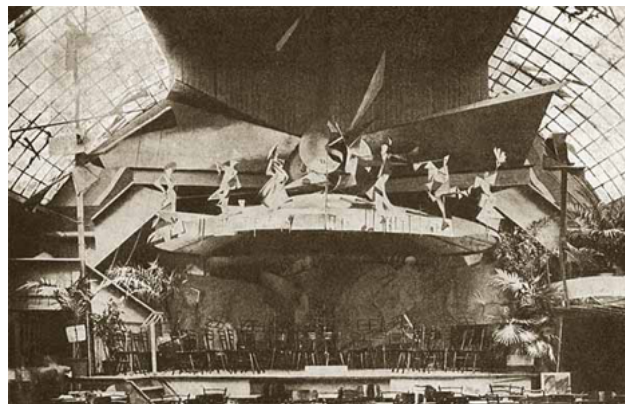


Figure 3.73. Cafe Pittoresque stage
 Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD)

Daniel Dondurev, an art historian by training and art critic by choice, was working as an art critic in the MOSKh in 1986. He persuaded the chairman of the Moscow Union of Artists, Oleg Savostoy, Vladimir Goriainov, the secretary of the ideology of the Union of Artists of the USSR and Viktor Dumanyan, the head of the Moscow exhibition committee, to allow him "to experiment for the sake of restructuring the museum system to increase the number of spectators." Dondurev states that the main problem of the Soviet official artistic organization

had always been the over-involvement of individual artists in the process. The Union of Artists, especially the board committee, was always composed of respectful artists who mostly approved the exhibitions including their works:

[Up until the times of Perestroika,] the official artistic structure was a genuinely invented and cleverly organized world of socialist self-service. [...] In order to change the exhibition mechanism in conditions of socialism, it was necessary to strike at the primary and seemingly sparing link; that was the principle: "everything is in the hands of the artists themselves." We agreed with the authorities that in the framework of the experiment, the exhibition would be done by art critics.³⁰¹

By breaking the link between the producer of art, and the administrator of the exhibiting process, the 'experiment' revolutionizes the Soviet museum system. In the 17th Youth Exhibition, many third-generation Nonconformists works were shown. German Vinogradov, Sergei Anufriev, Yuri Albert, together with Vadim Zakharov and Mironenko brothers, were all centerpieces of the exhibition. Victor Misiano, who was a junior art critic at the exhibition and acted as a bridge providing communication between the artists and the officials, states that there are two significant outcomes of the exhibition:

First, instead of traditionally exposing young "Soviet artists" under a standard umbrella, curators of 17th Youth Exhibition tried to curate the works to form a "meaningful and coherent stylistic flow." They did not only separate the "unofficial" works from the "official" ones not to denigrate them but for the sake of a stylistically coherent exhibition. Moreover, for the first time in Nonconformist history, the curators made sure that "each artist was individually represented within the framework of their creative priorities."³⁰²

³⁰¹ Dondurev, D. & Misiano, V. "The First Uncensored Project of the 80s: the 17th Youth Exhibition", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovietskim iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.147.

³⁰² Ibid, p.148.

Second, alongside the main exposition, parallel two-three-day long exhibitions of solely Nonconformist works were included in the exhibition program. More importantly, and for the first time, all events, artworks, and artists were uncensored. It is the main reason the critics, historians, and artists of Nonconformist art name the 17th Youth Exhibition, the first official exhibition of Nonconformist art in Russia. "Thus, for the first time, an attempt was made to destroy the eternal Russian division of art into 'official' and 'unofficial' art."³⁰³

The exhibition becomes even more significant, considering the symbolic status of the exhibition space for the Soviet intelligentsia. On the one hand, Nonconformist artists used the same stage Meyerhold and Mayakovsky used once in 1918. On the other hand, they had the chance to exhibit under the same dome with what once hosted Socialist Realist art. The same dome, once covering the statues and paintings of Lenin and Stalin, hosted artworks of Socialist Realist mockery.



Figure 3.74. Kuznetsky Most, 11 in 1934 and during 17th Youth Exhibition in 1986 (left) Russian State Archive of Documentary Films and Photographs (RGAKFD), (right) George Kiesewalter personal archive

³⁰³ Dondurev, D. & Misiano, V. "The First Uncensored Project of the 80s: the 17th Youth Exhibition", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovetskimi iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2014, p.148.



Figure 3.75. Kuznetsky Most, 11 during 17th Youth Exhibition in 1986
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

Although the secret service visited the exhibition and conduct "sweet conversations," the situation was as different as could be from Khrushchev's visit to Manege. Misano states that almost five thousand people visited the exhibition in a day, and during the 17 days it stayed open, tens of thousands of Muscovites came visiting Kuznetsky Most, 11.

While the 17th Youth Exhibition was being planned and executed, in 1986, Leonid Bazhanov came with an idea to form a museum exhibiting Moscow Nonconformist art and to also act as a depository and an archive for a collection of Nonconformist art history.

The museum of Nonconformist art was named as "Hermitage" Association and was registered on December 25, 1986. Although Leonid Bazhanov founded the idea, the accomplishment of

the museum was equally due to the supports of the collector and archivist Leonid Talochkin. The members of the association included Nikita Alexeev, paper architects Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin, and the art critic Andrei Erofeev. Erofeev had always been intrigued by the idea of establishing an alternative art museum, in which the works of every generation of Soviet artists from every genre would be exhibited. Together with painters, graphic artists, designers, photographers, and architects working to "promote and study [the] visual culture"³⁰⁴ of the Moscow underground scene, the association was registered at the Belyaev local exhibition hall on Profsoyuznaya Street in south Moscow, where most of its shows were organized.

The exhibition hall was located on the ground floor of an eight-story building that had been used as a residential unit on Profsoyuznaya Street. The ground floor functioned as the local library and transformed into an exhibition hall during Perestroika. The Hermitage was significant in two aspects:

Firstly, the aim was to form a cultural institution that would be respectful of the traditions of Nonconformist art. As Leonid Bazhanov states, a place that "we put on exhibitions, give lectures, hold seminars, concerts, discussions, put information material together."- The first official museum of Moscow Nonconformist art was imagined reflecting the long-standing tradition of underground space that had been used as a multi-functional unit while preserving the amateur soul of the underground culture.

Secondly, Hermitage was planned to be a repository of the history of Nonconformist art. Through a broad spectrum of exhibition projects, Hermitage aimed to bring together otherwise dispersed segments of Moscow Nonconformist art. As the name suggests, the amateur association was planned to be the "Hermitage of Moscow Nonconformist art."³⁰⁵ For

³⁰⁴ Leonid Bazhanov quoted in Tupitsyna, M. and Tupitsyn, V. "A Conversation With Independent Curator And Founder Of The Moscow's First Alternative Exhibition Space", *Flash Art*: 142, 1988, p.103.

³⁰⁵ Bazhanov, L. "The eighties were full of despair", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Perelomnye vos'midesyatye: v neofitsial'no sovetskimi iskusstve*. [Turning of the '80s in Soviet Unofficial art scene.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye: 2014, p.78.

Bazhanov, forming a museum-archive dedicated to Nonconformist art had two steps: first, building a museum collection, and second delivering it to the public.³⁰⁶



Figure 3.76. The performance of “Middle Russian Elevation”, Hermitage, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

To build a museum collection, Bazhanov firstly asked the artists to donate their works, which had been stored in their rooms for such a long time. However, for Bazhanov, a museum collection required a more extensive archival project, there he went to one of the local collectors of Nonconformist art, Leonid Talochkin. Leonid Talochkin was an archivist and collector of Soviet Nonconformist art. In the early 1960s, he became part of the underground circle and started collecting their work. By the mid-1970s, he had around 600 works in his possession and devoted all his time to archiving the activities of Moscow Nonconformists. In the meantime, "to avoid accusations of parasitism," he worked as "a concierge, stoker, and night guard."³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Bazhanov, L. Regulation on the amateur association of artists Hermitage (Unpublished, Moscow: Media Archive of the National Centre of Contemporary Art, 1986).

³⁰⁷ Talochkin, L. Personal Diary (unpublished, Moscow: Archive of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Section 1, Folder 3, 1987, unpaginated).

Talochkin archive contains several thousand documents, including detailed accounts of contemporary art events in Moscow, manuscripts by underground writers, poets, and artists, including the emigre artists Oskar Rabin, Vitaly Komar, and Alexander Melamid. From the 1960s through the 1990s, Talochkin also collected hundreds of photographs, exhibition invitations, booklets, postcards, slides, and images of works.³⁰⁸ By 1987 his collection exceeded 1,000 pieces, and, as he continuously mentions in his diaries, he was keen to find an appropriate space for the works' preservation and display.³⁰⁹

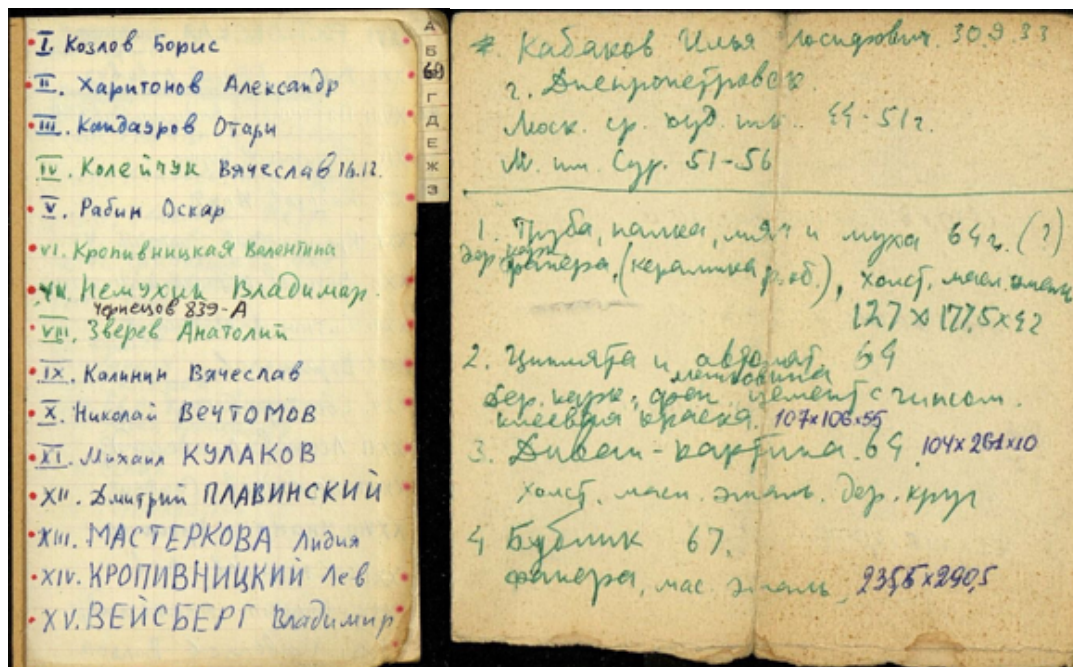


Figure 3.77. Leonid Talochkin, Collection Inventory: 1968-1972
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

³⁰⁸ Talochkin, L. donated his entire archive to Garage Museum of Contemporary art in 2014. For Talochkin's role on the establishment of international relations of Nonconformist art and artists, see: Chapter:3

³⁰⁹ Talochkin, L. Personal Diary (unpublished, Moscow: Archive of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Section 1, Folder 3, 1987, unpaginated).



Figure 3.78. Leonid Talochkin apartment, A visit of Nonconformist artist, 1986
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

After gathering the collection, Bazhanov and Talochkin decided to deliver it to the public. Therefore, the idea of a retrospective exhibition presenting three generations of Nonconformist artists and artworks were born. In the early stages of preparation, Talochkin wrote a letter to Leonid Sokov informing him about the exhibition, and he defined the original idea as a "show of the art of the 1960s, where some art of the 70s and 60s will also be included."³¹⁰

However, the project became the most significant endeavor of Hermitage, which reflected its ethos and goals that was to present and represent three generations of unofficial artists of Moscow. Therefore, the extent of the project was determined as the time period between 1957-1987, and the large-scale exhibition was titled as: "Retrospective: Works by Moscow Artists, 1957–1987."

³¹⁰ Leonid Talochkin, to Leonid Sokov. Letter: 18 August 1987 (unpublished; Moscow: Archive of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Section 2, Folder 5, 1987).



Figure 3.79. Poster for the exhibition “Retrospective: Works by Moscow Artists, 1957–1987”

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive



Figure 3.80. Newspaper article advertising the exhibition, Russkaya mysl' (Russian thought) Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

The exhibition was held in two parts:

The first part was shown between September 22 to October 11, 1987, and the second part was shown between October 14 to October 29, 1987. The participants included: First-generation on Nonconformists: Rimma and Valery Gerlovina, Leonid Sokov, Eduard Steinberg, Oleg Vasiliev, Erik Bulatov, Ivan Chuikov, Eduard Gorokhovskiy, Aleksandr Kosolapov, Igor Makarevich, Boris Orlov, Dmitri Prigov, Francisco Infante, Vladimir Yankilevsky and Ilya Kabakov; Second-generation of Nonconformists: Natalya Abalakova, Yuri Albert, Nikita Alekseev, Collective Actions, The Nest, Sven Gundlakh, George Kiesewalter, Sergei and Vladimir Mironenko, the Mukhomors, Irina Nakhova, Mikhail Roshal, Victor Skersis, the TOTART, Vadim Zakharov, Anatoly Zhigalov, and Konstantin Zvezdochetov; Third-generation of Nonconformists: Sergei Anufriev, Nikolai Filatov, Andrei Roiter, and German Vinogradov.

The idea of splitting the exhibition into two parts was first to encourage the viewer to attend the sequel exhibition to take in the full historical retrospective of the alternative movements in the art of the preceding three decades. It was also expected to start filling the gaps in the existing knowledge of contemporary Soviet art by offering an analytical and thoughtful approach towards the display.³¹¹ Moreover, Bazhanov and Talochkin wanted to present generational shifts within Nonconformist milieu and changing artistic interpretations through generations. Although the Nonconformist milieu gathered around two shared concerns: the condition of being outsiders and the shared interest in re-interpreting and re-appropriating the communal language and the aesthetics of communal everyday life; there was not a unified underground, the movement itself showed fragments, it evolved and reformed. The "Retrospective" exhibition was significant to present this panorama of changing, evolving, and reforming history of Nonconformist art, for the first time to be seen clearly and chronologically under a collective exhibition.



Figure 3.81. “Retrospective: Works by Moscow Artists, 1957–1987”, Vol:1, September 22 - October 11, 1987, Hermitage Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

³¹¹ Talochkin, L. Personal Diary (unpublished, Moscow: Archive of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Section 1, Folder 3, 1987, unpaginated).



Figure 3.82. “Retrospective: Works by Moscow Artists, 1957–1987”, Vol:2, October 14 - October 29, 1987, Hermitage Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

The collective exhibition in a gallery space was a breakthrough for each generation in a different sense: For the first generation, a collective exhibition with their underground peers itself had been a new experience. Besides, although they produced their works with the hope of exhibiting them in galleries one day, the works exhibited at Hermitage were initially produced and shown in the apartments. Meanwhile, as discussed before, one main difference between the first and second-generation Nonconformist practice was, as Sven Gundlakh stated, the second generation of Nonconformists produced their works to be exhibited in the rooms, while their predecessors mainly designed their works for gallery spaces. "Retrospective" was a seminal example for tracing the earliest example of the Nonconformist

works designed for the rooms to be transferred, or in a more appropriate terminology, re-enacted in the gallery space. As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, transferring the artwork produced on everyday domestic life and communal object from the room to the gallery space was the beginning of decontextualization of that Nonconformist work. Even when the gallery space was located in the Soviet Union, the Nonconformist works were still taken out of their communal settings. As they were produced in and on the communal rooms.

The best example of this decontextualization was re-locating Kabakov's panels produced for his project "ZheK" in the Hermitage. The large masonite panels, as discussed in Chapter 1, was produced as series containing charts, lists, "reports for the conducted public work" and lines of duties for a made-up ZheK committee of a Kommunka; supposedly was located on "Baumansky district of the city of Moscow."³¹² For the exhibition in Hermitage, one of the panels containing a daily work chart was exhibited side by side with another work from Kabakov containing "household trash" hung on an empty masonite panel, which he designed as a part of his kitchen series. The way the separate works installed side by side was contradicting Kabakov's initial aim to create an alternative reality, a total installation by the interaction of images, texts, objects, and sounds to imitate the context the installation references to. Instead of individual objects representing and reminding communal everyday life, Ilya Kabakov persisted on the necessity of construction of an overall alternative reality, where the objects, images, texts, and sounds together with the "structure of installation" recreate the spatial configuration of a communal room. In Hermitage, the work was re-located, taken from the Kabakov's workshop, which -as a once-communal room- served as the background of Kabakov's alternative reality and placed in a context-less white cube of the gallery side by side with works of other artists telling different stories. Therefore, the communal room framing and being as a part of the artwork was lost.

³¹² Kabakov, I. *On Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.31.



Figure 3.83. Masonite panels for “ZheK” in Kabakov’s workshop Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive



Figure 3.84. Kabakov's "ZheK" at Hermitage, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

A similar example of de-contextualization causing the artwork lost its meaning and significance can be observed in the installation of Mukhomors' initially produced for the first AptArt show in Alekseev's apartment. Initially, the work was designed to be placed on the kitchen counter in Alekseev's apartment. The scale of the work was adjusted to fit the window frame behind it, while it was curated together with Mukhomors' other two installations on Alekseev's Tv and Refrigerator. In Hermitage, on the other hand, the work was exhibited side by side with collages of Collective Actions on one side, and Zakharov's photographic project "I Made Enemies" on the other. The configuration in Hermitage was not a curatorial fail, but a result of altering the contexts the two examples were formed upon and designed for.



Figure 3.85. The Mukhomors, at AptArt Gallery, 1982
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.86. The Mukhomors' work at Hermitage, 1987
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

Therefore, the collective exhibition in Hermitage resulted very differently than the collective exhibitions in AptArt Gallery, and even in Sokov's apartment exhibition. As will be analyzed very broadly in the next chapter, the problem of Nonconformist artists' collective exhibitions was not only limited to how their works were taken out of their contexts, but how they were re-curated together under one big unofficial umbrella. Regardless, since Bazhanov at least witnessed the production and initial exhibiting processes of the works, Retrospective had a more sensitive approach to at least exhibit works according to the years they were produced in, putting together works from the same Nonconformist generations side by side. Moreover, for the first time, the Nonconformist room exhibitions of the last 30 years were re-enacted in a gallery space. The works once belonged to and shown in rooms, re-curated in the gallery space.

3.2 Reformation of Artworks

One significant aspect of the period between 1986-1991 for Nonconformist artists is that Perestroika paved the way to leave them their rooms and apartments and allowed them to experiment with other spaces for exhibiting conceptual art.

The content of the artwork produced, and the artistic concerns was similar to the previous generations. Third-generation of Nonconformists, similar to the generations before, produced artworks referencing to the communal domestic life, its objects and spaces. One significant example was Larisa Rezun (Zvezdochetova)'s recycled objects, which were once the decor of communal apartments, including cheap, mass-produced carpets, embroideries, and textiles. These recycled pieces of furniture and decor of once-communal rooms were reformed into artworks in the workshops of Furmany Lane squat. The tradition of recycling the banal domestic object was inherited from the previous generations. Similar to Rezun, Anufriev used the daily objects, mostly utensils he collected from kitchens, garbages, and even scrapyards to design installations, which he used to exhibit in the courtyard of Furmany Lane squat. However, during Perestroika, the artists who were benefitting from their relative freedom started occupying and even transforming other alternative spaces as exhibition space. This shift in exhibiting spaces also brought a shift in artistic practices: that is, using and transforming the space itself to be part of, to embody, or to become the artwork.

As discussed in the Kindergarten example, the Nonconformists' playing with the structure of space and transforming it into an exhibition hall was as significant of an artistic input as their artworks exhibited there. In Forman, the documentation of the decay and destruction of House No:18 was one of the most significant artworks of third-generation Nonconformists. In Sandunovsky Baths, the exhibition was of the space itself since the artworks were expected to be destroyed by steam. Therefore, regarding the third-generation Nonconformist artworks, artists, who got out of their apartments, reconstructed and played with the architectural space itself, turning it into a part of their artworks.

Meanwhile, the artworks of previous generations started being exhibited in the museums. This chapter traced the earlier examples of de-contextualizing the Nonconformist work on the case of Hermitage. The process of officialdom initiated during Perestroika came with domestic and international recognizability for Nonconformist artists, especially after Sotheby's auction in 1988. While this section traced the artists' recognizability in the Union, the next section focuses on the international journeys of Nonconformist artists and their networks in the West.

Moreover, the study will focus on the re-enactment of communal everyday life, its objects, and its spaces in Western museums through the artworks of Moscow Nonconformist artists.



Figure 3.87. Sergei Anufriev at Furmany Lane squat
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 3.88. Larisa Rezun-Zvezdochetova at Furmany Lane squat
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

CHAPTER 4

DEFORMATIONS

On July 7, 1988, at Mezhdunarodnaya Hotel, one of the most 'luxurious' hotels of Soviet Moscow, Sotheby's staged an auction of Soviet contemporary art.

Simon de Pury, then the private curator to the great collector Baron Thyssen before taking over the job as Chairman of Sotheby's Europe, developed the idea of holding an international auction during a visit to Moscow in 1986. On his last day in Moscow, for he attended another business meeting, he casually talked to an official from the Ministry of Culture about the possibility of holding an auction in Moscow. "I was expecting him to laugh," states Simon de Pury, but to his surprise, the official was open to the idea, even to the suggestion of including "unofficial artists," including "Kabakov, Bulatov and Vasiliev" whom he said to Pury: "they are also favorites of Paul Jolles."³¹³ Pury was familiar to Paul Jolles, a Swiss diplomat and later the owner of Nestle, who had been one of the few serious collectors of Soviet Nonconformist art, even long before Sotheby's when collecting the art of Soviet underground was regarded "no longer an eccentric taste, but still was a cultivated, obscure one."³¹⁴

Pury was first got acquainted with the works of Nonconformist "leaders" in an exhibition organized by Claudia Jolles, daughter of Paul Jolles after she managed to smuggle enough works of Kabakov, Bulatov, and Yankilevsky to Zurich where the first exhibition of unofficial Soviet art was held in West without the participation of the artists. Originally, Pury suggested the auction to mainly include Avant-garde works, including significant pieces in possession

³¹³ De Pury, S. "A Spotlight on Russian Art", Excerpted from an interview with Kate Fowle, April 8, 2015, published in Fowle, K. & Addison, R. (eds.), "Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986-1996, Moscow: Garage Ad Marginem, 2016, p. 51.

³¹⁴ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.34.

of Pushkin museum by Alexander Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, and Alexander Drevin — from the twenties as a sort of preface. After negotiating with the Ministry of Culture and the rest of the Soviet bureaucracy, it had been decided that the Sotheby's will include Avant-garde works together with Socialist Realist paintings and art pieces of official artists from 1960s to 1980s, in return for official authorities' approval for including the "unofficial art."



Figure 4.1. Sotheby's auction, Moscow, 1988
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

The Sotheby's auction, while not an exhibition, did "exhibit" Nonconformist artists, and it was a turning point driving the Western hype of Russian contemporary art.

Although the event was marked especially in the Western media as the beginning of the interaction of Western art dealers and Soviet artists of underground, the artistic bridges between Western art enthusiasts and the Nonconformist circle was established long before that. The exposure of the existence of an underground Soviet culture to the West following

Bulldozer exhibition accumulated through years and helped to establish a bridge between collectors and Nonconformist artists spanning over 20 years. Although the international media sensation following the Bulldozer exhibition intrigued many Western art enthusiasts and collectors in the second half of the 1970s, the transformation of unofficial art into a nationally recognized one was a direct result of Sotheby's auction. Many Nonconformist exhibitions produced from 1986 to 1991 could be seen as a direct result of artistic and international exchange; however, Sotheby's auction remains unique as the most successful example of commercial, cultural exchange to occur in the Soviet Union.

As outlined by writer Andrew Solomon: "It was so heralded of an event that in the years that followed critics, curators, collectors, and artists variously credited the auction house with discovering a movement, inventing a movement, and destroying a movement."³¹⁵

Kate Fowle, the art critic and chief curator in Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, states that the significance of Sotheby's was that it initiated a collapse of the separation between official and unofficial art "through a mutual attraction to the increasingly available money in the art world, as well as promoting a new wave of emigration by artists eager to benefit from the auction's domino effect."³¹⁶

Sotheby's had indeed surfaced Nonconformist artists for the general Western audience and triggered a wave of "bewildered collectors traveled to the Soviet Union in the hope of visiting 'underground' artists' studios."³¹⁷ However, on the other hand, the auction added another layer of misconception and misrepresentation to the image of Soviet unofficial art and artists from the Western perspective. The mercantilism the auction brought to the noncommercial world

³¹⁵ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.34.

³¹⁶ Fowle, K. "The New International Decade: 1986–1996", in Fowle, K. & Addison, R. (eds.), "Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986-1996, Moscow: Garage Ad Marginem, 2016, p. 12.

³¹⁷ Tupitsyn, M. "U-turn of the U-topian," in Ross, D.A. (ed.) *Between Spring and Summer: Soviet Conceptual Art in the Era of Late*, Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1990, p.35–36.

of unofficial art had two deforming effects on the very things Sotheby's was trying to promote: first on the Nonconformist artwork, and second on the once unofficial artist.

Firstly, the Nonconformist work, which concerned about representing the Soviet reality, became a commodity, even a souvenir for the Western buyers. Sotheby's is, after all, a public company, so it had reasons other than an interest in the unofficial artists' role of re-appropriating Soviet artistic terminology, and their concern for presenting Soviet everyday life. The visitors of Sotheby's were much less aware of the historical development of concepts and artistic genres of Nonconformist art and what it represents in the Soviet reality. Staging the sale was first and foremost commercially driven. The Sotheby's executives were interested in establishing good relations with the Soviet government, firstly because of the possibility of binding contracts and monopolizing the newly flourishing Soviet art market. Nonconformist art and artists, therefore, were initially seen as fresh blood to boom the art market.

Andrew Solomon had been one of the few actors who had been aware of the Nonconformists' take on Soviet context and their concern on producing context-dependent art. He went to Moscow for the first time in the summer of 1988 to attend Sotheby's sale of Contemporary Soviet Art. As a journalist, he intended to write about the incredible attention given to the auction, as well as the mostly unknown cultural/social atmosphere of the Soviet Union. However, he got acquainted with Nonconformist artists from third-generation and spent considerable time in Furmany squat. When he attended Sotheby's, he had already developed a valuable insight on Nonconformist artists, their generational networks, their history spanning to more than a decade, and their artistic concerns. When he was describing the Sotheby's event in his book "The Irony Tower," he offers a two-sided perspective on how Nonconformist artwork decontextualized and transformed into a souvenir during the auction. He mentions a brief interaction with Chairman Simon de Pury, who told him, "This is all a wonderful, giant risk. We know so little about this work we are buying, except that we know it is worth buying."³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.36.

Almost every painting was sold during the auction, and they were sold for inflated prices. Solomon describes the post-auction scene as:

...[while] Simon de Pury was hugging the deputy director of the Ministry of Culture, Sergey Popov [...] one woman exclaimed to another as they left the great room at the Mezh: "I bought his one," pointing at her catalog. "Or else this one. I do not remember which."

"Whichever," said her friend. "As long as you have something to remember tonight by. Wasn't it exciting?"³¹⁹

Although some of the Nonconformist works were sold to people who understood it, most went to people who were shopping for souvenirs. However, if they were not bought as "souvenirs" for such inflated prices, the official Soviet hierarchy would not have been shattered.

Secondly, regarding the artists, the auction, which increased professional interest in Soviet conceptual art, held the potential for a previously unimaginable life. Following Sotheby's, the Nonconformists were officially brought into the public eye. It had been a desired but also a frightening place to be since their life had based on privacy. Their new status as internationally and nationally recognized artists gave them the advantage of traveling freely since the Ministry of Culture started welcoming them with kindness, not because of their art's worth but because they became a prime source of hard currency.

On the other hand, traveling and producing in a new context bring out new questions regarding the status of a Soviet artist and the content of their work. The poet Elizabeth Bishop, in *Questions of Travel*, wrote: "Think of the long trip home. Should we have stayed at home and thought of here? Where would we be today?"³²⁰ While the artists were struggling to produce

³¹⁹ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.36.

³²⁰ Bishop, E. *Questions of Travel*, London: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1965, p. 14.

Soviet art for the Western audience, they also experienced the in-between state where they were forced to discover the difference between the place imagined and the place experienced. Yuri Avvakumov, one of the Paper Architects of Moscow,³²¹ once described the process of studying Western spaces as:

You see the picture; you imagine the building, you imagine yourself with the building, with the building in three dimensions [...] Your mind takes you off into space, traveling through the building. And then you remember, suddenly, that you have only a picture in front of you, and that there could be gross deformities at the back or a strange absence of sensation inside. You remember that all photography is tricky photography.³²²

Although Sotheby's opened a new chapter for the artists' lives, fueling a wave of immigration which was merely possible for Nonconformist artists before. Up until Sotheby's, during a decade long history of the Nonconformist practice, the rare communication with Western art world had been through a few collectors who discovered the existence of the underground art, and through Soviet immigrant artists of previous generations.

The decontextualization of Nonconformist artwork and deformation of Nonconformist art practice had long begun during these interactions when Nonconformist exhibitions were started to be held in western geographies. This chapter focuses on deformations of Nonconformist practice following the artworks and actors traveled to West. The main concern of this chapter, as was in the previous chapters, is to discuss the artworks regarding domestic

³²¹ In 1984, Avvakumov coined the term “paper architecture” to signify a genre of conceptual architectural design in the USSR in the 1980s. Paper Architecture was a genre of conceptual architecture in the USSR in the 1980s, designs that were never built, “projects of projects”. Historically Paper Architecture was a term that appeared in the late 1920s and referred to hare-brained schemes far removed from the vital tasks of the national-economic complex. Purely technically it was the happily found chance to send one’s projects abroad to international competitions of architectural ideas, bypassing the restrictions imposed by Soviet censors. Paper architects of late 1980s was a utopian group found by Avvakumov, and consisted of young architects, who were graduates of the Moscow Architecture Institute.

³²² Avvakumov, Y. Bumazhnaia arkhitektura. Antologiiia [Paper architecture: an anthology], Moscow: Garazh, 2019, p.96.

life and domestic spaces of the Commune. Therefore, especially regarding the re-enactments of the communal room, communal everyday life, and its objects, this section will discuss:

1. De-contextualization of Soviet Nonconformist artwork from its micro-context that had been the artist rooms/apartments (in which it had been produced), to the museum space.
2. De-contextualization of Soviet Nonconformist artwork from its macro-context that had been the Soviet context (to which it had been produced about), to the Western museum space.

Regarding these two primary inquiries, this chapter aims to analyze:

- * the condition of re-building/installing/re-enacting Soviet communal room in a gallery space through Nonconformist artworks,
- * presentation of Soviet context, everyday life and domesticity to the Western audience through Nonconformist artworks,
- * besides, in general, the spatial character of Nonconformist artwork, especially in a comparative analysis, their spaces of exhibition and production shifted.

While analyzing and discussing the points mentioned above, this study historically traces the traveling Nonconformist artworks and artists under two different categories:

The first deals with pre-Perestroika when smuggling artworks could hold the major part of the exhibitions and organizing exhibitions without their artists attending. Therefore, in the first part, the study traces artworks on the move. The main actors in the period before Perestroika had been the collectors of Nonconformist art. Through them, the artworks traveled and were exhibited.

The second part deals with post-Perestroika when the Nonconformist artists began transcending the boundaries of the Soviet Union rather freely. They did not only curate or design their own exhibitions in the Western gallery space but also had the freedom to re-appropriate their works produced for communal rooms to their new contexts.

4.1 On Networks

Since the Nonconformist journey abroad had two stages, one included artworks, and the second included artists, the networks firstly were shaped around artworks, and as a result, around collectors of those artworks, before the artists themselves went abroad and built their own networks.

4.1.1 Networks of Artworks

Although Sotheby's was marked as the first interaction of Nonconformist art to the Western art market, and art scene in general, the introduction of the Soviet conceptual art to the Western art scene was a gradual process started with a few collectors. The Soviet 'underground art' slowly got acquainted with the Western audience following the media scandal after Bulldozer Exhibition until it boomed after Sotheby's auction.

4.1.1.1 'Collector' and 'Artist'

Collecting Nonconformist art was rare not only for actors from the West but also for the few collectors in Moscow. Collecting art, let alone underground art had been a challenge for Muscovite figures, considering the State patronage made the official art museums the sole collector of official art. Individual art collecting was exposed to strict sanctions from the Ministry of Culture, even when the art collection included pieces from 'officially approved' artistic genres, such as the Avant-garde artworks of the 1920s, which had been accepted as part of Soviet official art discourse after Thaw.³²³ However, collecting Nonconformist art was

³²³ As Waltraud Bayer writes in her comprehensive essay on private art collectors in the Soviet Union, the existence of a private collection was rare, but not unique. Moreover, in many cases the state was fully aware of their existence and even provided some support. Already in the late Khrushchev and early Brezhnev periods some private collections of icons and paintings had been made publicly available through donations, foundations, publications and exhibitions, and some private art collections were even given their own museums, such as the Vishnevsky Collection, upon which the museum of V.A. Tropinin and other Moscow artists of his time was based, which opened in 1971.

This type of art collection managed to remain privately owned through the granting of a State-registered title (Okhrannaia gramota). These rare protection certificates, on the one hand, guaranteed the continuity of the

an underground act just as the art practice itself until Perestroika. Therefore, collecting and moving artworks from the Soviet Union to the West was performed illegally. The works were usually smuggled. In some instances, the archival documents, including the photographs and prints of the artworks, found their way to the West, where they were published, re-created, and exhibited.

This chapter will analyze the extreme measures taken to exhibit and introduce Nonconformist artworks to the Western audience through the networks of the artists established through their artworks.

Therefore, the few figures emerged and took the mission of introducing Nonconformist art to the West. While three of them were Western art connoisseurs, the local collectors were the figures from the Nonconformist milieu themselves, who were a ‘lucky few’ having the opportunity to emigrate before Perestroika and carry their Nonconformist heritage with them.

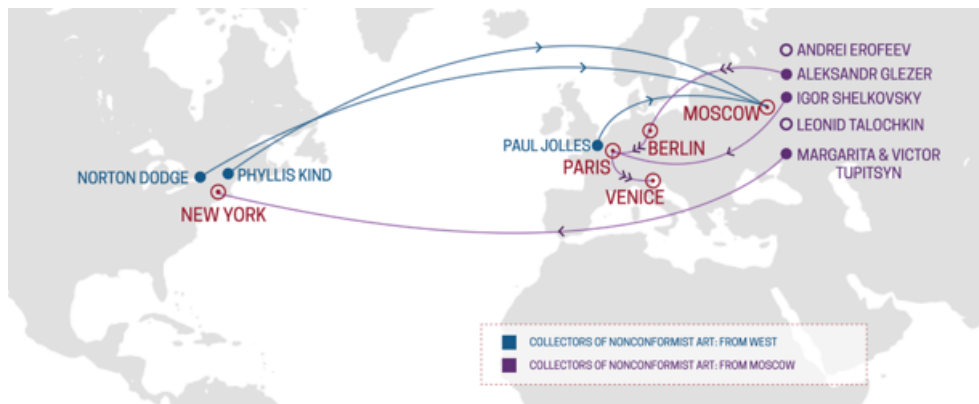


Figure 4.2. Collectors of Nonconformist Art, 1965-1986

Figure by the Author

collection and protected it from confiscation by the state, however on the other hand, they also facilitated state access to the collections and control over them, because whoever was “registered was identified as the owner of a collection”.

Bayer, W. *Gerettete Kultur. Private Kunstsammler in der Sowjetunion 1917-1991*, Wien: Turia & Kant, 2006, p. 15.

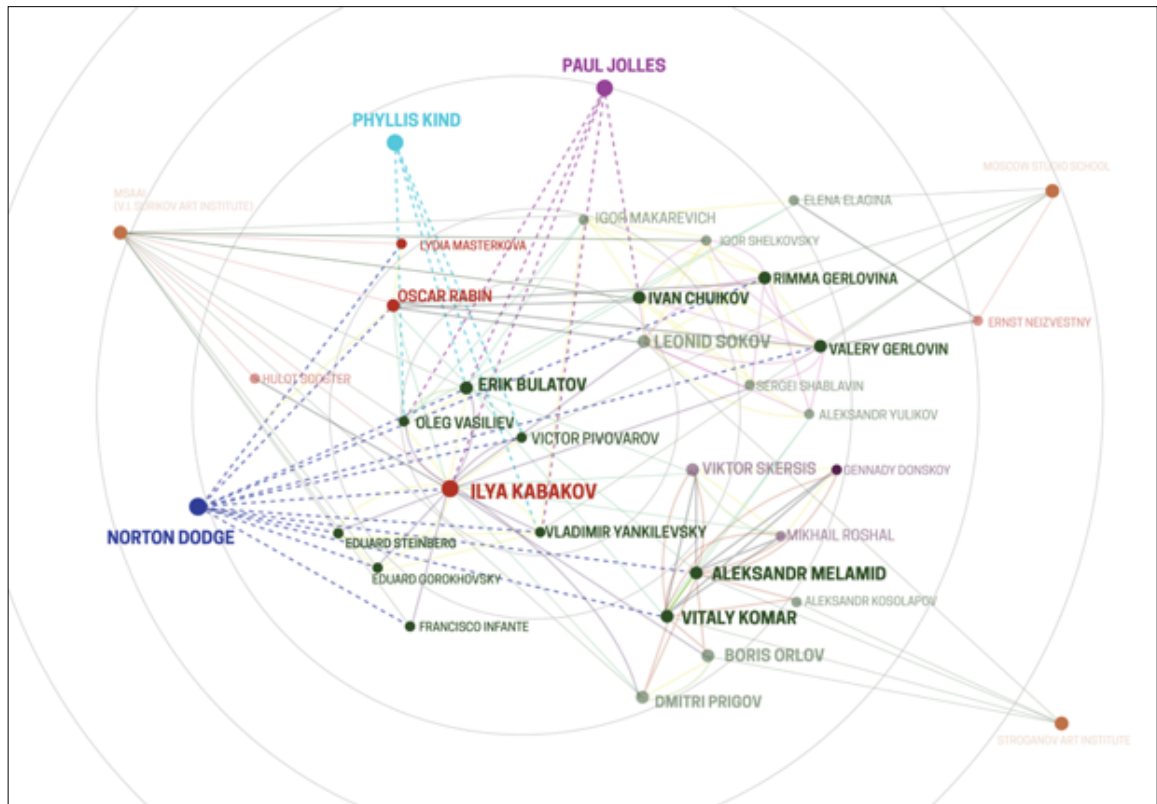


Figure 4.3. Network of collectors and Nonconformist artists, 1965-1986

Figure by the Author

4.1.1.2 ‘Suitcase Art’: Smugglers of Unofficial Art: 1975-1986

Leonid Bazhanov, the founder of the Hermitage Association, states that the art market for Nonconformist artists emerged in the 1970s, and either journalists or diplomats mostly formed it.³²⁴ One reason behind it was the restrictions on the travel of foreign citizens to the Soviet Union. The group of people having the most freedom of movement in and out of the Union was diplomats and journalists. The other factor was the lack of demand, not only for the

³²⁴ Bazhanov, L. “Seventies are a new artistic way of thinking”, in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.26.

touristic excursions to the Soviet Union but also to Nonconformist art since the genre itself was pretty much unknown to the Western audience. Therefore, Soviet conceptual art and Moscow Nonconformist artists were introduced to the West by three prominent figures: Norton Dodge, Paul Jolles, and Phyllis Kind, the first two being Western officials. These figures had been operating behind the scenes long before Sotheby's, at a time the circulation of Nonconformist artworks was forbidden and posed a danger for the artists themselves. Therefore, first-generation Nonconformist artists and collectors came up with a solution by-passing the restrictions of the system: Artists produced works based on the size of a suitcase for collectors to fit them in their luggage and smuggled them abroad minimizing the detection of the artworks. As a result of this, two generations of Nonconformist artists' works traveled and were exhibited abroad without their authors attending, while the peculiarly sized works came to be known as "Suitcase Art" in the Nonconformist circle.

Out of the three collectors, Norton Dodge was the first to discover the existence and value of Nonconformist art. Norton Dodge, who had been doing his Ph.D. on Soviet Economics at Harvard University, decided to visit the Soviet Union to research "the importance of the Soviet Union's economic growth of technology transfer and the development of human capital" in 1955. It was the first of his many visits, and his first introduction to not underground art, but an underground culture through samizdat literature. Dodge states: "I felt that someone should try to develop a similar record for the visual arts. However, 1955 was too early since Intourist³²⁵ was then in complete charge of the daily routines of all visitors. An unauthorized meeting between an American and a dissident artist might have created trouble for the artist."³²⁶

Norton Dodge came back to Moscow in 1962. His first contact with the Nonconformist art was at the apartment of George Costakis, the great Moscow collector of avant-garde art of the

³²⁵ In 1930s, the Soviet Union wanted to attract foreign tourists to bring in currency and improve its external image. On Stalin's initiative, a national tourist agency was founded, and it was named "Intourist". Intourist was responsible for attracting, accommodating and escorting all foreign guests. See: Intourist Guide to Soviet Union, Vneshtorgisdat, 1932.

³²⁶ "Interview with Norton Dodge", in Baigell, R. & Baigell, M. (eds.) *Soviet Dissident Artists: Interviews After Perestroika*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001, p. 27.

1920s as well as of Nonconformists. Costakis had been a legendary figure in the history of Soviet art collecting. Although he was a Greek citizen, he was born and lived in Moscow for most of his life, until he emigrated to Greece in 1977.

In 1946, he stumbled across his first works of avant-garde art by Olga Rozanova. Then he began seeking works of Soviet experimental painters who had been active between 1910-1930 and started displaying them on the walls of his apartment on 59, Vernadsky Prospekt, Moscow. "At a time when modernist art was hidden from view in the storerooms of Soviet museums," states Yelena Kalinsky, "Costakis's private collection, which he displayed on the walls of his home, became Moscow's [first] unofficial museum of modern art."³²⁷ Costakis's apartment also became a meeting place for international art collectors and Nonconformist artists between the 1960s to 1977.

Costakis's apartment also had been a place to access to the avant-garde legacy for Nonconformist artists. Costa's in his memoirs describes his relationship with the Nonconformist milieu as:

We developed very close and amicable relationships. They would often visit me to look at paintings or to show me their own works. And I frequently called on them at their workshops [...] you might say that I performed the role of a kind of father-patron. After all, nobody was interested in the youth back then. Every day, I would go either to some [apartment] exhibition or visit friends. Something was always happening – the life of a collector abounds with impressions.³²⁸

Costakis had the chance to emigrate in 1977, but in return for his papers of emigration, the Ministry of Culture demanded his collection as a 'gift,' and he left a large portion of his collection as a gift to the State Tretyakov Gallery. Although he had left Moscow, Costakis's

³²⁷ Kalinsky, Y. "Costakis Collection", in *Parallel Chronologies: An Archive of East European Exhibitions*, accessed at: <http://tranzit.org/exhibitionarchive/costakis-collection/>

³²⁸ Costakis, G. *Moi avangard: Vospominaniia kolleksionera [My Avant-Garde: Memoirs of a Collector]* Moscow: Modus Graffiti, 1993, p. 88-90.

apartment was the first place for art connoisseurs to visit and meet unofficial artists. One of those art connoisseurs was Norton Dodge, who had been a primary figure for Nonconformist artists in the following periods.



Figure 4.4. George Costakis apartment, early 1970s, 59, Vernadsky Prospekt, Moscow
Peter Roberts personal archive, "Costakis: A Russian Life in Art"



Figure 4.5. George Costakis at the workshop of Vladimir Yankilevsky, late 1970s
Peter Roberts personal archive, "Costakis: A Russian Life in Art"

Norton Dodge visited Costakis's apartment during his visit in 1962. He remembers: "his incredible collection of nonconformist art [...] was crammed into rooms, under beds and sofas and covering every wall and even part of the ceiling."³²⁹ In Costakis's apartment, Dodge firstly met Liazonovo group artists Oscar Rabin, and Lydia Masterkova. He went back to New York with a small painting that would fit in his suitcase, and that constituted the beginning of his collection. In 1974, during Dodge's third visit, Costakis introduced him to the artist Boris Steinberg, brother of Eduard Steinberg. Boris Sternberg then introduced Dodge to Tatyana Kolodzei. Dodge writes: "A major breakthrough in my collecting story was when I met Tatyana Kolodzei, an art historian and then-wife of the collector-archivist Leonid Talochkin."³³⁰

A pattern soon developed that was repeated each time I came to Moscow. [...] I would meet Tatyana, we would then visit two, three, four artists before late-night exhaustion set in. She had already become a major Moscow collector.³³¹

Through Kolodzei, Dodge met Kabakov, Yankilevsky, Gorokhovsky, Infante, Gerlovins, Komar and Melamid, Pivovarov, and others. He especially remembers his meeting with Kabakov:

To reach his studio, one had to climb many flights of stairs to the attic of the building, and then walk along planks laid end to end across the heavy ceiling beams of the floor below. These led to a large, heavy door opening into a spectacular studio space under the building's peaked roof.³³²

³²⁹ Interview with Norton Dodge", in Baigell, R. & Baigell, M. (eds.) *Soviet Dissident Artists: Interviews After Perestroika*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001, p. 27.

³³⁰ Dodge, N. "Notes on Collecting Nonconformist Soviet Art", in Rosenfeld, A. & Dodge, N. (eds.), *Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience 1956-1986*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995, p. 10.

³³¹ *Ibid*, p.11.

³³² *Ibid*, p.12.

Dodge followed and participated in several major apartment exhibitions through the 1970s, as well as Nonconformists' attempts of official recognition in VDNKh's Beekeeping Pavilion and House of Culture. At a time when Western knowledge on a Soviet conceptual art was non-existent, Norton Dodge was one of the first people to try to "record the struggle for artistic freedom in the Soviet Union." Since he thought it would not be possible to bring artworks themselves to the West, he began photographing art in apartments, rooms, and artist workshops at apartment exhibitions, as well as in collections of Western diplomats and journalists in the Soviet Union as well as in the West. These photographic records were vital, not only for archiving the artists' works until collectors found a way to smuggle especially the large size artworks out of the country. They were also extremely significant when collectors arranged exhibitions in the West with Nonconformist artworks without their artists. As will be discussed, the re-enactments of first Nonconformist exhibitions were generally curated based on these photographic records of Dodge and other collectors, as well as of artists themselves.

In the spring of 1977, after Dodge had squeezed six trips into four years, he curated his first major exhibition on Nonconformist Art titled "New Art from the Soviet Union," in Washington, D.C. His frequent visits had started posing suspicion for the Soviet authorities by that point, and he states, after the exhibition, "I assumed the Soviet authorities knew what I had been up to if they had not known it already." Therefore, he had to take a break from visiting Moscow until Perestroika; however, Dodge started supporting the Muscovite collectors as well as artists emigrated to New York until 1991.

While Norton Dodge was collecting works for his future exhibition, Paul Jolles, a wealthy Swiss diplomat for foreign economic affairs and chairman of Nestlé, who, with his daughter, Claudia, had been connoisseurs of and advocate for underrepresented art starting from the mid-1970s. Their involvement with Moscow Nonconformist art began in 1974, just before Jolles was appointed as a Swiss official to Moscow when Jolleses visited an exhibition in Galerie Ziegler in Zurich. The exhibition showed works from Kabakov, Bulatov, and Yankilevsky, which were brought to Zurich by a Slavish expert as souvenirs from her trip abroad. The Zurich exhibition was considered irrelevant and was not even commented on in the press; however, Soviet conceptual art intrigued Paul Jolles and her daughter. Paul Jolles

mentions in his memoir that when he asked Kabakov about how the works he had seen in Zurich ended up being exhibited, Kabakov told him that "it was such a terrible sight that they readily accepted any suggestion to take their works abroad at any price and without knowing where their works were going."³³³

Therefore, when Jolles had the opportunity for an official visit to Moscow regarding a global economic exploratory mission in 1978, he took his chance at finding the unofficial artists he had encountered in the Zurich exhibition. His first act was asking the Swiss embassy staff to locate the artists he had seen in the Zurich show. Jolles first met with Kabakov, whom he had developed a close relationship over the years. In Kabakov's studio, he says, he was "warmly received. Kabakov immediately took me to meet the other artists. They were not remotely competitive; they all wanted to introduce me to one another, and I bought some small works, drawings mostly, from the people I met."³³⁴ In his first visit, Jolles met Kabakov, Bulatov, Yankilevsky, and Ivan Chuikov in 1978. In 1984, he came back, bringing his daughter Claudia with him.



Figure 4.6. Paul and Claudia Jolles visiting Erik Bulatov, Moscow, 1984
Paul Jolles personal archive, "Memento aus Moskau"

³³³ Jolles, P. *Memento aus Moskau. Begegnungen mit inoffiziellen Künstlern 1978 - 1997* [Memento from Moscow. Encounters with unofficial artists from 1978 to 1997], Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1997, p.27.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.28.



Figure 4.7. Vladimir Yankilevsky, Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Paul Jolles, Ivan Chuikov, Moscow, 1984
Paul Jolles personal archive, “Memento aus Moskau”



Figure 4.8. Paul Jolles and Ivan Chuikov, Moscow, 1984
Paul Jolles personal archive, “Memento aus Moskau”



Figure 4.9. Ilya Kabakov showing his albums to potential collectors, Claudia Jolles in the middle, Moscow, 1984
Paul Jolles personal archive, “Memento aus Moskau”

Jolleses, like Dodge, visited the artists and documented their artworks. Later, when Paul Jolles returned to Europe, he presented these records to Jean-Hubert Martin, then-director of the Kunsthalle in Berne and the Centre Pompidou. It was the first significant act of international recognition for Nonconformist artists. Martin showed great enthusiasm, especially for Kabakov; however, as Jolles stated, "there was no possibility of getting official Soviet approbation or export permits," and since Paul Jolles had an official title, quietly transferring the art out of the country was out of the question. Instead, he reached out to wealthy Swiss families to 'adopt' individual paintings for their names by donating to the Ministry of Culture a small fee. As a result:

...the authorities did not review paintings exported by individuals for private collections as they did those taken out for exhibitions or resale. Delays were terrible, but the paintings eventually began to arrive in the West, each with stamped export documents, across which the authorities had written: "Of No Artistic Value."³³⁵

³³⁵ Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower. Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf Publishing Group, 1991, p.42.

By 1985, the Jolleses had enough work to organize an exhibition. As a result, Claudia Jolles reached out to Jean-Hubert Martin for an exhibition in Kunsthalle in Berne. Then she reached out to Kabakov, who was still in Moscow and presented him with a list of work and a floor plan of the gallery where she and Martin would co-curate his exhibition. Kabakov designed the show from afar. In the summer of 1986, it opened in the Kunsthalle in Berne. Later, Claudia Jolles helped Kabakov and Bulatov to emigrate from Moscow, and she has been responsible for curatorial and organizational processes of some of the most significant Nonconformist exhibitions between 1986-1991.



Figure 4.10. Ilya Kabakov and Paul Jolles working on the planning of the exhibition in Kunsthalle in Bern, Moscow, 1986
Paul Jolles personal archive, “Memento aus Moskau”

Phyllis Kind was a gallery owner from Chicago who had always been intrigued by alternative forms of art. In her words, early in her career, she "developed an interest in contemporary outsiders." She opened her gallery in New York in 1975 and visited Moscow for an excursion in 1986, just before Kabakov had emigrated, and the before gentle breezes of Perestroika had yet to come.

Kind visited Moscow for a future project titled "International Book" planned to be featuring artists from all over the world. The project crew was interested in including Soviet artists in the book; therefore, the sponsors of the project assembled a team of delegates, including Phyllis Kind to review the works. Kind mainly came to Moscow as an official delegate; however, she heard of the existence of Nonconformist artists beforehand when Margarita Tupitsyn, who emigrated to New York a decade ago, gave her a copy of the tamizdat A-YA edited by Shelkovsky together with artists' apartments addresses before her trip.

In February 1986, Kind got acquainted with Oleg Vasiliev, whom she has supported during his entire Western journey and career. Through Vasiliev, Kind got acquainted with Nonconformist artists of two generations. Unlike Dodge and Jolles, Kind's relationship to the Nonconformist milieu had started with artists belonging to the different generations since, by the time she visited Moscow, the Nonconformist practice had already been established and neatly practicing as an 'unofficial institution.' She especially was interested in MANI Folders and archival practices of second-generation Nonconformists; therefore, she got close to Vadim Zakharov and George Kiesewalter.

By the time Kind had visited, Zakharov and Kiesewalter were editing the album "Around the Workshops" to be published in MANI Folders. Therefore, after meeting with Kind, they gave her a copy of the album, hoping that it would be published, or better exhibited in New York. However, when Kind was preparing to leave, the agents from KGB visited her hotel room and confiscated the album. One week later, on July 5, 1986, there appeared an article in the newspaper "Sovetskaya Kultura" (The Soviet Culture) titled "The Fish in the Muddy Water." The following is an excerpt from the article:

Everything began in the hotel "Intourist" where American citizen Phyllis Kind was staying. ... The administration of the hotel found a very voluminous manuscript in her room during cleaning, and not just a manuscript but a mock-up of a book already prepared for publication, with textual planning, photo illustrations, and a sketch of the cover. On the same day, in Moscow Sheremetyevo Airport by flight No: 311 of the Lufthansa airlines, the delegation to which Kind was a part of was to fly to Frankfurt am Main. In the customs examination of her hand luggage, our officials discovered the same figures [Nonconformists] in photographs, and in slides bound up the same with the voluminous manuscript found in the hotel room. [These are] the same scaffoldings were made in those cellars [artist rooms], blasphemously offending the feelings of Soviet people.

What is next? On further inspection, two standard sheets of typewritten text or rather the instructions written in English were found. They consisted of the addresses of workshops of Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Eduard Steinberg, and a number of other artists. Furthermore, they [apparently] ended up in Kind's luggage "by chance." [There were also] illustrated articles that were repeatedly published in the "unofficial Russian journal of the fine art A-YA" published by I. Shelkovsky while addresses were typed against each name, up to the numbers of the entrance, apartment, and telephone numbers, so that Phyllis Kind would have her Moscow routes.

Apparently, the head of the American delegation did not know that Igor Shelkovsky is by no means a respectable cultural critic. In the past, as the failed sculptor he is, he surrendered himself to foreigners, seeking approval for his unrecognized talent. However, it turned out that talent was not found in foreign lands either. [...] Deprived of Soviet citizenship, Shelkovsky was recruited to serve as an ideological saboteur and is now working as the editor of the anti-Soviet magazine "A-YA," which breathes a truly unquenchable hatred for our country.

So, we ask, Ms. Kind, who and on whose recommendations accompanied you on your Moscow trip?³³⁶

³³⁶ Olshevsky, V. "The Fish in the Muddy Water", Sovetskaya Kultura, July 5, 1986.



Figure 4.11. The article “The Fish in the Muddy Water”, Sovetskaya Kultura, July 5, 1986
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Leonid Talochkin archive

The article was published only a couple of months before the official advent of Perestroika. Phyllis Kind had lost the records of albums while she was leaving; however, she managed to smuggle artworks with which she opened an exhibition in May 1987, titled "Direct from Moscow!"

4.1.1.3 Collectors from ‘Home’: Networks of Soviet Art Collectors and Their Footprints

While Dodge, Jolles, and Kind were forming their collections, a small group of Muscovites was interested in forming a collection of their own, too. As explained above, the collectors of Nonconformist art from Moscow had usually been in, or close to the Nonconformist circle.

However, the fact that they were born into the Soviet context and got to observe the evolution of Nonconformist practice was not the only significance differentiating Soviet collectors from their Western peers. The collectors and collections will be referred here are emigre Soviet intellectuals who had spent a considerable amount of their time to collecting before their emigration. After their emigration, they spent even more time on organizing Nonconformist artworks without their authors present in the West.

Moreover, the destinations of collectors, and therefore artworks formed a network of relationships, easing while paving the way of artists to follow. Many artists followed the path previously was traversed by their artworks and emigrated to destinations only to benefit from networks built by their artworks, of course, with the help of Soviet collectors. Therefore, the graph showing the emigre collector destinations present two cities dominantly occupied by Nonconformists. This section will examine the Paris excursion of Glezer and Shelkovsky, and New York excursion by Tupitsyns while trying to map the networks built on artworks.

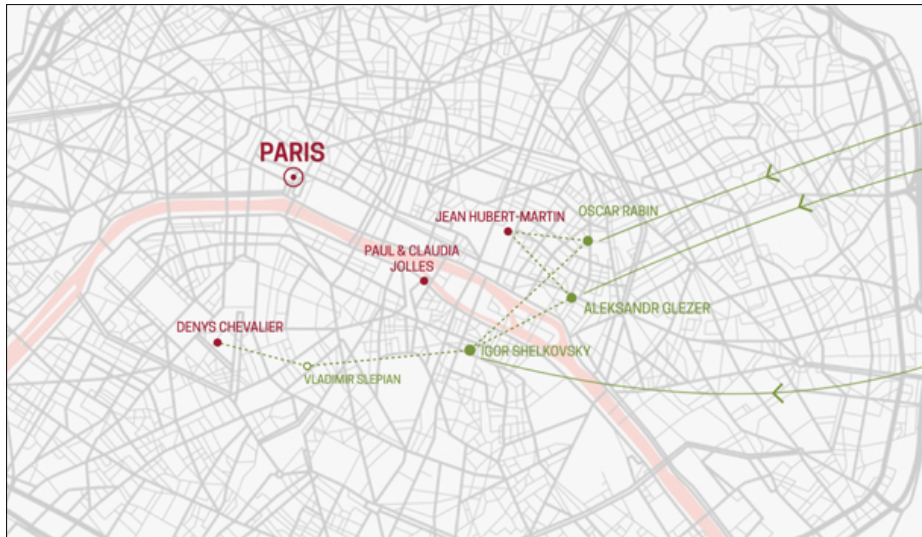


Figure 4.12. Network of collectors and Nonconformist artworks, 1975-1986, Paris
Figure by the Author

Aleksandr Glezer was one of the closest figures to the Liazonovo group in the 1960s; however, he developed close ties to first-generation Nonconformist artists during the 1970s until his

emigration in 1975. He started collecting works of Rabin and Masterkova, and later Kabakov, Sooster, and Yankilevsky contributed to Glezer's collection. He had been one of the central figures organizing the Bulldozer exhibition together with Oscar Rabin. Therefore, he had the same pressure to leave the Union as Rabin. Glezer benefitted the forced freedom that State had to provide for unofficial artists during the post-Bulldozer period to keep a low profile on the international arena. In 1975 Alexander Glezer, together with art historian Igor Golomshtok, left Moscow for Paris and took his collection abroad, where he immediately began actively organizing exhibitions.



Figure 4.13. Aleksandr Glezer, collection in his Moscow apartment, 1974
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Igor Palmin archive

Starting from Paris, Glezer started a crusade with his collection. He immediately organized a series of exhibitions throughout Europe. In the first year of its exhibition marathon, Glezer collection was shown in in the Künstlerhaus in Vienna (February 22 –2 March 1975), Braunschweig (May 11 –22 June), Freiburg (October 17 –16 November), and Kunstamt Berlin-Charlottenburg (November 7 –5 December).³³⁷

In late December, in 1975, Alexander Glezer returned to Paris, and together with Oscar Rabin, he contacted Jean-Hubert Martin, the chairman of Centre Pompidou, who at the time was preparing for the exhibit "Paris-Moskau" upon the works Paul Jolles brought from Moscow. With the help of Martin, Glezer opened the Russian Museum in Exile at Montgeron near Paris on January 24, 1976. The museum acted as a depository for Glezer's collection. After an intense period of 2 years of traveling, Glezer collection was permanently displayed in the Museum of Exile. The Museum did not only act as an intermediary for introducing Nonconformist art to Europe, but Glezer's efforts also laid the base of artistic networking for latter emigre Nonconformists moving to Paris, including Shelkovsky, Bulatov, and Alekseev.



Figure 4.14. Russian Museum in Exile at Montgeron near Paris, 1976
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional Archive

³³⁷ Golomshtok, I. and Glezer, A. *Soviet Art in Exile*, New York: Random House, 1977.

See also: Erofeev, A. *Non-Official Art: Soviet Artists of the 1960s*, Roseville East, NSW, Australia: Craftsman House, 1995; (Non)conform: *Russian and Soviet Art 1958–1995: The Ludwig Collection*, Munich/Berlin/London/New York: Prestel, 1995; Schröder, T. "Aus Moskau verjagt: Bilder im Exil," *Die Zeit* 12, 14 March 1975, p.15.



Figure 4.15. Article introducing Russian Museum of Exile, *Le Monde*, 1976
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional Archive

Although Bulatov and Alekseev emigrated to Paris in the late 1980s, Shelkovsky arrived in 1976. His primary intention was to practice art in Paris, but he ended up forming an alternative form of a collection of Nonconformist art, one that was published on paper as *tamizdat*.

In Paris, Shelkovsky had two different networks. The first one was around Glezer, Rabin, and Soviet dissident intellectuals, including Vladimir Maximov, a dissident writer who had been publishing the *samizdat* "The Third Wave." With Glezer and Rabin, he got close to Hubert-martin on the one hand. On the other hand, he met with the Czech artist Vladimir Slepian who took him to the House of Artists (Maison des Artistes) to help him find a studio. Shelkovsky met the well-known art critic and the founder of the Salon de la Jeune Sculpture³³⁸ (The Young Sculpture), Denys Chevalier, through the House of Artists. The young Sculpture was a moving exhibition, held in various places of Paris from the museum of modern art of the city of Paris to the gardens of the Champs-Élysées, between 1948-1990. When Shelkovsky heard about the

³³⁸ The foundation of the Association of Young Sculpture in 1948 is the work of Denys Chevalier and Pierre Descargues, both art writers, surrounded by a group of sculptors. The primary objective of the association was the organization of an annual sculpture exhibition intended to publicize contemporary trends and, although they were non-exclusive, it was mainly interested in non-figurative art. The fair was inaugurated on May 14, 1949, in the garden and chapel of the Rodin museum in Paris. The first Salon welcomed 63 sculptors. Quickly, the Young Sculpture Fair became an important meeting for many artists and more than 200 artists were thus gathered in the 1970s. The last fair was held in 1990.

Salon, they were preparing their annual exhibition at the UNESCO courtyard, and an artist circle without a permanent exhibition space was the closest thing to a Moscow Nonconformist habitat that Shelkovsky could find in Europe.



Figure 4.16. Poster for the Salon de la Jeune Sculpture exhibition, 1966
Archives des musées nationaux Expositions, Salons, Expositions universelles, Online catalog

Denys Chevalier introduced Shelkovsky to sculptures and publishers, as well as other art connoisseurs. He also helped Shelkovsky to build his workshop in the historical Knights' Templar, the monastery later transformed into a center for artists to work and exhibit. Shelkovsky states:

The old monastery of the Knights' Templar was restored and turned into a cultural center. A long barn of the XVII century with thick stone walls and a roof

of up to ten meters was divided into eight compartments, and each of them was a studio for the sculptors. A concrete floor, a large sink, glass doors of huge sizes that even large sculptures could bring in and taken out. Everything was new, down to the needles.³³⁹

In this workshop, Shelkovsky started editing, binding, and publishing A-YA. The first samizdat dedicated to Soviet Nonconformist art, the foundations of A-YA was long laid before Shelkovsky left Moscow, during a reading session at Gerlovins' apartment in 1975. The magazine later became an archive of Nonconformist art. Moreover, it became an artist catalog, and exhibition catalog and a virtual museum presenting Nonconformist works to the Western audience. Shelkovsky's account is different from other collectors, in the sense that he started collecting after he emigrated only to publish materials in A-YA.



Figure 4.17. Francisco Infante visiting Igor Shelkovsky in his Paris workshop at Knights' Templar monastery, 1983
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

³³⁹ Shelkovsky, I. "In Memory" in Tupitsyn, V. *Krug obshcheniya [The Milieu]*, Moscow: NLO, 2013, p.126.



Figure 4.18. “Soviet Artists in Paris”, article from Artnews, May 1981. Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive



Figure 4.19. Network of collectors and Nonconformist artworks, 1975-1986, New York
Figure by the author

Margarita Tupitsyn once stated that: " Nonconformist art gained its international status in New York thanks to the efforts of not only artists but also critics integrated to American discourse as agents and collectors of Soviet Nonconformist art."³⁴⁰ Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn took this role of introducing Nonconformist art to the New York audience.

Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn emigrated to New York with the help of Norton Dodge after the scandal of the Bulldozer exhibition in 1975. Victor Tupitsyn was held in custody following the exhibition due to his essential role in organizing the exhibition. Tupitsyns, like Glezer, faced rather harsh treatments from the authorities, unlike some of their peers who had the 'opportunity' to exhibit in VDNKh. These harsh treatments, on the one hand, forced them to leave, and on the other hand, bureaucratically made it easy to leave since Soviet legislation on immigration was loosened briefly following the Bulldozer exhibition.

Upon emigrating to New York, Margarita Tupitsyn started her Master's degree, which she had finished in 1980. In the meantime, Tupitsyns preserved close contact with Norton Dodge who introduced them to the American art dealer Eduard Nakhamkin, who is an emigre who moved to the United States in 1975 from Riga, Latvia, where he was a mathematics professor at the Polytechnical Institute. Nakhamkin had been sponsoring artists and collectors to open gallery spaces in SoHo, New York, and was close to Phyllis Kind. By late 1980, Tupitsyns met with Kind, and Margarita Tupitsyn had her doctoral dissertation at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Right about that time, Margarita Tupitsyn was offered to curate a Moscow Nonconformist exhibition at the University of Maryland entitled "Nonconformists: Contemporary Commentary from the Soviet Union." This was the first exhibition designed and curated by one of the Nonconformist milieu, and also solely dedicated to Nonconformist art.

The exhibition echoed in the New York art scene, and soon after, Nakhamkin offered Tupitsyns to open an exhibition space solely dedicated to Soviet contemporary art. With the space provided by Eduard Nakhamkin on the corner of Houston and Broadway on number 599, in SoHo New York, the Contemporary Russian Art Center of America (CRACA) opened

³⁴⁰ Tupitsyna, M. & Tupitsyn, V. Moscow-New York, Moscow: WAM, No:21, 2006, p. 231-232.

in 1981. CRACA had been active for over a year and closed in 1982. However, it provided essential connections for Moscow Nonconformist artists not only because Nonconformists had a permanent exhibition space in New York, but also because that exhibition space was located in the heart of New York art scene in SoHo, wherein following years allowed emigre Nonconformists to meet and collaborate with New Yorker artists. That was where Komar and Melamine met Warhol and organized a joint performance, as well as Gerlovins, Sokov, and Kosolapov frequently visited, even lived nearby.



Figure 4.20. Installation view, CRACA, 1982
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive



Figure 4.21. Margarita Tupitsyn, Norton Dodge and Rimma Gerlovina at CRACA, 1981
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive



Figure 4.22. Installation view, CRACA, 1982
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

Glezer, Shelkovsky, and Tupitsyns laid the foundation of networking for their future emigre peers. Although their collections were formed in different ways, they all adapted to the geography they have taken their collections to. While Glezer designed a moving exhibition, Shelkovsky chose an exhibition method on paper as a continuation of a long-standing underground tradition of samizdat. Meanwhile, Tupitsyns chose to build a Nonconformist exhibition space in alien geography to exhibit their collections. As will be discussed in the next section, "On Artworks," the methods of presenting Nonconformist artwork changed for each collection, for each collector, and in each geography. The change in methods determined the way of the content or message of the artworks transmitting to the Western audience. Since the artworks were exhibited firstly without their artists present, the initial contact between Western audience and Soviet Nonconformist work was provided by the collectors.

While some collectors chose to leave Moscow and introduce the Nonconformist practice to abroad, those who were patient enough to stay, slowly gained an official status and an official space for their collection after Perestroika. One example of the case is Leonid Talochkin. Having been actively involved in Moscow's unofficial circle, Talochkin became a chronicler and archiver of Nonconformist art. Due to his close connections with many artists, by the late 1970s, he had collected almost 600 works belonged to Lianozovo artists and first-generation Nonconformists. Talochkin's collection resided in his room; however, the building shared the same destiny with Furmany squat and was due to be demolished. Therefore, the long-term preservation of the collection became an urgent issue for Talochkin. Aleksander Khalturin, then the Director of the Administration of Fine Arts and Cultural Heritage and an acquaintance of Talochkin, suggested that he should register the collection as a "cultural heritage" benefitting from a newly issued legislation in 1978.³⁴¹ Two days later, Talochkin was allocated a two-bedroom apartment for himself and the artworks, as the artworks were recognized as the heritage of the USSR. Talochkin speculates that the reason was both an attempt to gain better control over the artworks,³⁴² while also being influenced by the financial opportunities

³⁴¹ Talochkin, L. Mne prosto darili kartiny [I was just gifted the paintings]. Interview by Nikita Alekseev in *Insotranets* [Foreigner], 2000, no. 9, p. 7.

³⁴² Talochkin, L. Other art of Leonid Talochkin, interview by Ina Makharashvili, in *Russkaia mysl'* [Russian thought], no.4316, 2000, p. 15.

unofficial art could provide after all the authorities realized post-Bulldozer recognition and demand for unofficial art was increasing.³⁴³ Later Talochkin initiated the Hermitage association with Leonid Bazhanov and put his collection into the exhibition. Especially after the project: Retrospective, the Hermitage association was planned to be one of the key places in Moscow to hold and present the historical pieces of Nonconformist art. While Talochkin's collection found itself a somehow permanent exhibition space in Hermitage association, Andrei Erofeev compiling a collection that was designed to have no permanent exhibition space.



Figure 4.23. Leonid Talochkin, AptArt Behind the Fence
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

³⁴³ Romer, F. Relics. Pennies from heaven. (Dissidents of Union-wide importance. Collection of Leonid Talochkin displayed in RGGU takes Russian contemporary art a quarter of a century back) in *Itogi* [Conclusions], 7 March 2000.

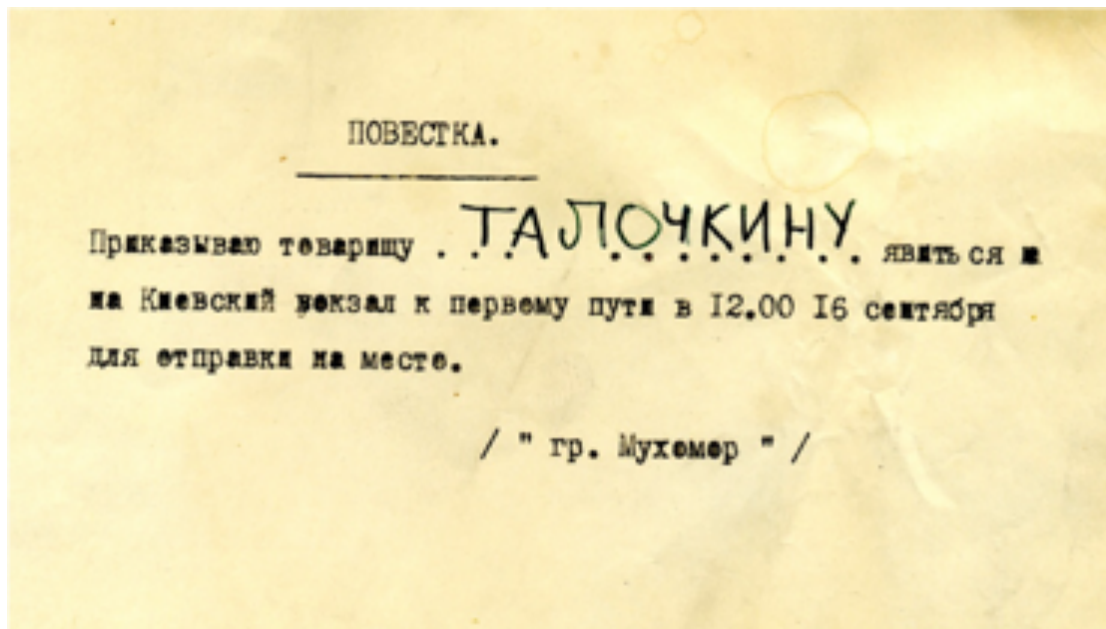


Figure 4.24. Invitation for Leonid Talochkin to the performance of the Mukhomors Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive

In the late 1980s, a group of Moscow art historians, headed by Andrei Erofeev, one of the co-curators of Retrospective in Hermitage, took the lead for building a collection of contemporary art with an emphasis on installation and performance.

In 1989, I was invited to join the newly founded Tsaritsyno Museum (then a museum of folk and applied art). The aim was to build a collection of contemporary art in a state institution, something which had not existed since the 1930s. At the height of Perestroika, some officials saw the absence of a contemporary art museum as a flaw in our culture.³⁴⁴

Viktor Egorychev, the recently appointed vice-director of the research department, offered Erofeev the opportunity to develop a strategy for the future collection and to demonstrate it in practice through a series of exhibitions. In June 1989, the Museum established a department

³⁴⁴ Erofeev, A. "Building a museum through curating exhibitions," in Fowle, K. and Addison, R. (eds.), *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade*, Moscow: Art Guide, 2016, p. 113.

of contemporary trends, with Erofeev became the Head of the Department of Contemporary Art at the Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve. There was one major issue, which Erofeev transformed into a hallmark very similar to Aleksandr Glezer's moving museum: an exhibition without a museum.

What Erofeev suggested was to pre-design the exhibitions. He drafted an exhibition program constituted of three consecutive shows: To the Object, In Rooms, and The Artist Instead of the Artwork. The exhibitions were pre-curated: Erofeev managed to ensemble a considerable amount of photo documentation, installations, and sculptures, and firstly formed the permanent collection. Then he designed three different exhibitions out of that collection. For the years between 1990-1994, the works traveled around various Russian and international venues (including the Netherlands, Germany, Slovakia, and Montenegro).

Erofeev asserts that "as Tsaritsyno had no exhibition space of its own, we had to create an exhibition without a museum,"³⁴⁵ or with multiple museums. The show was formed on not building a museum for unofficial art, but "on building a collection."³⁴⁶ Although, Erofeev's initial idea was to hold an exhibition without a museum was successful, and his moving exhibitions managed to reach audiences from various geographies, most of the time especially between exhibitions, the collection was kept in storage in a former bomb shelter on the territory of Tsaritsyno.

By organizing an exhibition without a museum, Erofeev tried to give a historical reference to the long-standing Nonconformist tradition of exhibiting without an exhibition space. Meanwhile, he tried to transform the concept of "alternative exhibition space" itself and reinterpret the alternative exhibition as an exhibition consisting of "an alternative plan of exhibiting," hence in Tsaritsyno case, a collection without a museum. Ironically, the majority

³⁴⁵ Erofeev, A. "Building a museum through curating exhibitions," in Fowle, K. and Addison, R. (eds.), *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade*, Moscow: Art Guide, 2016, p. 114.

³⁴⁶ Levashov, V. "In other genre," in *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo* [Decorative art], 396: 11, 1990, p.8.

of artworks never reached display and were forever buried in storage, fell victim to the same system Erofeev had been criticizing.

However, even with its defects, Tsaritsyno collection gives one significant reference to the heritage of Nonconformist practice, which had been the moving artworks without their artists. Even though the collection was formed after Perestroika and artists had the freedom to move, Erofeev intended to re-enact the Nonconformist tradition of "exhibition without its artists," and "exhibition without a museum." The former represented the Nonconformist journey in the West, while the latter referenced to Nonconformist history in Moscow.

4.2 Network of Artists

4.2.1 On Immigration

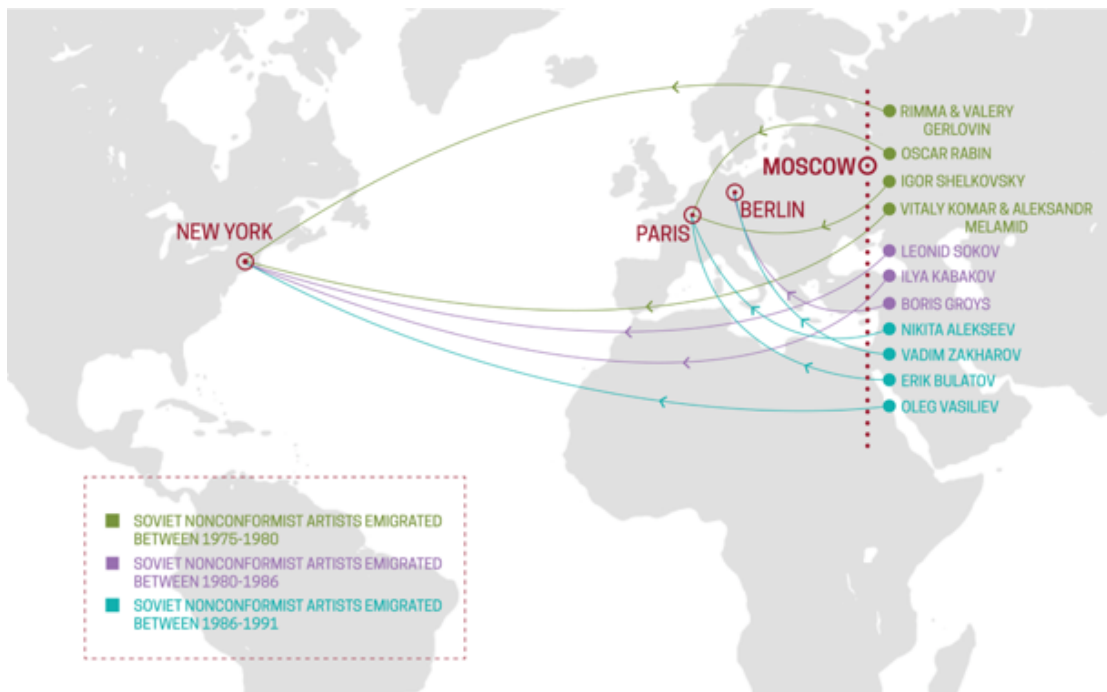


Figure 4.25. Nonconformist emigre routes, 1975-1991
Figure by the Author

Although almost three-decades-long Nonconformist practice experienced significant waves of immigration, the artworks of the artists always were one step ahead of them in terms of recognition. One of the main reasons was that the artworks were moved collectively before the artists could.

The first emigration wave spread on an extended five-year period between 1975-1980, and as far as the Western art scene concerned, they were individual artists moving out of the Soviet Union rather than a community being built up in Western cities. Therefore, it required a certain amount of time until the artists were regarded as members of a collective movement rather than individual Soviet artists. It was not until Tupitsyns built CRACA in New York in 1981, and Shelkovsky started publishing A-YA in late 1979 that the emigre Nonconformist artists started being recognized as a part of their Soviet culture, heritage, and Nonconformist movement. Following the first half of the 1980s, Nonconformist milieu had already been recognized in its totality in the West.

Nonconformist artists' immigration to West happened in two major waves, one as discussed in the first chapter was between 1975-1980, and the second was right after Perestroika between 1986-1991. In between these two waves, artists left Moscow, but as Alekseev declared: "at a time when no one was leaving when there was no reason to leave."³⁴⁷

While their artworks preceded them arriving to and being recognized in the West, artists followed the footsteps of their work and established their own networks, with the help of collectors, and previously emigrated peers. As discussed before, there had been two major Nonconformist emigre destinations on top of other cities: one where a Nonconformist museum was built in New York, and the other was the center of many dissident intellectuals where A-YA was published in Paris.

³⁴⁷ Alekseev, N. "Ryady pamyati" [Rows of Memory], Moscow: New Literary Review, 2008, p.74.

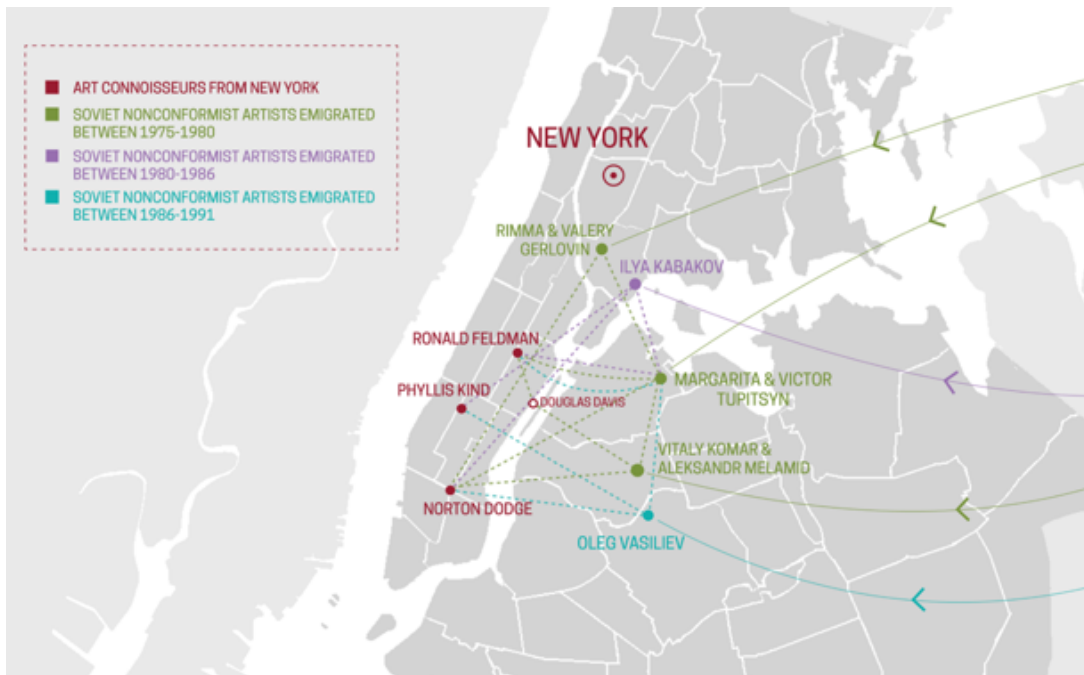


Figure 4.26. Network of Nonconformist artists in New York, 1975-1991
Figure by the Author

Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid immigrated to New York in 1978, three years after Tupitsyns settled in New York. Upon their arrival, Norton Dodge introduced them to the journalist Douglas Davis who had been working for Newsweek.

Davis got them an apartment on 33rd and Madison, and the very next day, they visited Ronald Feldman. Feldman had a gallery on 74th and Maddison, and the gallery had been hosting major works of Komar and Melamid two years before their arrival, after Dodge donated some of the works he smuggled out of Moscow, and Tupitsyns helped organize the exhibitions. Therefore, Komar and Melamid were already known in the New York scene. Soon after they emigrated, Feldman introduced them to Andy Warhol. Vitaly Komar describes his memory of meeting with Warhol as:

As examples of my most reliable impressions about America, I would count the acquaintance with Chinese food and meeting with Andy Warhol. [...] The

meeting with Warhol was a cultural shock. For the first time, I was in the studio of a famous pop artist. His studio was simultaneously the editorial office of the magazine *Interview* and a club, through which a vast number of amazingly beautiful men and women passed. They walked past, nodded to us. It was not the atmosphere that you expect to see in a workshop, where the artist needs to concentrate and work. Warhol knew us. We once did a series of works dedicated to the masterpieces of pop art, including his works. The idea was to look at modern art through the eyes of the people of the future. With the help of various techniques, we turned the bright canvases of Warhol into these dark, cracked, partially burned paintings. Feldman explained that standing in front of them, Warhol turned green. He said he saw how his work might look like, say, after a nuclear war or some other catastrophe.³⁴⁸

Gerlovins arrived in New York in 1980, when Margarita Tupitsyn was building CRACA. Upon their arrival, Tupitsyns introduced them to Ronald Feldman, who, by that time, became significantly interested in exhibiting Nonconformist art. Gerlovins, together with Margarita Tupitsyn, organized exhibitions in CRACA, Rimma Gerlovin even organized a collective show in 1982 entitled "Russian Samizdat Art," which she compiled and exhibited MANI materials gotten mailed her by Nikita Alekseev.

By the time Kabakov arrived in New York in 1986, not only Dodge, Feldman, and Tupitsyns welcomed him; many art critics, curators, and art dilettantes knew about his work. Phyllis Kind, together with other art connoisseurs, rushed into organizing Kabakov exhibitions, including Alfred Barr, who was the Chief Curator of MoMA. A year later, Phyllis Kind visited Moscow and helped Oleg Vasiliev to emigrate and settle in New York. The year was 1991, and the Soviet Union was on the verge of falling. With the arrival of Oleg Vasiliev, the Nonconformist circle in New York was completed.

³⁴⁸ Komar, V. "Stories", in Kiesewalter, G. (ed.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyie, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.80.



Figure 4.27. Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid in the studio of Andy Warhol, 1979.
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

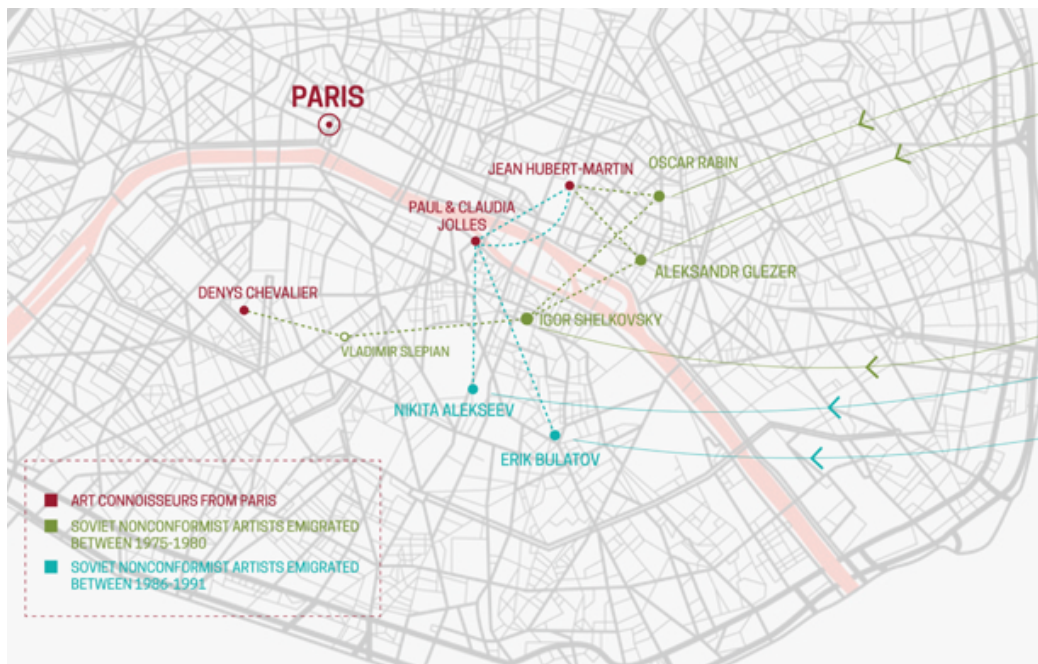


Figure 4.28. Network of Nonconformist artists in Paris, 1975-1991
Figure by the Author

In Paris, when Nikita Alekseev settled in 1987, the emigre network had long been established by Glezer, Shelkovsky, and Rabin during the late 1970s. Four years later, in 1991, Erik Bulatov left Moscow after the Soviet Union fell. Alexeev and Bulatov had already been introduced to Jean Hubert-Martin by Paul Jolles years before. Bulatov got acquainted with Martin during the planning of exhibition in Kunsthalle in Bern, where his works had been exhibited with Kabakov. Alexeev met Martin later than Bulatov. Martin helped both artists to build their workshops and later organized their solo exhibitions, together with collective exhibitions in Centre Pompidou.



Figure 4.29. Nikita Alekseev in Paris, 1987
Andrew Solomon, “The Irony Tower”, 1991

Vladimir Slepian: I had conceived a project: a new method of collective painting.

Pierre Schneider: In other words, you left a country of collectivism for the West because you wanted to do collective painting?

Artnews, March 1959

Although by the mid-1980s, the Western audience was aware of the existence of a Soviet unofficial artistic culture, few were informed about the history and practice of Soviet Nonconformist art. The knowledgeable ones had the information from pioneer collectors and curators that later became specialists of Nonconformist art following the fall of the Soviet Union. However, the recognizability of especially Moscow Nonconformist artists boomed following the Sotheby's auction. As introduced before, the recognition after Sotheby's both deformed the Nonconformist artwork, which had been purchased as a souvenir, and the image of Nonconformist artists reducing the actors to one label: Soviet underground artist." Before a discussion on the deformation of artworks, especially those concerning the representations of communal room, communal everyday life, or domestic life/objects, it is essential to say a few words on the Western perception of Soviet Nonconformist artists.

The primary problem for the artists before an emigre Nonconformist community was established in certain Western geography was the problem of lack of recognizability. After Aleksandr Kosolapov emigrated to New York in 1975, he remarked on the challenge of exhibiting as a Soviet artist in an interview to the New York Times:

Russian artists have trouble showing their work not only in Moscow but also in New York. Everyone thinks that Russian culture lags, that we are yesterday's artists. However, it is a different generation now, a younger generation that has advanced a lot. They are very well informed; they know what is going on in the West, and their work is not dissimilar from Western work. What they produce is

not necessarily "dissident" art, though if it is, it is dissident culturally rather than politically.³⁴⁹

The earlier emigre Nonconformist artists struggled because of the lack of a collective community in the West, a kind of collective milieu they had formed back in Moscow. The artist's struggle back in the mid-1970s was to prove the originality and authenticity of their work. Although the situation changed after Perestroika, and especially following Sotheby's, it did not change for the better. Since the Nonconformist movement became hype and fashionable, and as Phyllis Kind admits, many connoisseurs were only interested in Moscow Nonconformist artworks because "they liked the idea that it was Soviet,"³⁵⁰ the artists started being solely regarded as "Soviet underground" or "Soviet dissident."

Nonconformist artists organize solo exhibitions, they started being referred together as any dissident intellectual that had ever lived in the Soviet Union, from Chagall to Solzhenitsyn. Moreover, even when they participated in collective exhibitions together with other members of Nonconformist milieu, their different genres were mashed together under a vague "Soviet Underground Art" umbrella.

When asked about the curatorial decisions regarding collective Nonconformist exhibitions, "the concept of expanding the scope of the exhibition [to include every artist from Nonconformist milieu] is perfectly logical from a business point of view," said Phyllis Kind, who has mounted major New York exhibitions of Nonconformist artists. "But the artists deserve to be treated as individuals, and for their art to be looked at separately. If that is not true, we might as well be selling shoes here."³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Kosolapov, A. quoted in Glueck, A. "A Forum for Dissident Art", in *The New York Times*, December 28, 1979.

³⁵⁰ Kind, P. quoted in Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.68.

³⁵¹ Phyllis Kind, Interview with Douglas C. McGill, "Soviets Designate a U.S. Dealer for Their Artists", *New York Times*, January 10, 1989, p. 17.



Figure 4.30. Rimma Gerlovina, Valery Gerlovin, Alexander Kosolapov, Igor Shelkovsky, Margarita Masterkova-Tupitsyna, Victor Tupitsyn. A rally in front of the Guggenheim Museum with a demand to stop the commercialization of the Russian avant-garde. 1981
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive

Moving to and exhibiting in the West brings together questions about the deformation of the content of artworks as their context shifted. It also brings together a discussion on whether once-collective practices of Nonconformist artists evolved or deformed. Moreover, how did the addition of collaborations with Western artists added to that deformation/evolution? The next section examines the deformed Soviet conceptual artworks and practices in Western geographies.

4.3 On Artworks

In our Soviet situation [...] it's inadequate to produce "things," handmade objects, rather than theoretical values. Indeed, we only imagine that we exist, that we mean something. In reality [...] here,

there is another "culture," and what we are doing is evaluated in the West as having only ethnographic rather than aesthetic values.

Andrei Monastyrsky, letter to Victor Tupitsyn in New York,
March 8, 1979

In 1974, four years before their immigration, Vitaly Komar and Aleksandr Melamid collaborated on a performance with the art critic and journalist Douglas Davis. They designed two performances entitled "Where Is the Line Between Us?" and "Why is the Line Between Us?". They were photographed standing two opposites on a picture frame holding signs in Cyrillic on Davis' hand and English on Komar & Melamid's hand asking, "Where Is the Line Between Us?", and "Why is the Line Between Us?" Two photographs later montaged together, showing a dividing thick black line. The main aim of the project was to prove the translatability of ideas. Even though the ideas of Nonconformists were derived from the Soviet context, the artists hoped to find common ground with their Western colleagues. Artists believed the perceptibility of the contents of their artworks counting on the empathy and general knowledge of Western artists and audiences on the Soviet culture. Moreover, they, as the later emigre Nonconformist artists do, hoped to engage in an active dialogue, even to collaborate with their Western peers.

Komar and Melamid's attempts on collaboration and communication with the international art community later was reflected by their students from Polygraphic Institute, members of the Nest group: Victor Skersis, Gennady Donskoy, and Mikhail Roshal. Skersis states:

We belong to this [Moscow Nonconformist] circle because we live, we think, we work the same way... We know that the distance between our circle and official art is immense. However, we also know that we have to go further to transcend the boundaries of visual art [as] we are also members of another circle, a virtual one, one that does not know the bounds of space.³⁵²

³⁵² Skersis, V. "Instead of an Introduction", in Holmogorova, O. (eds.) Donskoy, Roshal, Skersis: The Nest, Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Tsentr Sovremennogo Iskusstva, 2009, p.12.



Figure 4.31. Vitaly Komar, Aleksandr Melamid, Douglas Davis, “Where is the Line Between Us?” & “Why is the Line Between Us?”, 1974. Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

One of the ambitions of Nonconformist milieu was to collaborate with their Western colleagues, and they, on some rare instances, achieved it in individual projects. However, the first real collaborations, that they could participate collectively were held following Perestroika.

Lisa Schmitz organized one of the earliest collaborations in which Nonconformist milieu participated collectively. Lisa Schmitz, a West German conceptual artist and an art teacher at Berlin Art Academy, visited Moscow in 1986. During her first visit, she became determined to "explore the complex structures of the Soviet conceptual art world."³⁵³ One year later, in late 1987, Schmitz got a scholarship from DAAD,³⁵⁴ and came back to Moscow to study at the Stroganoff Institute. She had a project in mind that involved a collaboration of contemporary artists from West Berlin and Moscow. Schmitz explains her intend as: "The project should take place in both cities as an experimental studio and platform for discussion and communication, to be followed by an exhibition as a work in progress."³⁵⁵ She was recommended by DAAD to contact German scholar Sabine Haensgen, who had been involved in the activities of Collective Actions during the early 1980s, and recorded the actions, and conversations of artists which were later published in the book "Kulturpalast."³⁵⁶ She, then, together with Haensgen, compiled a list of potential Soviet artists to invite to such a collaboration. The list included: Nikita Alexeev, Andrei Monastyrsky, Irina Nakhova, Dmitri Prigov, The Mukhomors, and Vadim Zakharov. From West Germany, she contacted the group Bomba Colori, as she cooperated with some of them in the past.

³⁵³ Lisa Schmitz quoted in Solomon, A. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, New York City: Knopf, 1991, p.170.

³⁵⁴ DAAD: the German Academic Exchange Service.

³⁵⁵ Schmitz, L. "The Art Project Искunство: Moskau–Berlin/Берлин–Москва", Excerpted from an interview with Kate Fowle, April 8, 2015, published in Fowle, K. & Addison, R. (ed.), *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986-1996*, Moscow: Garage Ad Marginem, 2016, p. 61.

³⁵⁶ See: Hirt, G. & Wonders, S. (Sabine Haensgen) (ed.), *Kulturpalast: Neue Moskauer Poesie & Aktionskunst*, Munich: S-Press, 1984.

When she had a rough draft on her mind on the framework and the artists, she traveled to Paris to meet Nikita Alekseev, who by then emigrated in March 1987. She met with Alekseev and got acquainted with Shelkovsky through him. Alekseev contacted the artists, and Schmitz returned to Moscow with two of the Bomba Colori artists to visit Nonconformists in Furmany squat. Zakharov took Schmitz and Bomba Colori artists to KLAVA, and the participants multiplied, including Sergei Anufriev, Joseph Backstein, and Pavel Pepperstein. At Furmanny they came up with the idea to call the project ИСКУНСТВО: Moskau–Berlin/Берлин–Москва. The name read as ISKUNSTVO: a mix of the Russian word for art: Iskusstvo, and German word for art: Kunst.

Back in Berlin, Schmitz prepared a portfolio and a program for the workshop/exhibition and presented to Ulrich Roloff-Momin, president of the Hochschule der Künste Berlin. As well as financial support, he offered Künstlerbahnhof Westend as the exhibition space, a former station in Berlin-Charlottenburg, which was about to become an exhibition and art studio center.

My idea was not just to find exciting artists in Moscow and show their works in a curated exhibition in Berlin. It was more important to let artists from Moscow and West Berlin meet and establish a discourse, which was not easy because they came from very different social, political, and cultural backgrounds. The idea was to run an open studio for four weeks, a platform that allowed the artists to follow their ideas and do works to get to know each other and to develop a common exhibition concept, acknowledging the diverse art practices present.³⁵⁷

Not since the 1920s had Soviet artists been allowed to take part in an art exhibition in a Western country by private invitation. Permission to travel abroad could only be granted on receipt of an official invitation by the Ministry of Culture, and it gave permission selectively. However, Schmitz managed to get passes for participating artists of ISKUNSTVO. The exhibition was opened on September 12 at Künstlerbahnhof Westend.

³⁵⁷ Schmitz, L. “The Art Project Искunstво: Moskau–Berlin/Берлин–Москва”, Excerpted from an interview with Kate Fowle, April 8, 2015, published in Fowle, K. & Addison, R. (ed.), *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986-1996*, Moscow: Garage Ad Marginem, 2016, p. 62.

Künstlerbahnhof Westend is a station complex initially built to serve the Westend villa estate (Villenkolonie). Built in 1884 to a design by the office of the architects Heinrich Joseph Kayser and Karl von Großheim in the Renaissance Revival style, the western section of the complex was closed for rail traffic in 1980 and vacated in 1987. After 1987, it was used by the Freundeskreis der Universität der Künste, a sub-academy operated under the Berlin University of the Arts, as a studio and exhibition building. The west section was renamed as Künstlerbahnhof Artist Station and was used as an exhibition space until 2001.

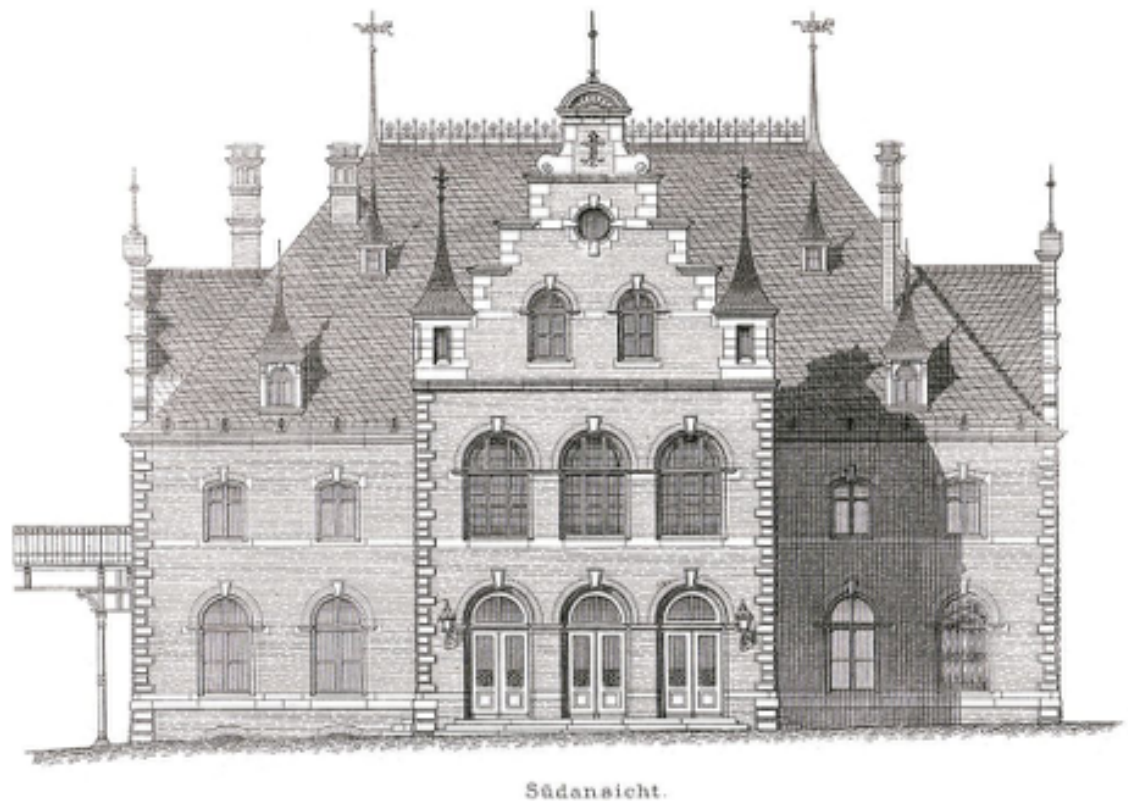


Figure 4.32. Künstlerbahnhof Westend, Facade Drawing, Kaiser & Großheim - Zeitschrift für Bauwesen, Atlasband, 1887, Blatt 31
Kunstmuseum archive, Berlin



Figure 4.33. Künstlerbahnhof Westend, Interior of exhibition hall, Projekt: Künstlerkonzepte im Dialog: Berlin – London, 1994. Kunstmuseum archive, Berlin



Figure 4.34. ISKUNSTVO, Invitation
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Vadim Zakharov Archive

Although the exhibition on Westend opened in September, the artists arrived in Berlin four weeks before the exhibition. As Schmitz described, the exhibition was planned to precede with a workshop. For Nonconformist artists, this workshop was a continuation of their domestic situation at Furmany. They started living in the conductor quarters, significantly similar to the Soviet communal rooms in size and organization. They were approximately 12 sq.m and lined

around a corridor looking at a central gallery space. The exhibition was firstly and mostly significant for its preparation process. Although Nonconformist artists shifted their context, their living environment was very familiar. They lived, worked, and exhibited in Westend.

Moreover, while producing their works for the show, they brought art materials from Moscow, which "took an age to clear through German customs." The reason behind bringing Soviet materials was firstly practical: since it was their first time abroad for most of the artists, their disorientation caused them to be concerned that "there might be the same sort of problems acquiring materials in Berlin as there were in the Soviet Union."³⁵⁸

However, there was a symbolic stand behind the execution and the content of the Nonconformist works exhibited in Iskunstvo. The artists mostly re-produced installations they had designed back in Moscow, some of them even brought part of the installations with them to be exhibited in Berlin. Moreover, among the 'materials' brought from Moscow included everyday objects used in installations, such as Konstantin Zvezdochetov's installation of a barricade where he used kitchen cabinet doors or Vadim Zakharov's chairs. Therefore, the Soviet artwork on Soviet everyday settings was produced with Soviet materials were exhibited in another geography. As their first collective experiment to exhibit in a gallery space rather than an apartment, Iskunstvo was significant and successful since Nonconformist artists succeeded to transform/re-appropriate the space as a Soviet alternative zone for exhibition. However, Schmitz's idea of bringing together two poles of culture and designing an exhibition of "common aesthetic ground" failed. Iskunstvo was a Nonconformist collective exhibition that happened to be presented side by side with German artists, as Alekseev puts it: "[The] point was not that the Moscow and Berlin artists were poles apart, but that they lived in different worlds."³⁵⁹ Iskunstvo was only successful, because Nonconformist artists transformed the exhibition into a familiar surrounding for them. Even when curating, Nonconformist works were exhibited together in the same chambers apart from Bomba Colori works. Therefore, for Nonconformists, the exhibition resembled a continuation of AptArt, and Furmany exhibits: they

³⁵⁸ Alekseev, N. "Ryady pamyati" [Rows of Memory], Moscow: New Literary Review, 2008, p.306.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, p.306.

exhibit together where they lived and worked. Boris Groys later commented on the exhibition as a "Soviet exhibition without a context."³⁶⁰ Although Iskunstvo gave artists a context-less space to re-create their Soviet context, other cases where they re-produced their artworks, or re-enact their environments and even past exhibitions did not turn out very similar.



Figure 4.35. Iskunstvo installation view
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive



Figure 4.36. Conductor quarters in Westend
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

³⁶⁰ Groys, B. "Bez konteksta" [Without Context], *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR*, 4, 1989, p.69.



Figure 4.37. Zvezdochetov installation, Barricades of Venice, Iskunstvo Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive



Figure 4.38. Zakharov installation, After Furmany: No. 2, Iskunstvo Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

The next section will analyze the exhibition of Nonconformist artworks in Western museums under three main themes:

1. Re-enacting the room: The room installations and artworks of re-appropriated domestic objects produced and exhibited in artist rooms in their Moscow days, which later were re-produced in the Western galleries. Regarding this discussion, the study will take room installations of Kabakov as the case study.
2. Re-enacting the exhibition: After firstly tracing re-enactments of communal rooms and artist rooms as artworks, this study traces how another hallmark of Nonconformist history was transmitted to the Western audience, that is, the re-enactment of Moscow apartment exhibition. In the case of "AptArt in Tribeca," where the AptArt gallery was re-enacted, the study will try to answer the gradual deformation of the artwork as it was separated from its micro context, that is the artist room.
3. Re-enacting the artist's room: In the final step, after tracing the fate of communal room installations, and the communal art objects separated from the room they were exhibited during the re-enactment of AptArt, the study traces the unique cases where the Nonconformist artist rooms became objects of installations. Through cases in which artist rooms were re-produced, the study analyzes the artist's room deforming from exhibition spaces into pieces of memorabilia of Nonconformist history. As the case studies, the exhibition "In Rooms" will be discussed.

4.3.1 Re-Enacting the Room

Jean-Hubert Martin organized a solo Erik Bulatov show in Centre Pompidou in 1988. The French audience's strongest impression from the show can be traced to the exhibition log, where many audiences reacted to his painting Krasikov Street (See: Figure. 93) as "Is that a real street from Moscow?"

Andrew Solomon once stated: "the easiest thing to lose sight of when [Nonconformist] work is cut off from its origins is its irony."³⁶¹ The significance of Nonconformist works lies in their Soviet background and context-dependency; however, that context-dependency had always included a brilliant mocking, and innuendo of their contexts. That very character of their artwork got the artists into trouble before their immigration. However, upon emigrating to West, they realized the translation of their work into Western terminology deformed its paradoxical nature. Since the audience they are interacting with was unfamiliar with the Soviet geography and circumstances of Soviet everyday life, the witty, critical comments and references of their artworks were too provincial for a Western audience to grasp. Solomon states, one of the earlier examples where Nonconformist artists faced this reality was in Sotheby's.

Therefore, the methods and experiments of transmitting the content to the Western audience also required transmitting a piece of knowledge about the Soviet context. However, since the artworks were not documentations or presentations, but ironic representations and mocking re-appropriations of Soviet communal rooms, and domestic objects, the primary deformation was to lose the artworks' aesthetic value. The new role of the Nonconformist artist in the West became representatives, chroniclers, presenters, and "truth-tellers" of the Soviet context. The main argument of this chapter is the new role of communal room installation as a stage, a space, a render, partly a chronicle, and a piece of the reality of the Soviet context presented to Western gaze.

Ilya Kabakov, in this sense, set a significant example, as his genre concerning "the Soviet life and mentality, the analysis of which became the main topic of his art" was informative rather than artistic for the Western audience. After his emigration in 1986, Kabakov quickly became a phenomenon³⁶² in the West. Kabakov, in an interview, states that the positive reaction from the Western audience towards his artworks was related to him taking the position of an observer.

³⁶¹ Arndt, M. (ed.), Erik Bulatov. *Catalogue raisonné*, Vol: 2, Köln: Wienand, 2012, p.277.

³⁶² Schlegel, A.I. "The Kabakov Phenomenon," *Art Journal* 58, 1999, p.98–101.

I was not a Soviet artist who wanted to show Soviet art to the West. The conceptual position was to look at Soviet life itself through the eyes of a "foreigner" who has arrived there. ... My installations were well received because they were projections of an outsider into a world unfamiliar to them. Included in my task was to show the ordinary, banal Soviet world, with its communality, language, wretchedness, sentimentality.³⁶³

Kabakov, therefore following his emigration took the new role of a narrator of Soviet reality; more importantly, his installations took on the role of spatial representations and even replicas of Soviet reality. Soon after his arrival to New York, Kabakov's first room installation, "The Man who Flew into Space from His Room," which he built in his attic at Sretensky Boulevard, was re-produced, however this time as a part of a larger project entitled Ten Characters. Ten Characters was exhibited at Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York between April 30 and June, 4 1988. Ten Characters was designed as a communal apartment hosting ten dwellers, all having a different background.³⁶⁴ The gallery announced the exhibition in a press release as "Ten Characters is an installation consisting of two large, communal apartments, which include hallways and kitchens. Ten tenants inhabit these apartments, each in his or her own room, and each one has developed a very distinct personality."³⁶⁵

Two halls of the gallery were transformed into two large communal apartments. Built within the gallery space, both of these apartments consisted of a long corridor with rooms lined up on both sides, and a kitchen at the far end. The dimensions of each room are the same as Kabakov built in his attic workshop, a replica of the sizes dictated by Soviet sanitary norms for minimum living. Each room contained a series of objects and types of furniture which

³⁶³ Vidokle, A. "In Conversation with Ilya and Emilia Kabakov", E-Flux: 40, December 2012.

³⁶⁴ Since the main 'objects' of the installation consisting of a few installation rooms were our 10 'heroes,' we shall name each of them here in order: 1. The Man Who Flew into His Picture/ 2. The Man Who Collected the Opinions of Others/ 3. The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment/ 4. The Untalented Artist/ 5. The Short Man/ 6. The Composer/ 7. The Collector/ 8. The Man Who Describes His Life Through Other Characters/ 9. The Man Who Saved Nikolai Viktorovich/ 10. The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away (The Garbage Man)

³⁶⁵ Groys, B. (eds.), Ilya Kabakov: Installations Catalogue Raisonne 1983-2000, Munich: Richter Verlag, 2004, p. 210.

Kabakov labeled and wrote instructions to how he smuggled it to the West. These were the Soviet everyday objects which Kabakov brought as an 'artistic material for his installations.'

While re-producing the room in Feldman Galery, Kabakov came up with the idea of using introductory texts merged into the design of the installations to narrate the story and history behind the installation. Later became the hallmark of Kabakov's communal room installations, these texts were firstly used in Ten Characters. He describes these texts as a vital part of his new role as a narrator of Soviet life to the Western audience, which helped him construct and transmit the communal narrative to "the foreign eye."³⁶⁶

Using complementary texts also served the genre of the total installation, which Kabakov theorized in Moscow and perfected after his immigration. In his book, "On Total Installation," he describes the total installation as a new medium working as a complex and single whole to alter viewers' perception. It is a re-constructed reality, every element in which serves the purpose of staging that reality. From texts to objects accompanying the newly 'built' space, every element installed in the communal room connected and in the service of this medium, which Kabakov calls "a total installation." Kabakov uses the term "building," instead of "installing" the communal room, where a structural entity had to be independently infiltrated into the surrounding gallery space. For him, in order for the audience to "dwell" in communal room installations, one had to create a new environment which will alter "the social recognizability" of the viewer, as that recognizability tends to perceive the context from a Western perspective, the audience was given an alternative reality to "leave behind their Western perspective before entering the installation." Kabakov tries to re-enact the communal apartment itself to stimulate an artificial sense of belonging and communality in the Western audience, "as everyone knows, it is impossible today to understand anything without the surrounding context."³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Kabakov, I. On the Total Installation, Cologne: Hatje Cantz: 1997, p.244.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p.244.

In the Soviets [...] things do not play the same role in the life of each person as in the West, and if they are, they are all old, dilapidated, dirty, obligatory. [...] Objects of daily life are similar, virtually indistinguishable, and approximately the same color. However, on the other hand, the spaces where the things are placed are "our" spaces! [...] the very same objects which in the West live independently: tables, chairs, etc., in our country, become mere accessories of the general atmosphere, are engulfed by it, they play a role assigned by this atmosphere, serving merely as insignificant parts of a mysterious, but powerful and persuasive "whole." All of the above has prompted me toward an obligatory inclusion of the surrounding space into the installation. In return, a new medium of representation emerged, which I call "total."³⁶⁸

Each project had two different sets of texts, one describes the installation, and the other, which Kabakov calls "the text of installation" typed on walls, placed on types of furniture and objects guiding and informing the audience about the design and use of spaces and objects. The most significant part of these texts was their documentary character. The text pinned on the facade of the rooms facing to the corridor in *Ten Characters* explains the entire history of communal housing of Soviet Union. Following is an excerpt from the text of *Ten Characters*:

When I think about our life, one of the main images that unites everything is that of the communal apartment. After the revolution in 1917, we began to see 'condensation' [uplotnenie] and 'partitioning' of living space in all of our big cities, and especially in Moscow and Leningrad. [...] There was a shortage of living space, and numerous waves of people, both local and newcomers, were given the apartments that had been left empty by departing 'bourgeois' and 'noble creatures' by special 'orders' issued by organs of the new proletarian regime. [...] Under conditions created by the permanent housing crisis during the post-revolutionary and later the post-war periods (until 1953 there was virtually no mass-scale building of residential housing like there is now) a family lived in the same place virtually forever. [...] Rooms that had been 30-40 square meters, were divided by thin plywood partitions into smaller rooms in which families also lived and multiplied ... Often these cells were not bigger than 5-6 square meters, and two or three layers were built in them to accommodate tenants. [...] But it was impossible to stretch, to enlarge the actual apartment, and the layout remained as it was when the 'old' owners lived there.

³⁶⁸ Kabakov, I. *On the Total Installation*, Cologne: Hatje Cantz: 1997, p.245.

A few words about that layout. Major urban construction took place in our big cities in the 1880s and 1890s, and the primary type of construction were so-called 'lucrative properties,' i.e., buildings which had apartments that were rented out primarily to the well-to-do: lawyers, doctors, engineers, important functionaries, industrialists, etc. All of these apartments subsequently became 'communal.' [...] One room, on the bottom left, becomes the room for 'common use.' As a rule, it does not have a window, and tenants store heavy things or things they do not need in it – dressers, shelves, old couches, tables, things that they cannot bring themselves to throw away, but which block their entire living space. [...] The apartment is filled with junk, and often the tenants do not know what to do with them. The entire corridor is filled on both sides with trunks, boxes, bundles, packages, all piled up, and sometimes tied with rope. Above these piles, there is the obligatory coat-rack next to each door, and above it, there are more shelves with belongings, while bicycles, basins, and chairs hang on nails. [...] But the apartment is exhausted not only by all of this junk but also from the incessant background sounds. Either shout, the carryings-on of children or quiet conversations: they never subside neither day nor night, resounding from all sides, from the kitchen, the corridor or from behind the thin partitions of the rooms.³⁶⁹

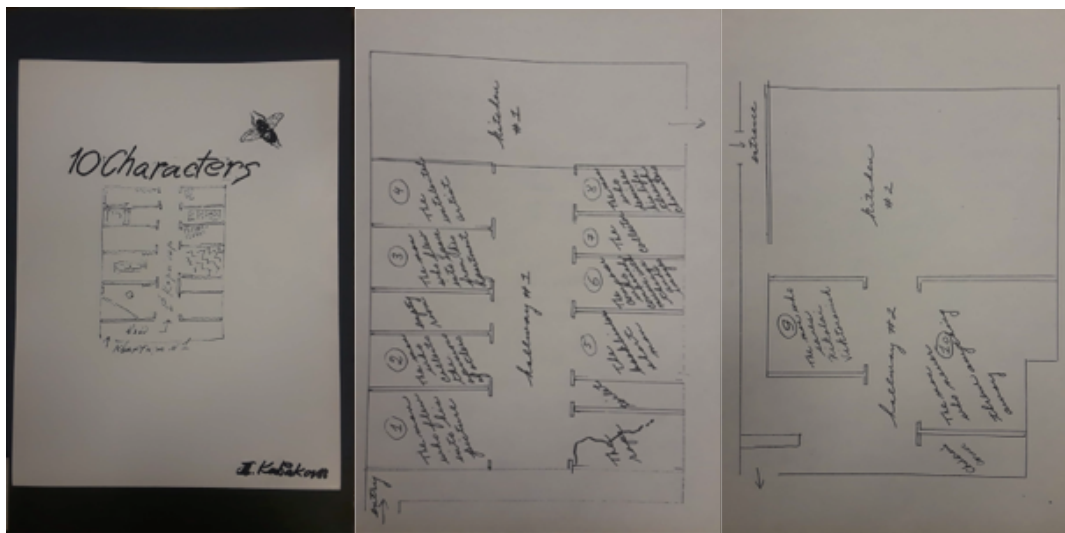


Figure 4.39. The Sketches of Kabakov on Ten Characters
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

³⁶⁹ Kabakov, I. "Text of the Installation", Exhibition Catalog: Ten Characters, Ronald Feldman Gallery, 1998, accessed through Zimmerli Museum Nancy and Norton Dodge Archive. [Unpublished]

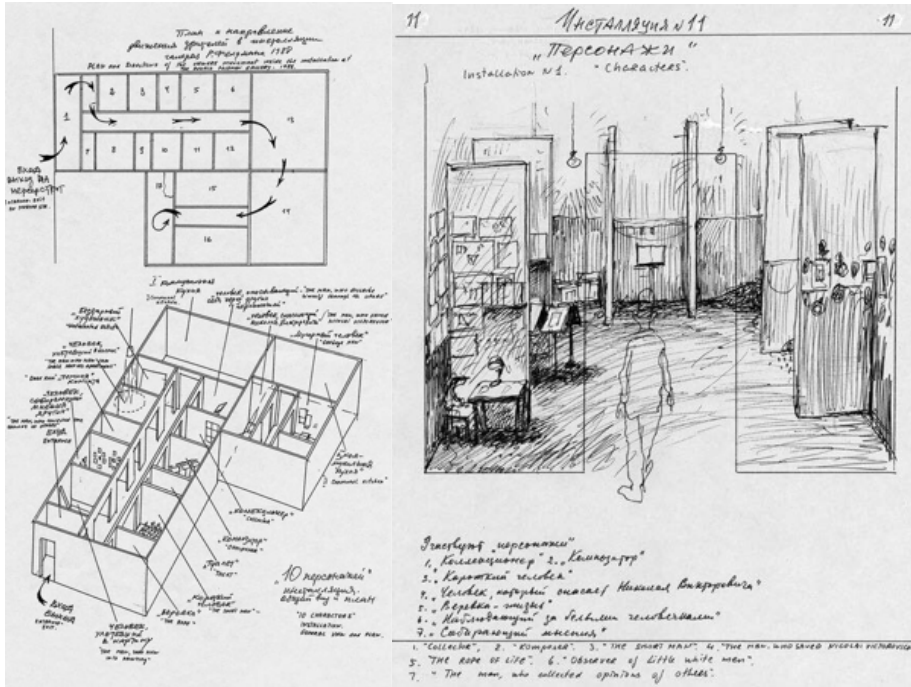


Figure 4.40. The Sketches of Kabakov on Ten Characters
 Ilya & Emilia Kabakov personal archive



Figure 4.41. Installation view of Ten Characters
 Ronald Feldman Gallery exhibition archive

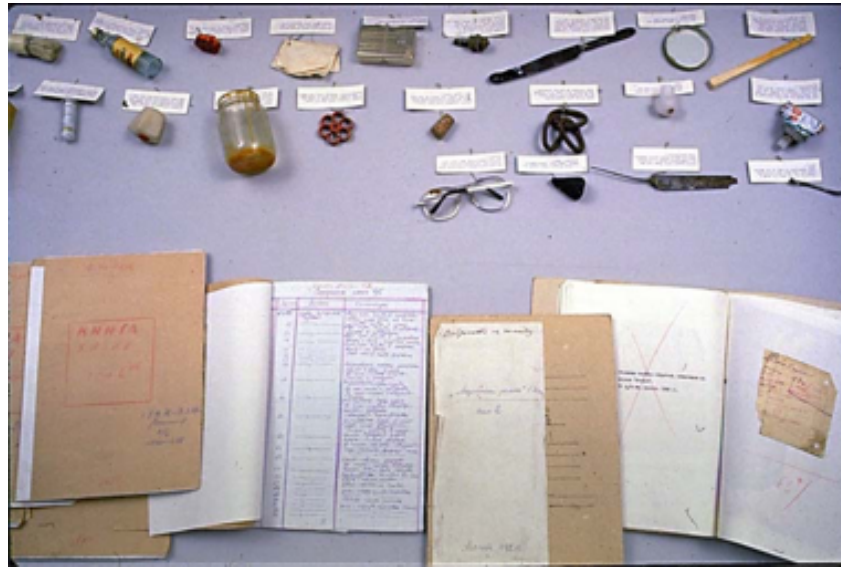


Figure 4.42. Installation view: Soviet objects in Ten Characters
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

Kabakov's total installations significantly present an architectural character, not of any space, but a Soviet communal apartment. Even his method of installing the rooms inside the museum shell is a replica of uplotnenie. He firstly built an alien structure within the museum space to create his own context to work with. Later he installed more rooms inside of the one big enclosed space he infiltrated in the gallery space. Kabakov's total installations were usually built as enclosed structures out of plywood facades. Kabakov left the outer facades naked, unpainted on purpose. The viewers had to find their way inside since the 'outer room' blocked all the visual contact with museum space. The choice of isolating the installation was intentional. Kabakov, firstly, wanted to create a single spatial whole in the inside, while on the outside, he leaves the outer facades style-less, without any architectural or historical reference that would fuse into to museum space, which is a context-less white cube.

When Kabakov built his first room in Moscow, the single room within his attic still showing signs of the building's neoclassical background, his room built out of plywood was referring the Stalinist motto "national in form, socialist in content," a room built within a bourgeois quarter. However, moving the room to the West, it took a new role: the room was built

together with one other within another room that had been international in form but socialist in content.



Figure 4.43. Installation view: Ilya Kabakov, Palace of Projects, Centre Pompidou, 1989
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

Kabakov repeatedly re-enacted communal rooms in different museums, in different contexts, but always with the same outline: an enclosed prism separating the rooms inside from the rest of the museum space to re-enact the Soviet context. Kabakov's installations present a significant inquiry on the effect of changing the context on the representation of communal room:

Although Kabakov specifically used the objects he brought from the Soviet Union, and photographs and ideological posters from the previous installation of the room were kept and reused in the new setting; the execution of the first version and second version of "The Man who Flew into Space from His Room" was still different. Since the room was rebuilt in a museum space, it lost its micro context, which was the artist's room. In the first version, Kabakov's room was a vital part of the installation. In the second version, to re-enact the room in a room, Kabakov re-configured an outer shell to imitate the artist's room. However, this new

shell, the outer room, was appropriated to the gallery space. While Kabakov's workshop was still Soviet from the outside, as it was "national in form," the outer shell in Feldman Gallery was Soviet on the inside but context-less on the outside. It was an enclosed, plywood rectangular prism. Therefore, the room installation, while forming a Soviet habitat inside, was deformed on the outside, because it was separated from its micro context.

Taking the artwork as a constant and observing the changing context provides an appropriate ground to compare the spaces it was exhibited in. As in Kabakov's example, tracing two different executions of "The Man who Flew into Space from His Room," makes it possible to compare the shift from artist room to Western gallery space as micro-contexts of artwork.

In the next section, the study will focus on the re-enactment of Nonconformist exhibitions in Moscow. As stated in the previous chapter, emigre Nonconformist networks could only be established in the West following Perestroika. Before their emigration, however, the collectors were arranging Nonconformist exhibitions without their artists attending. Some collectors managed to arrange these exhibitions with the works they smuggled, like Dodge and Kind, and others with the works they adopted, like Jolles. However, two Muscovite collectors had taken on a harder job to re-enact AptArt gallery and its first exhibition: The Autumn Show in New York.

Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn kept in close contact with Nonconformist milieu even after the immigration. Although they left right before the first generation of Nonconformist artists started apartment showings and assemble as a circle, Tupitsyns made sure to follow the formation and later reformation of the generations of Nonconformist art, artists and networks through constant communication. Although they could not visit back Moscow, therefore their chance of getting their hands on actual Nonconformist works was meager, they built their collection with an alternative, yet very Nonconformist method: they collected and archived artists' documents of artworks and events.

As discussed before archiving the artworks and exhibits was a pivotal part of Nonconformist practice since the artists were responsible for every step of artistic performance being the outcasts of Soviet art scene. They published their documents in samizdat folder MANI and circulated among each other. However, Nonconformist documentation of the artworks and exhibitions were more far-reaching, and ended up traveling to firstly Paris, where they were published in tamizdat A-YA edited by Igor Shelkovsky, and then to New York where they were exhibited by Tupitsyns in a re-enactment show of AptArt. This section traces the case study where AptArt was re-enacted without 'Apt', and apartment exhibitions re-enacted outside of artist apartments.

4.3.2 Re-Enacting the Exhibition: On Exhibiting the Nonconformist Archive

If MANI Folders were archives of Nonconformist exhibits, A-YA and later AptArt in New York were exhibits of Nonconformist archives. They executed different exhibition forms; however, they both showed the same purpose of re-enacting the Nonconformist artwork through documents.

Igor Shelkovsky started working on A-YA in 1977. It was the first Nonconformist magazine published abroad, and also multilingual. The texts of artists were translated into English and French. Although initially, Glezer promoted the Nonconformist works in Paris, A-YA offered a more diverse and inclusive medium. The first issue was published in 1979 and opened with the article of Boris Groys titled "Moscow Romantic Conceptualism." This was the first time many audiences of the West started hearing about the existence of the diversity of Unofficial Soviet artists. Since the European collectors of the late 1970s were somewhat interested in collecting the works of three big names: Kabakov, Bulatov, and Yankilevsky, A-YA constituted a significant depository for promoting the less known side of the Moscow unofficial scene.

The Western press greeted the magazine with enthusiasm and benevolence. Articles appeared in many of the world's largest newspapers, such as The New York Times, Le Monde, Liberation, Neue Zurcher Zeitung, and in art magazines, from the American Artforum to the

French "Channel." The less known unofficial artists of Moscow were an exciting theme and was most welcome. However, this does not mean that the aesthetics of new artists were immediately evaluated as something independent and significant. Instead, the first issue aroused bewilderment and curiosity. It took a long time and a few issues to turn that curiosity into recognition and more profound interest.

Although the sole purpose of the magazine was to create an artistic product and not to be referred to as a dissident publication, the increasing interest from the Western media got Nonconformist artists in Moscow into trouble with authorities. Shelkovsky states: "After the first issue, many were summoned to the KGB, but at first they were completely polite conversations." Following that 'incident,' the later issues were opened with the statement: "Materials of authors who are in the USSR are printed without their knowledge." However, this statement was not enough, in 1985, Igor Shelkovsky was officially denaturalized. Although A-YA ceased to exist in 1986, the magazine was considered as a substitute for exhibitions. Aleksandr Kosolapov stated: "For us, the magazine is like a gallery."³⁷⁰

A-YA took on a difficult mission to build a virtual museum for Nonconformist works. More significantly, in the fifth issue, the pictures of AptArt gallery was published in 1983. Later in 1984, Shelkovsky visited Tupitsyns in New York, and they had the idea of organizing a re-enactment of the AptArt Gallery. The main idea was to re-enact the apartment exhibition solely through the documents of the artists. A-YA was a pioneer in terms of building a virtual museum where the Nonconformist archives were exhibited first. The next experimentation of exhibiting the archive was realized in New York.

³⁷⁰ Kosolapov, A. "The problems of the non-expression of the new generation of the seventies", in Kiesewalter, G. (eds.) *Eti strannyye semidesyatyaye, ili Poterya nevinnosti*. [These Strange Seventies, Or The Loss Of Innocence.] Moscow: Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye, 2015, p.89.



Figure 4.44. A-YA first three issues
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

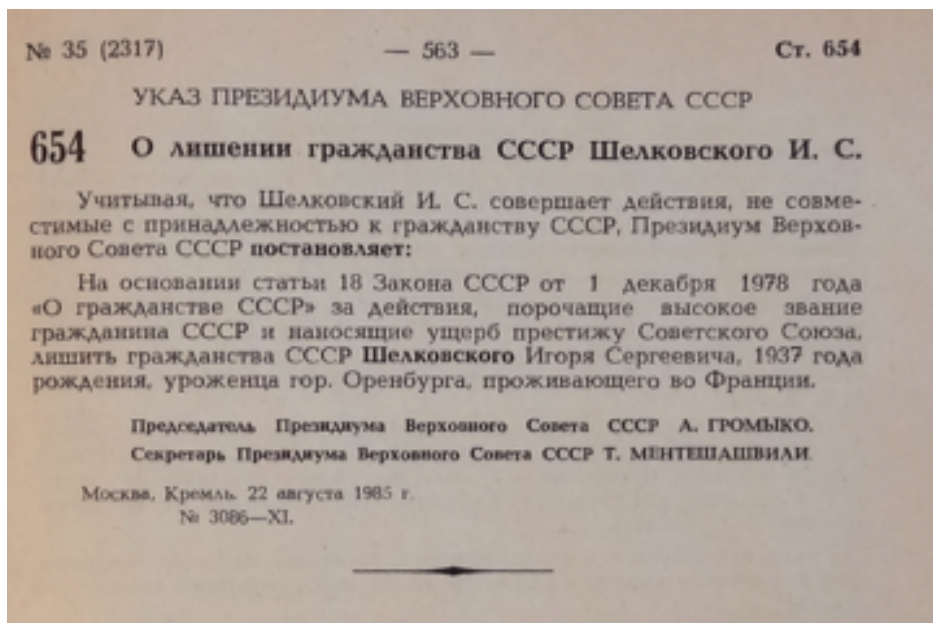


Figure 4.45. The Decree regarding Shelkovsky's denaturalization, 1985
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

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Representatives:	<table> <tr> <td>USA</td> <td>Israel</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Janet Kravetz Hollander</i> <i>237 Montgomery Street</i> <i>Jersey City, N. J. 07302</i> <i>Tel. (201) 435-5671</i></td> <td><i>Michael Grobman</i> <i>20 Ephraim Str.</i> <i>Bak'a, Jerusalem</i> <i>Tel. 712 493</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Italia</td> <td>England</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Michail Kulakov</i> <i>Via Luca della Robbia 80</i> <i>00153 Roma</i></td> <td><i>Igor Golomstock</i> <i>61 Aston Str.</i> <i>Oxford OX 4 1EW</i> <i>Tel. 733 58 97</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Japan</td> <td>Austria</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>EST-OUEST. Galerie d'art</i> <i>Imperial Hiroo 4-11-35</i> <i>Minamiazabu</i> <i>Minato-ku, Tokyo</i> <i>Tel. (03) 449 78 28</i></td> <td><i>Vadim Kosmatchev</i> <i>Gussenbaugasse 1/16</i> <i>Wien 1090</i> <i>Tel. 34 70 852</i></td> </tr> </table>	USA	Israel	<i>Janet Kravetz Hollander</i> <i>237 Montgomery Street</i> <i>Jersey City, N. J. 07302</i> <i>Tel. (201) 435-5671</i>	<i>Michael Grobman</i> <i>20 Ephraim Str.</i> <i>Bak'a, Jerusalem</i> <i>Tel. 712 493</i>	Italia	England	<i>Michail Kulakov</i> <i>Via Luca della Robbia 80</i> <i>00153 Roma</i>	<i>Igor Golomstock</i> <i>61 Aston Str.</i> <i>Oxford OX 4 1EW</i> <i>Tel. 733 58 97</i>	Japan	Austria	<i>EST-OUEST. Galerie d'art</i> <i>Imperial Hiroo 4-11-35</i> <i>Minamiazabu</i> <i>Minato-ku, Tokyo</i> <i>Tel. (03) 449 78 28</i>	<i>Vadim Kosmatchev</i> <i>Gussenbaugasse 1/16</i> <i>Wien 1090</i> <i>Tel. 34 70 852</i>
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<p>Мнения, выраженные в статьях, могут не совпадать с мнениями редакции.</p> <p>Материалы авторов, находящихся в СССР печатаются без их ведома.</p>													

Figure 4.46. The opening statement of A-YA: “Materials of authors who are in the USSR are printed without their knowledge.”

Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick



Figure 4.47. A-YA, Inside pages
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick



Figure 4.48. A-YA, Issue: 5, Pictures from AptArt Gallery
Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection, Zimmerli Art Museum in New Brunswick

In his Introduction to the first volume of the series "Architecture of the Soviet avant-garde," S. O. Khan-Magomedov writes that in the Soviet Union, unlike any other centers of modernism, the legacy of the avant-garde had not been revealed, preserved, studied or collected. "For almost half a century, the domestic vanguard art was pushed by the official press as a flawed stage in the development of Soviet art, causing many materials to be lost."³⁷¹ Margarita Tupitsyn references to Khan-Magomedov in her Introduction to the article "Moscow-New York,":

Paradoxically, the verdict of Khan-Magomedov remains valid to the alternative culture of the post-war period. The door was opening for unofficial art production does not mean that the artists will be able to institutionalize their practice. Soviet contemporary art still did not take its place at the institutional level. The problem is that exhibiting the artwork is the final stage of absorbing [the Nonconformist] aesthetic values. It is necessary for the audience to first familiarize themselves with the factography and culture of the [Nonconformist] movement with the help of its documents, before putting the artworks on display.³⁷²

For Margarita Turpitsyn, an overall understanding of historicity, and aesthetics of any movement, but specifically Nonconformist art, would only be possible after exposing to a factual overture. She refers to exhibiting the archival work on artworks as a part of the Nonconformist practice's journey to reach museological cultivation and the final form of aesthetic reflection. For Tupitsyn, in order for Nonconformist art to gain its autonomy, it needed to practice and experiment on exhibiting in the museums. Moreover, these experiments could only be viable through firstly exhibiting its already produced works in the form of documentary archives.

³⁷¹ Tupitsyna, M. & Tupitsyn, V. Moscow-New York, Moscow: WAM, No:21, 2006, p. 229.

³⁷² Ibid, p.229.

She claims that Nonconformist art and its legacy can be preserved by firstly introducing its historical formation and traditions. The Nonconformist artworks can only communicate to an audience from another context, by firstly introducing its evolution and its terminology.

When discussing the issue of re-contextualization, Margarita Tupitsyn believed that one way of overcoming the barrier of the cultural untranslatability of Nonconformist art is the "gradual re-surfacing its cultural layers" instead of introducing its objects as alien structures to the Western audience. Since the Nonconformist art started being 'properly' exhibited after the second half of the 1980s, Tupitsyns needed to introduce its formation first. While Kabakov managed to make that historical remark by introducing Soviet reality and history to the Western audience, Tupitsyns tried to establish the communication between Soviet artists and Western audiences by introducing the historical formation of the movement itself.

Taking the responsibility of introducing the history of Nonconformist art, they took active roles in building a Nonconformist museum in New York. As briefly introduced in the last section, CRACA was established in 1981. It was located on the eleventh floor of a high-rise building named Ayer Building at 599 Broadway in SoHo. The building was constructed in 1916. It had a special place in the history of SoHo, which had been regarded as an artist town in the 1970s and 1980s New York. The building had a bright blue and eight-story long art piece on its facade, which was called "The Gateway to Soho." Constructed and installed on the building in 1973 by Forrest Myers, "Gateway to Soho" was the symbol of SoHo's alternative art legacy. In this iconic building, in the two and a half years of its existence, CRACA organized several critical collective exhibitions³⁷³ in which Tupitsyns tried to give a retrospective panorama. "As a result of the CRACA's efforts, the American public was able

³⁷³ Among the exhibitions held in CRACA: "New Russian Wave" (1981-1982); "New Art from the Soviet Union: Selections" (1982); "Come Yesterday and You'll Be First" (1983, originated at City without walls in Newark, New Jersey, with Margarita Tupitsyn as curator); "Soviet Artists in Exile at Home and Abroad: Moscow" (1984); and "Post Socialist Realism: The New Soviet Reality" (1987-1988). After CRACA was closed, exhibitions were held at the Firebird Gallery in Alexandria, Virginia, and at the CASE [Committee for the Absorption of Soviet Emigrés]: Museum of Contemporary Russian Art in Jersey City. Dennis Roach helped prepare catalogues for both exhibition venues. The CASE Museum was established by Arthur Goldberg and directed by Alexander Glezer.

to receive a fuller understanding of both the Moscow communal conceptualism of the 1960s and 1970s and (more importantly) the Russian Nonconformism of the 1980s.³⁷⁴



Figure 4.49. “New Russian Wave” exhibition view, CRACA, and Ayer Building, 1978
Margarita and Victor Tupitsyn personal archive
New York City Historical Records

³⁷⁴ Tupitsyn, V. *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)Modernism in Russia*. Mass: The MIT Press: 2012, p.91.

However, CRACA was short-lived. It was closed by 1984. Shortly after CRACA was closed, Tupitsyns initiated the organization of AptArt New York. They needed a space for exhibition, however not any space but one that would suit the tradition of alternative exhibitions. Also, they needed an intermediary figure who could properly relate the Nonconformist tradition of apartment exhibitions. Tupitsyns wanted to exhibit the archival documents of artworks transforming the space of Alekseev's apartment, and they wanted to do that without the artworks and outside of Alekseev's apartment. Therefore, they contacted Valerie Smith, then chief curator of Artists Space.

Artists Space was founded in 1971 was mostly focused on underrepresented artists, ephemeral forms of art, alternative movements, and non-profit and culturally and socially 'extreme' art movements. Considering the Nonconformist culture and terminology, Smith seemed to be the best agent to help to present AptArt to the New York audience.

The exhibition was titled "AptArt in Tribeca" and formed entirely of documentary photographs of AptArt Gallery and The Autumn Show that Tupitsyns compiled together out of the letters, and posts their Nonconformist colleagues sent from Moscow, as well as the archive of Shelkovsky gathered for A-YA. The exhibition was opened in 1985 in the New Museum of Contemporary Art on 583 Broadway, New York.

The New Museum established in 1971 and moved to 583 Broadway on the ground floor of the historic Astor Building in SoHo between Houston and Prince Streets on September 1, 1983. Astor building, designed by Cleverdon & Putzel in 1897, is a 12-story building originally was planned to house lofts for garment industry manufacturing. The building was converted into an office building shortly before The New Museum moved to the ground floor. The exhibition space included flexible exhibition hubs, and for AptArt, a small L-shaped hub was spared at the corner of the exhibition hall.



Figure 4.50. The New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Astor Building
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Archive of Print & Ephemera

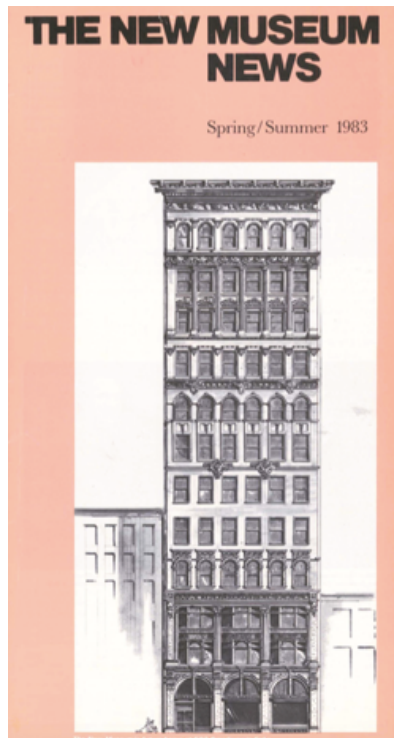


Figure 4.51. The New Museum Bulletin, 1983
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Archive of Print & Ephemera

On the L-shaped corner, Margarita Tupitsyn organized two walls tiled with photographs from AptArt Gallery. The hallmark of the first show, the Mukhomors' Novel-Refrigerator and TV were barely seen, while Abalakova and Zhigaglov's banner "Art Belongs..." covered most of the surface of the wall. The audiences could barely see the works of SZ. The most significant part of the exhibition was that the audience could not see any signs, documents, or photographs regarding Alekseev's apartment, although the apartment was a vital part of the exhibition.

The lack of any information on the spatial background of the AptArt contradicted with Tupitsyns' idea of introducing the history and terminology of Nonconformist art before exhibiting the works itself. They believed exhibiting the artworks themselves without introducing their history would decontextualize the artworks; however, the artist's room had been a vital part of that history.

By subtracting any information or visual regarding the context of the AptArt, they deformed the very history of Nonconformist art. Apartments were pivotal as apartment exhibitions were the solution to the unofficial status of the artists, as well as the symbol of their unofficialdom. Therefore, when the room itself was removed from the presentation of their history, it reduced the status of Moscow Nonconformism from 'an alternative form of art flourished in artist rooms despite the official artistic impositions and lack of institutional opportunities', to a mere "a form of resistance against Socialist state in the form of art."

Therefore, unlike the previous examples of the shift in the context disturbing the relevance of spatial Soviet innuendo art, AptArt in Tribeca deformed the history of apartment exhibitions by misrepresenting it. Moreover, the artist room was not only a central part of the Nonconformist history but also a part of the exhibition itself during AptArt, as together with types of furniture, the room itself was transformed into a work of art. The lack of introduction to the artist room itself caused a partial representation of the original exhibitions. The audience perceived the Autumn show as fragments of an exhibition, not as a coherent whole.



Figure 4.52. Installation view from AptArt in Tribeca, 1986, with the photograph of Mukhomors' Refrigerator and TV is tagged
 The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Archive of Print & Ephemera



Figure 4.53. Mukhomors' Refrigerator and TV at AptArt Gallery, 1984
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, George Kiesewalter archive



Figure 4.54. Installation view from AptArt in Tribeca, 1986
The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Archive of Print & Ephemera

4.3.3 Re-Enacting the Artist Room

While in AptArt in Tribeca, the artworks shown as stripped from the artist's room, almost five years later, Andrei Erofeev organized an exhibition transforming and presenting artists' rooms themselves as artworks. As discussed in the previous section Andrei Erofeev started a quest to build a collection without a museum under the administrations of Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve in 1990. His initial strategy was while designing a place-less exhibition, to also refer to a significant Nonconformist tradition of context-dependency: taking installations, objects, and even the spaces that had been inseparable from their context, or in Nonconformist practice, from each other; and separate them into three different exhibitions.

He designed an organization scheme composed of three modules: the first was titled "To the Object," where the domestic objects later transformed into artworks were exhibited within separate cubicles made out of plywood. In the first module, Erofeev deliberately put the context-dependent objects into context-less volumes. To the Object was opened at Moscow's Sadovniki exhibition hall and then traveled to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1990.

The second volume was titled "In Rooms," in which Erofeev aimed to present "the particular conditions in which Soviet Nonconformist practice existed."³⁷⁵ He stated in the exhibition catalog: "Unlike the Western model, which evolved largely in response to museum spaces, in the Soviet Union, the genre developed in response to the intimate scale of the artist's apartment."³⁷⁶ Therefore, Erofeev interpreted the artist's room as much an artwork and a vital part of the Nonconformist practice. In Rooms was opened at Dom Kultury, Bratislava, in 1991.

The third volume was titled "The Artist Instead of the Artwork," in which Erofeev separated the artists themselves from their artworks and designed an exhibition on archival photographs

³⁷⁵ Erofeev, A. "Building a museum through curating exhibitions," in Fowle, K. and Addison, R. (eds.), *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade*, Moscow: Art Guide, 2016, p.114.

³⁷⁶ Erofeev, A. "Introduction", Installation Catalog for "In Rooms", Dom Kultury, Bratislava in 1991. accessed through Garage Museum of Contemporary Art archive. Unpublished]

and documentation of artists' performances and portraits. The Artist Instead of the Artwork was opened in the Central House of Artists, Moscow, in 1994.



Figure 4.55. To the Object, installation view
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

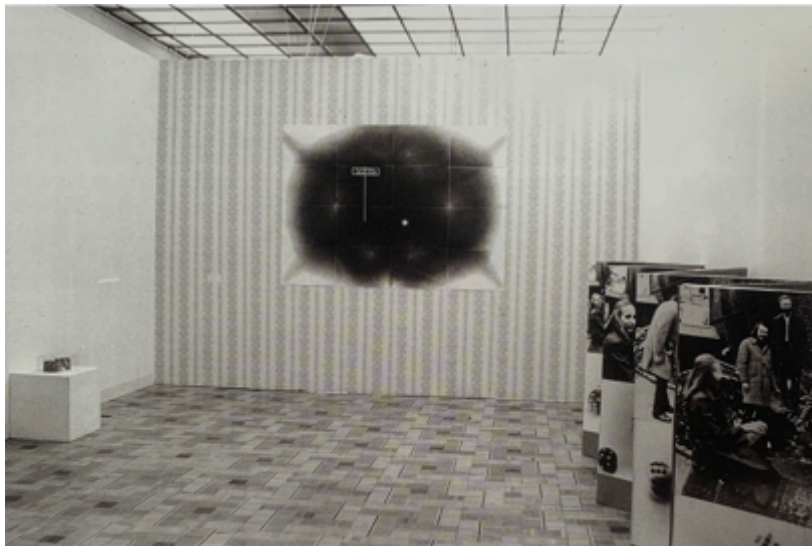


Figure 4.56. The Artist Instead of the Artwork, installation view
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

Out of the three modules, "In Rooms" was the most significant to this study in terms of its architectural references. While Kabakov was building communal rooms for ordinary Soviet person, and Tupitsyns excluding the artist's rooms from an exhibition of "room exhibitions", "In Rooms" deliberately omit the existence of artwork, that had been a vital part of Nonconformist artists' rooms, for the sake of transforming the artist room itself into a work of art. Unlike the previous examples, Erofeev knowingly deformed the Nonconformist practice by dividing it into its fragments. Victor Misano states that this extreme stand had been a particular action, one that resembles the Nonconformist practices of the 1980s the most.³⁷⁷

By dividing the parts that had formed the Nonconformist practice: the object, the room, and the artist into fragments, and exhibiting them separately, Erofeev achieved a coherent whole. Each exhibition includes presents and represents the very things that had been vital to the Nonconformist practice by their absence. Three exhibitions were designed like puzzle pieces of a whole; by each time removing two parts from the overall composition, Erofeev stresses the necessity, and uniqueness of the missing part. Just like his exhibitions without the museum, the absence of a fragment in an exhibition stresses its necessity.

Artists who designed the rooms for "In Rooms" all referenced to each other's room. One unique example is the work, which Konstantin Zvezdochetov designed, titled "Room on Clear Streams." The artist's work compositionally shows significant resemblances to the photographic documents of Zakharov and Kļesewalter's album "Rooms," where they photographed the Nonconformist artist rooms. Zvezdochetov's work shows apparent similarities to the room of another Mukhomors member Vladimir Mironenko's room. The installation, therefore, not only became a re-enactment of a photographic document, and architectural reinterpretation, but also references to a core Nonconformist tradition: that the art of Moscow Nonconformism was formed, reformed and deformed in rooms.

³⁷⁷ Misiano, V. "V storonu ot" ["Aside From"], *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR*, 11, 1990, p.7–8.



Figure 4.57. Konstantin Zvezdochetov, “Room on Clear Streams”, and Vladimir Mironenko’s room for the album “Rooms”
Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Institutional archive

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, the formations, reformations and deformations of Moscow Nonconformist artist circle and their take on communal room and communal living are traced. The final analysis of forming their genre of the room, reforming their practices and aesthetics regarding the changing context of communality in Soviet context, and deforming the room during their exhibitions in West, Nonconformist practice and history has shown distinct parallels with the evolution of Soviet architecture, communal living, culture and context in general.

As a conclusion, it is important to search for this parallel between the room and the Nonconformist practice in the post-Soviet era.

Anthropologist Ilya Utekhin initiated a project in 2015, where he and photographer Elena Mikhailova started documenting the interiors and living of previous Kommunaliki in post-Soviet period. In his article “The Post-Soviet Kommunalka,” Utekhin starts discussing the current condition of Kommunalka in the contemporary Russian culture through its new role as a touristic destination. He remembers one of the touristic tours he took, where the guide states: “Communal apartments are an ugly legacy of the Soviet system, but at the same time they also represent the Soviet motherland, a repository of nostalgic memories.”³⁷⁸ Utekhin refuses this statement, since for him, communal apartments are still a vital part of post-Soviet reality even if their functions are relatively different.

During his project, Utekhin wanders around the corridors of previous Kommunaliki and documents especially the common areas. Following the dissolution of Soviet Union, a rapid

³⁷⁸ Utekhin, I. “The Post-Soviet Kommunalka”, in Ransel, D. (ed.) *Everyday Life in Russia: Past and Present*, Michigan: Indiana University Press, 2015, p.247.

privatization of previous Kommunalaki began, through which a single landlord got to own an entire Kommunalaka because of the uncontrolled free economy and underselling of these apartments since they are “the ugly legacy of the past.” In contemporary Russian Federation, the landlords who owned these properties started renting them rather randomly to mostly immigrants who have been living “15 people in a single rom which is definitely under the Soviet sanitary norm.” Utekhin states that, just like in 1930s, it became rather usual to come up with signs and boards of tenants warning other tenants to stay out of the food in the communal kitchen and pick up their trash. Although, it is not mandatory and state-controlled to live in Kommunalaki, the shared life becomes mandatory, but this time, as a result of capital economy. Therefore, the spatial legacy and the everyday practices of collective living continue to exist in post-Soviet Russia, although the context is different, as long as spatial practices are concerned the uplotnenie still is viable for major cities.



Figure 5.1. Ilya Utekhin & Elena Mikhailova, “Post-Soviet Kommunalaka” Project, 2015

Arzamas Academy archive

While the communal rooms still live and well today, how the Nonconformist practice which, through their decades-long struggle with the official institutions, formed, reformed, and deformed in rooms while taking the communal room as their main subject evolved?

The Nonconformist practice produced and exhibited in rooms. As the pivotal part of their practice, Nonconformist aesthetics were developed concerning the Soviet everyday domestic space, its objects, and Soviet everyday dynamics. The primary question when concluding is: what happened to the Nonconformist artistic genre when there was no Soviet context to refer to? While concluding, it is essential to make some parallel remarks on Nonconformist artistic evolution following 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union.

On September 25, 1982, at Ronald Feldman Gallery, the exhibition "Sots Art" was opened. The exhibition hall of the gallery re-organized to imitate official exhibition spaces: "the lights were dimmed to set off the large, dramatically lit canvasses executed in an academic style."³⁷⁹ There were swags of drapery hanging from the ceiling, and artificial columns decorated with Greek muses combined with Kremlin ornamentations were added to the exhibition hall. The exhibition was of a series of utilitarian painting executed in a mockery style of the ready-made mechanisms of Soviet propaganda. At the beginning of the show, Komar and Melamine made a statement: "We are not trying to do a political show. This is nostalgia."³⁸⁰

Meanwhile, in November of 1996, Ilya Kabakov built an entirely realistic 'communal apartment' on the second floor of a small estate amidst old trees that, in turn, stood near an old, large villa where the Gallery of Modern Art of the city of Leipzig is located. The building was a two-story structure that belonged to the manager of a nearby villa. There were three rooms in it, which were accessed through a narrow corridor, which was eventually connected to a small kitchen.

³⁷⁹ Hughes, R. "Through the Ironic Curtain," Time 17, October 25, 1982, p.73.

³⁸⁰ Komar and Melamid quoted in Hughes, R. "Through the Ironic Curtain," Time 17, October 25, 1982, p.73.

When we entered, everything was empty, abandoned, and it seemed that no one had resided in the apartment for a long time. However, the walls, floor, and ceiling, though cracked and very shabby, were nonetheless still quite durable, and the appearance of a former residence was preserved. Down below on the first floor, there were two other spaces: ample space for a carriage and a stable with stalls for three horses. [...] In such a situation, the Communal Apartment just begged to be built. [...] We did an entire reconstruction transforming a long-abandoned manager's house into an over-crowded Moscow 'communal apartment'.³⁸¹

There were two parts to this reconstruction: the first was to construct the interior with Soviet furniture, clothing, lamps, dishes, and other domestic clutter. The walls of the first floor were already peeling. Kabakov painted the walls in dull colors, leaving the peeling parts naked. He hanged rows of wooden boards with texts on them that mostly included resident complaints. He covered the leaking parts of the corridor with old Soviet newspapers. On the second floor, he decorated three rooms, the kitchen, and the corridor. He states:

...an ordinary interior of a communal apartment that has been recreated in all its detail. Tables with dishes on them stand right up against one another; there are shelves above them with pots, plates, and other such things. The ceiling and the only lamp are not visible: laundry is hung to dry on ropes stretched across the room.

A dreary row of glass jars stands on the windowsill. In everything, there is slovenliness, neglect, chaos, formlessness, tedium, and depressing everyday reality. Having stood for a bit and having listened to the exchange of voices and have gotten bored with looking at what is usually not subject to such scrutiny –

³⁸¹ Kabakov, I. *On Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.303.

every day, the hopeless dreariness of existence – the viewer then enters the corridor and opens the door to the first room on the left.³⁸²

After the interiors were Sovietized, Kabakov went on to the second part: to isolate the communal apartment from the surrounding "alien" context. He covered all windows with either matte or semi-transparent paper. It was a re-interpretation of his hallmark of building a plywood shell covering the communal installation.

After the installation was completed, and the rooms were decorated, Kabakov and accompanying circle of 'builders' cooked and ate in the communal kitchen of the apartment. This was Kabakov's first attempt to transform physical space into a communal installation. While commenting on the work, he does refer to the reconstruction as a "communal apartment" instead of installation.

One one side, since the room, as had been discussed throughout this study, had been a vital part of the Nonconformist practice, it is expected to live in the post-Soviet Nonconformist works considering the aspect of nostalgia. However, there is a more determining factor, in my opinion, for the Nonconformist artists to still derive forms from everyday practices and spaces of collective living. Just like the Kommunaliki preserved its spatial form but put into use under a different ideological era after socialism, Nonconformist artists re-define the collective living not as a socialist legacy, but a contemporary and, at times mandatory, form of living under the global capitalist economy. One good example of continuing to practice on communal room and collective exhibiting in a room is Vadim Zakharov's recent initiative started in Berlin named "FreeHome." Zakharov transforms his Berlin house into an artist squat where the young Berliner artists can come, work, stay and exhibit. During an interview with the artists, he told: "Collective living is a universal form nowadays. More importantly, it is an artistic necessity for sharing ideas since it is the prerequisite of collective working and artistic collaborations."

³⁸² Kabakov, I. *On Art*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018, p.303.

Therefore, although Kommunal'ki had been a unique architectural experiment, in contemporary context both for Russia and of Nonconformist artists, it is a common practice.



Figure 5.2. Ilya Kabakov, “Voices Behind the Door”, Leipzig, 1996.
Ilya & Emilia Kabakov personal archive



Figure 5.3. Ilya Kabakov, “Voices Behind the Door”, Leipzig, 1996.
Ilya & Emilia Kabakov personal archive

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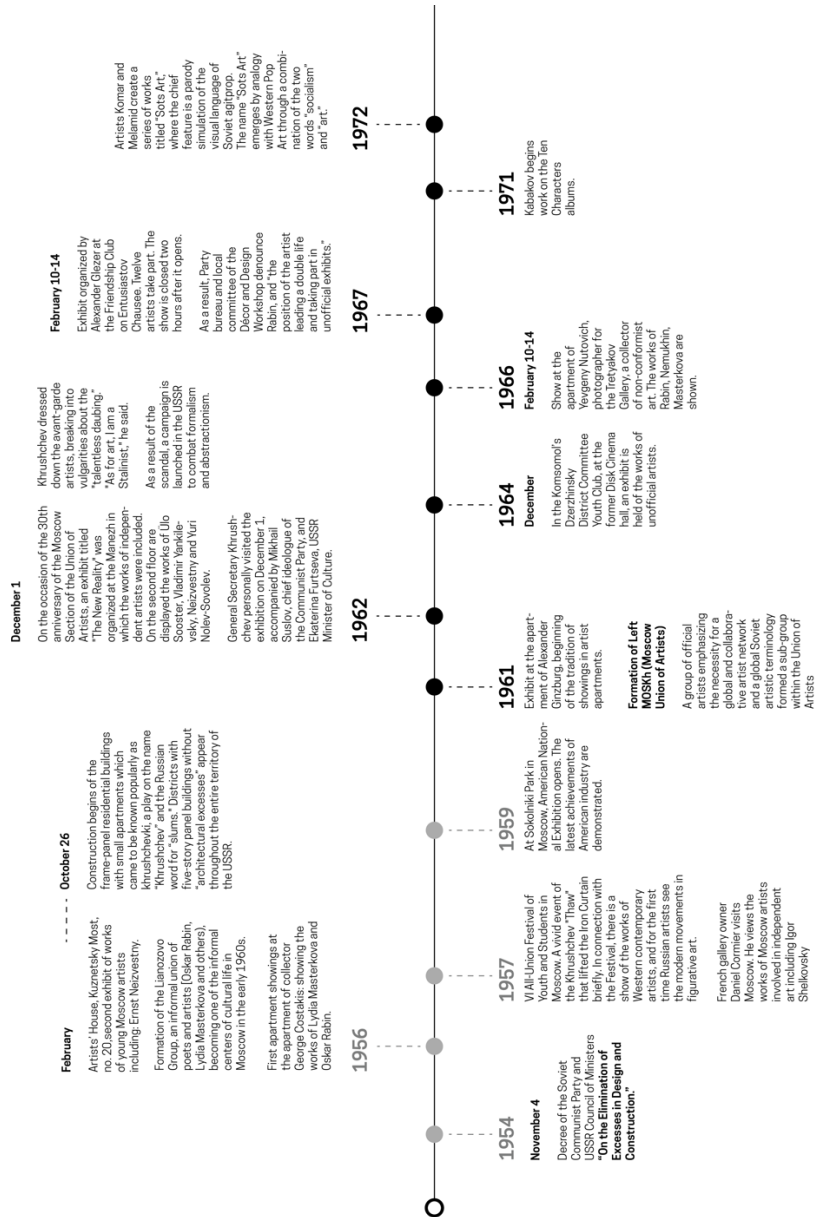
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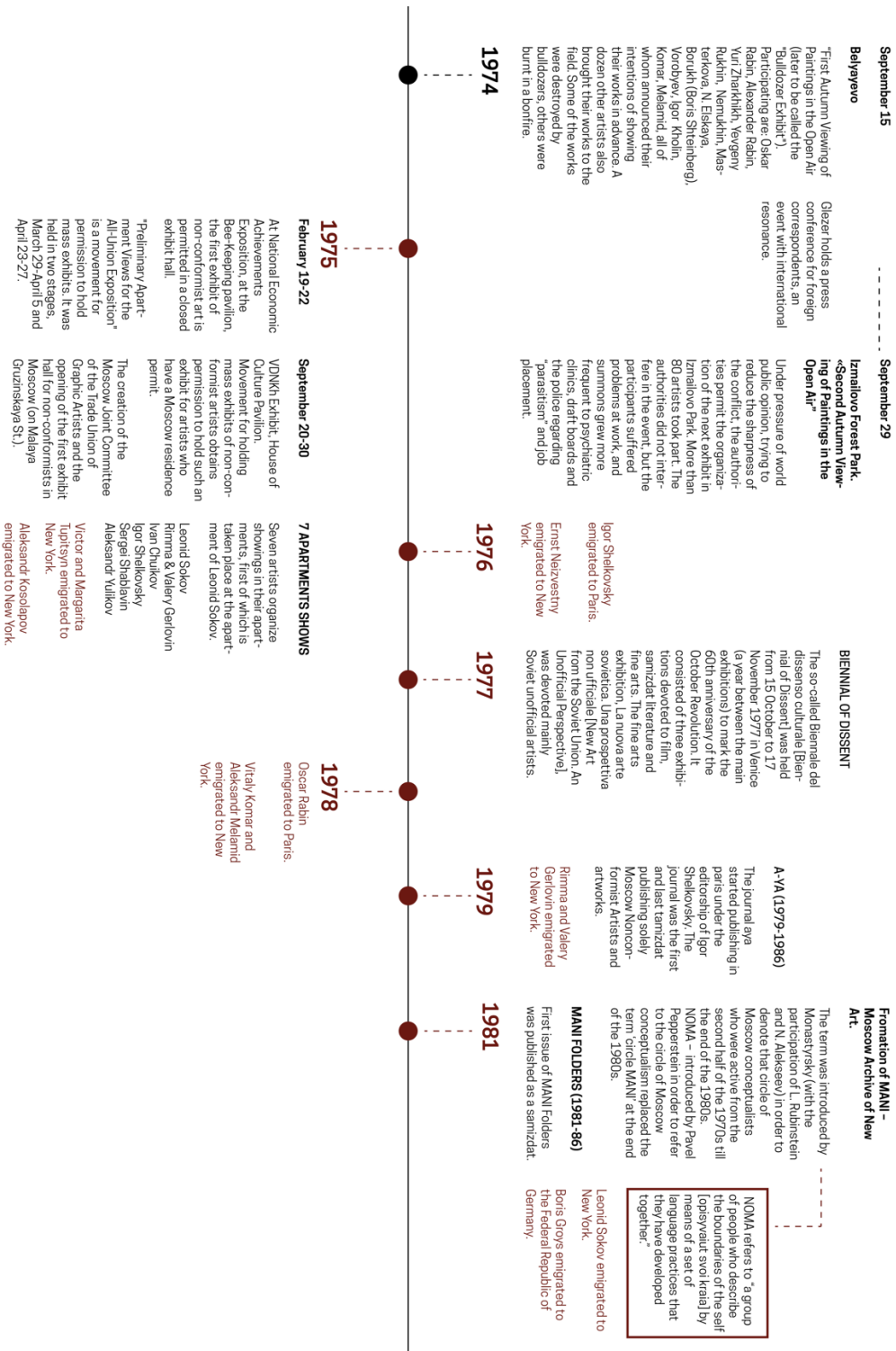
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APPENDICES

A. TIMELINE OF SOVIET NONCONFORMIST JOURNEY





Formation of Creative Center "Kindergarten"

"Kindergarten" was indeed a unique phenomenon formed by the cooperation of three artists: Andrei Ivotier, German Vinogradov, Nikolai Filatov, which began in the spring of 1985, when all three got a job as watchmen in a departmental kindergarten, the building of which was mothballed in Khokhlovsky Lane awaiting repair. The old two-story building was immediately occupied by art workshops, spaces for installations and temporary exhibitions. So the first art squat was born in Moscow.

Ilya Kabakov left for New York.

Formation of Creative Center "Kindergarten"

"Kindergarten" was indeed a unique phenomenon formed by the cooperation of three artists: Andrei Ivotier, German Vinogradov, Nikolai Filatov, which began in the spring of 1985, when all three got a job as watchmen in a departmental kindergarten, the building of which was mothballed in Khokhlovsky Lane awaiting repair. The old two-story building was immediately occupied by art workshops, spaces for installations and temporary exhibitions. So the first art squat was born in Moscow.

Ilya Kabakov left for New York.

Artists Squat on Furmanny Lane (1986-1990)

A group of young nonconformist artists to use the settled communal apartments in workshop No. 49 on Furmanny Lane, an apartment complex planned to be demolished in 1990.

Yuri Albert, Sven Gundlakh, Vadim Zakharov, Konstantin Zvezdochortov, brothers Vladimir and Sergey Mironenko and Andrei Filippov were the first to enter two communal apartments.

They were followed by artists from younger generation. The artists workshops formed a central meeting point for unofficial artists of late 1980s until the building demolished and the squat moved to an empty house on Trekhrudny Lane.

July 5

An article comes out in Sovetskaya Kultura with the headline "Fish in a troubled pond" discussing the condition of underground art.

December 25

Formation of Hermitage

An amateur creative association. About 80 people join including artists, photographers, art critics, architects, and writers. The Hermitage started its activities in the exhibition hall of the District Library, and moved to the exhibition hall at the Embassy of Netherlands.

November

17th Youth Exhibition

Arranged by MOSKh and held at the USSR and RSFSR Unions of Artists' halls on Kuznetsky Most, 20 to encourage "a variety of creative search".

They were followed by artists from younger generation. The artists workshops formed a central meeting point for unofficial artists of late 1980s until the building demolished and the squat moved to an empty house on Trekhrudny Lane.

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July 5

An article comes out in Sovetskaya Kultura with the headline "Fish in a troubled pond" discussing the condition of underground art.

1986

1985

1984

1982

APT-ART (1982-1984)

The first exhibition of APT-ART exhibition series was held at the apartment of Nikita Alekseev. Participants include:

Andrei Monastyrsky
Mukhomor group
Nikita Alekseev
Natalia Abalakova
Anatolii Zhigalov
Vadim Zakharov
Victor Skersis
Mikhail Roshal
Sergei Anuriev
George Kiesewalter
Lav Rubinshtain
Nikolai Panitkov

The House of the Artist (Kuznetsky Most, 11)

Leonid Bazhanov arranges the House of the Artist at Kuznetsky Most, 11 as a temporary exhibition space for unofficial gatherings. Mostly one-day exhibitions of Nonconformist artists were held at the place.

Victor Pivovarov emigrated to Prague.

October 19-25

Formation of KLAVA [The Club of Avant-Gardists]

The Avant-Garde Club chose a strategy for holding exhibitions in the most unusual spaces - actions on chartered ships, in a vacant lot and in an apartment, in Sandunov baths, in the Exhibition Hall of the Proletarian District.

Curators: Leonid Bazhanov, Vitaly Patsyukov, Leonid Talochkin, Andrey Erofeev. The exhibition was the first to present an overall panorama of Moscow Nonconformist circle and their works though three generations.

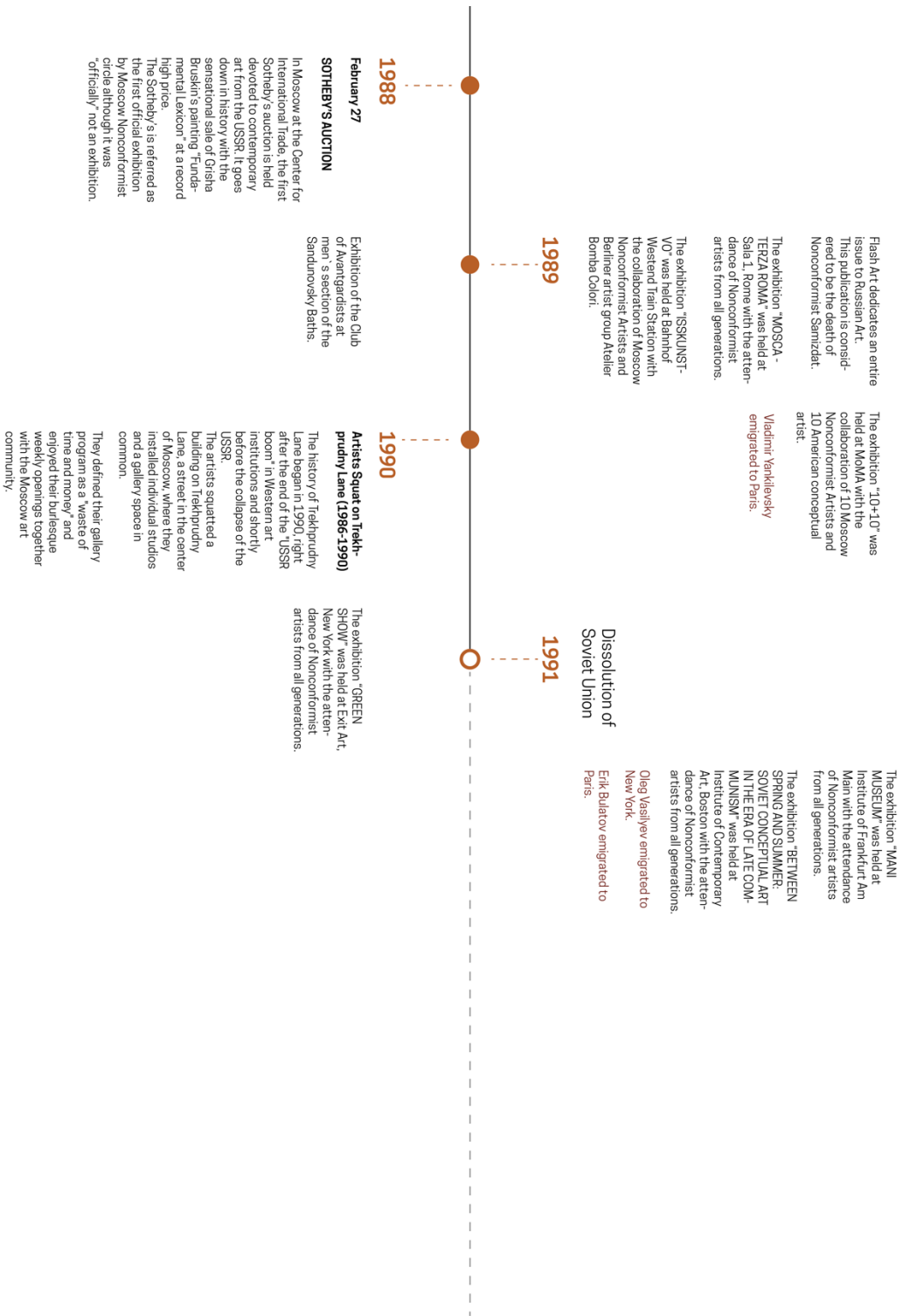
1987

February

Formation of KLAVA [The Club of Avant-Gardists]

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B. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Yıldırım, Senem
Date and Place of Birth: 16 May 1987, Akşehir
Phone: +90 312 2853604
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph.D	METU History of Architecture	2020
MS	METU Architecture	2013
BS	METU Architecture	2010

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2018-2019	COLUMBIA UNI. Harriman Institute	Visiting Scholar
2012-Present	GAZI UNI. Department of Architecture	Research Assistant
2011-2012	EMI Construction Co.	Junior Architect/Designer
2010-2012		Freelance Designer

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Intermediate Russian, Beginner Japanese

PUBLICATIONS

1. Yıldırım, S. "Re-Imagining the City through the Act of Graffiti: on tags and Urban Parasites, 4th Annual Conference on Image, Proceedings Book, 2013, ISBN 0-7803-5467-2.
2. Yıldırım, S. "On Proportions and Spatial Perception", Review for the Book "An Introduction to the Visual History of Turkey", TMMOB Journal of Architecture, 2013, 351.

3. Yildirim Evsen, S. "Spatial Perceptions in Charles Dickens' Illustrated Novels", LITCRI'15, Proceedings Book, 2015, ISBN: 978-605-9207-09-6.

4. Yildirim Evsen, Senem. (2016)"Demonic Spaces': On Dickensian Spaces and Illustrated Novels", 2016, Journal of New World Sciences Academy, ISSN 1308-7320.

5. Yildirim Evsen, Senem. (2016)"Structuring Places-To-Play: Between Assassin's Creed and Parkour/, Reconstruction of Architectural Space In Games and The Gamer's Experience", 2016, Spectra Journal, 5:1.

6. Yildirim Evsen, S. "This is How We Live: [In]Appropriate Rooms / Nonconformist Apartment Exhibitions and the Case of Communal Apartment: 1982-1984", "Appropriate(d) Interiors" Pratt Annual Symposium on Interior Provocations, Proceedings Book, 2019.

WORKSHOPS

1. METU Fabric Form Workshop, 2012, Participant

2. WIRE 2013, International Winter School, Teaching Assistant

3. WIRE 2014, International Winter School, Teaching Assistant

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Soviet Postmodern Culture , Soviet Art and Architecture of Perestroika, Cold War Visuality and Architecture, Intersections of Art and Architectural History, Political Propoganda and its Visual Means of Representation.

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

“OLUŞUMLAR, DÖNÜŞÜMLER, BOZUNUMLAR”

MOSKOVA NONKOFORMİST SANATÇILARI VE İŞLERİ PEŞİNDE KOMÜN ODA
VE MİMARİSİNİN İZİNİ SÜRMEK

1975-1991

Bu tez, 1970lerin ikinci yarısında Sovyet Moskova’sı yeraltı kültüründe yeşeren Sovyet Nonkonfomist sanatçıların pratikleri ve işleri üzerinden komün odanın kamusal mahreme uzanan evrimini takip etmektedir. Sovyet lideri Kruşçev’in inisiyatifıyla 1955’te başlayan Çözülme dönemi, Stalin sonrası Sovyetler Birliği’nde ulusal kültür ve politikanın yeniden şekillenmesinde devrimsel bir rol oynamıştır. Yeniden keşfedilen bireysel ve toplumsal özgürlükler özellikle büyük şehirlerde entellektüellerin, sanat, edebiyat ve mimaride katı resmi üslup ve pratiklerin sınırlarını aşarak yeni keşifler yapmaya başlayacak kadar özgürleşmesine sebep olmuştur.

Elbette, 25 yılı aşkın süredir Stalin hegemonyası ve totaliter bir rejimin gölgesinde yaşayan Sovyet toplumu için Çözülme sonrası bireysel ifade özgürlüğünün geri döneceği ihtimali benzer süreçlerden geçen başka toplumlarda olduğu kadar önemli ve hayatidir. Fakat, Kruşçev Çözülmesi’nin beraberinde getirdiği göreceli özgürlük; yeni, esnek ve Sosyalist Gerçekçilik akımının dışında kavramsal bir sanat, edebiyat ve mimarlık üslubunun yeşerebileceğine dair umutları olan, ve resmi üslubun dışında kendilerine yer bulmaya çalışan yeni nesil entellektüeller için bir hayal kırıklığına dönüşür. Özellikle sergileyebilmek durumunun yalnızca devletin ‘resmi’ titrini uygun gördüğün sanatçılara ait bir ayrıcalık olması³⁸³, bu titr

³⁸³ Sovyetler Birliği’nde yerel entellektüel sendikaların oluşturulması ilk olarak Çarlık dönemi sanat okullarının 1920’de “Özgür Atölyeler” ismi altında tek bir çatı altında birleştirilmesiyle başlar. Moskova’da iki ana sanat okulu: MSAAI (Surikov Sanat Okulu) ve Stroganov Sanat Okulu öğrencileri tarafından başlatılan inisiyatifin aslı amacı farklı fikir paylaşımlarının desteklediği özgür ve kolektif yeni bir eğitim sistemi yaratmaktır. ‘Özgür Atölyeler’ projesi sanat ve mimarlık eğitiminde bir devrim yaratır. 29 Kasım 1921’de Sovyet Halk Temsilcileri Konseyinin “Eğitim Üzerine” başlığıyla yayınlanan hükmü sonucu tüm özgür atölyeler VKhUTEMAS altında birleştirilir. Kolektif eğitimin ana temsilcilerinden biri olan VkhUTEMAS, Stalin döneminde tektip üslupta sanatçılar yetiştiren ‘totaliter fabrika’lara dönüştü. Eğitimin tektipleştirilmesi ile beraber, tek kurum altına toplanan

için ‘fazla kavramsal’ olan yeni nesil sanatçılarının yeraltına çekilip, resmi kanalların dışında alternatif sanat akımları ve alternatif sergi mekanları aramalarına/yaratmalarına sebep olur.

Yeraltı kültürünün yeşermesi, bir taraftan sanatçıların resmi kanallarda ve özellikle Sanatçılar Birliği’nde yer bulamamasıyla bir zorunluluk haline gelirken, diğer taraftan Sovyetler Birliği’nde 1955’te başlatılan mimari bir kaymayla doğrudan ilişkilidir, ve bu kayma sonucu özgün bir akıma dönüşür ve mekanını bulur.

10 Kasım 1955’te Sovyet Komünist Partisi ve Sovyet Yerel Yönetimler Konseyi, “Tasarım ve İnşaa’da Aşırılıkların Elenmesi Üzerine” başlıklı 1871 numaralı hükmü yürürlüğe koyar ve hüküm, Sovyetler Birliği’nin ana resmi yayın organlarından biri olan Pravda’da yayınlanır. Bu hüküm, bir yandan Stalinist mimariyle ilişkilendirilen neo-klasik üslubu, süslemeye olan düşkünlüğü ve yüksek maliyetli inşa süreçleri yüzünden yerer. Diğer yandan, devrim sonrasında başlatılan ve konutlarda mahrem alanların çözülmesiyle sonuçlanan komün apartmanların üretilmesi ve kolektif yaşamın yaratılması deneyi, Kruşçev’in inisiyatifıyla sekteye uğrar. Liderin ismiyle anılmaya başlanan ve prefabrik bir konut tipolojisi öneren Kruşçevka’lar Moskova ve Leningrad’da hızla ve sistematik olarak inşa edilmeye başlanır, ve Sovyetler’in başlıca kentlerinde hem konut sorununu çözmeyi hem de her birey/aile için mahrem bir oda sağlamayı vaat eder. Kruşçev’in umut vaat eden fakat gerçekleşmeyen pek çok önerisinin aksine, Kruşçevka projesi sonucu konut mimarisinin temeli olan oda, 40 yıla yakın bir süreden sonra 1956’da tekrar mahrem olur. Odanın yeni kazanılan mahremliği yeraltı sanatçıları için yalnızca cesaretlendirici olmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda özgün bir toplanma ve sergileme mekanının doğmasına olanak sağlar: bu tez yaşam alanlarını yeraltı sergilerine dönüştüren bir grup Moskova sanatçısının, komün oda mirasını hem sergilemek mekanı hem

mimarlık ve sanat eğitimi önce yerelde, büyük şehirlerde, daha sonra da ülke çapında Sovyet Sanatçılar Birliği’ne bağlandı. Sanatçılar Birliği, ‘resmi sanatçı’ titrinin kazanılabildiği yegane organizasyon haline gelir. Tüm sergi mekanlarının devlet kontrolü altında olduğu Sovyetler Birliği’nde, sanat yapmak isteyen her birey Sanatçılar Birliği’ne üye olmak zorundaydı.

de sanat eserlerinin konusu yaptıkları özebir bir dönem olan 1975-1991 yılları arasına odaklanmaktadır.

Üç bölümden oluşan tez, üç jenerasyon boyunca hem Moskova Nonkonformist sanatçıları, onların biyografilerini, ilişkilerini, ağlarını ve ayak izlerindeki, hem de komün odayı ve komün apartmandaki domestik yaşamı dert edinen Moskova Nonkonformist sanat eserlerindeki oluşumları, dönüşümleri ve bozunumları takip eder. Tezin her bölümü sanatçı ağlarını, ve sanat eserlerini paralelde takip etmek amacıyla ikiye bölünmüştür.

Tezin ilk bölümü 1975-1986 yılları arasında Nonkonformist ilişki ağları ve sanat eserlerinin oluşum sürecine odaklanmaktadır. Sovyetler Birliği'nde Islahat dönemi olarak bilinen ve Gorbaçev tarafından ilan edilen 1986 ve sonrası sürecin tam öncesinde, Breznev önderliğindeki ülkenin duraklama dönemine odaklanan birinci bölüm, Nonkonformistlerin bir ve ikinci nesillerinin birbirilerine bağlı ve iletişim içerisinde yeni-mahrem fakat bir zamanların komün odalarını iskan tutma hikayelerini takip eder. Birinci ve ikinci nesil Nonkonformistlerden bahsetmeden önce, tezin odaklandığı zaman aralığı ve başlangıç noktasının seçimiyle ilgili birkaç söz söylemek gerekir. Daha önce bahsedildiği gibi, Moskova'da yeraltı kültürünün oluşması süreci 1960'larda başlar. Odaların özel alanlara dönüştürülmesini takip eden süreçte sanatçı odaları toplanma mekanları, ve hatta sanatçıların ürettikleri işlerini sergiledikleri tek kişilik sergi mekanları olarak kullanılmaya başlanır. Fakat bu tezin 1975 yılını başlangıç noktası seçmek için iki sebebi vardır:

1. Her ne kadar 1960-1975 arası süreçte, sanatçı odaları sergileme mekanları olarak kullanılsa da, bu gösterimler kolektif bir grup ruhundan yoksun, tek kişilik sunumlar olarak kalmıştır. Bunun sebebi bir taraftan Moskova özelinde 'yeraltı sanatçı' sayısının bir akım, ve hatta çoğu zaman bir grup oluşturamayacak kadar az olmasıdır. 1975'i takip eden süreçte ise, bu tezde Moskova Nonkonformistleri olarak anılan grup, adeta kendi kurumsallaşma sürecini

yaratmış, hem kendi nesilleriyle, hem de nesiller arası kuvvetli iletişim ağı geliştirmiş, ve düzenlenen sergiler bireysel sergiler olmaktan ziyade kolektif sergilere dönüşmüştür.³⁸⁴

2. 1960-1975 arası Moskova yeraltı kültürü özelinde aktif olan sanatçıların kavramsal sanat anlayışı çoğunlukla Batı'dan kaçak olarak getirilen 'kahve masası kitapları'ndan esinlenir ve küresel soyut sanat biçimlerini benimser. 1975'ten sonra ise Moskova Nonkonformist sanatçıları, Sovyet resmi üslubunun bir kinayesi olan ve özellikle Sovyet konutu ve kolektif yaşam pratiklerinin yeniden üretimini dert edinen kendi eşsiz akımlarını üretirler.

Sonuç olarak, 1970'lerin ilk yarısında biraraya gelmeye başlayan sanatçılar, 1975 yılı itibarıyla Nonkonformist akımın ilk neslini oluşturur ve kolektif oda sergilerine başlar. Sanatçıların ilişki ağlarını takipleyen bu çalışma, her nesil için ayrı grafikler üzerinden belirli bir neslin ana aktörlerini belirleyerek, bu aktörlerin odaları üzerinden Moskova Nonkonformist buluşma mekanlarını haritalandırır. Aktörlerin biyografileri üzerinden şekillenen bu grafikler, dijital bir platform aracılığıyla³⁸⁵ düğüm noktaları ve ilişki biçimleri kodlanarak görsellenir, ve bir nesil içerisinde diğerler sanatçılara oranla daha aktif olan sanatçılar Nonkonformist yolculuğun takip edilmesi için düğüm noktalarını oluşturur, bu ana aktörlerin odaları ise toplanma/sergilenme merkezleri olarak analiz edilir. Örnek olarak, bu çalışmada her sanatçının kendi düğüm noktası vardır, ve bu düğüm noktaları belirli ilişki biçimleriyle birbirine bağlanır: tanışıklık derecesi, mezun oldukları sanat enstitüleri vb. gibi. Daha çok bağlantıya sahip olan aktör temel alınarak ilişkiler, mekanlar ve sanat eserleri tartışılır.

³⁸⁴ Tupitsyn (2012).

³⁸⁵ Kullanılan platform graphcommons.com'dur. Bu dijital platform, bireysel dataları kompleks bir haritalandırmayla görselleyerek, özellikle kalabalık bir sanatçı grubunun takip edildiği bu gibi çalışmalarda, hangi aktörün daha aktif olduğunun anlaşılmasını sağlar.

*

Birinci nesil sözkonusu olduğunda, sanatçı biyografilerinin izleri, ilk Nonkonformist grupların şekillenmesinde sanatçıların mezun oldukları sanat enstitülerinin³⁸⁶ etkili olduğunu gösterir. Birinci nesil arasından:

- * MSAAI (Surikov Sanat Enstitüsü)'de eğitimini almış olan: Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Oleg Vasiliev, Eduard Steinberg, Eduard Gorokhovsky, Igor Makarevich, Igor Shelkovsky, Ivan Chuikov, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Francisco Infante ve Dmitri Prigov;
- * Stroganov sanat Enstitüsü'nde eğitimini alış olan Aleksandr Melamid, Vitaly Komar, Leonid Sokov, Boris Orlov ve Aleksandr Kosolapov;
- * Stüdyo Okulu'nda eğitimini almış olan Rimma ve Valery Gerlovin, Elena Elagina ve Victor Pivovarov öncelikle kendi aralarında küçük gruplar kurmaya başlar. (Figür 2.4)

Zamanla üç ayrı alt grup korunsa da, birbirine yaklaşan ve oda ziyaretleri aracılığıyla ortak bir payda yakalayabilen bu sanatçılar, ilk Nonkonformist sanatçı ağını ve Nonkonformist estetiğin ilk örneklerini üretirler. 1975 itibariyle 3 ana alt grup oluşmuştur: Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Oleg Vasilyev ve Vladimir Yankilevsky'nin merkezinde olduğu Sretensky Bulvarı,³⁸⁷ Rimma ve Valery Gerlovin, Ivan Chuikov ve Leonid Sokov'un merkezinde bulunduğu "7 Yaratıcılık Çemberi";³⁸⁸ ve Vitaly Komar ve Aleksandr Melamid'in merkezinde olduğu "Sotsart".³⁸⁹ (Figür 2.15)

³⁸⁶ Nonkonformist sanatçıların mezun olduğu üç ana sanat okulu, tarihsel mirasları açısından da önemlidir. MSAAI ve Stroganov ilk özgür atölyelerin kurulduğu okullarken, Stüdyo Okulu, Eli Belyutin önderliğinde 1950'lerden başlayarak 1920'lerin Sovyet Avangard'ını yeniden canlandırarak kavramsal bir eğitim programı uygulamanın savaşını vermiştir.

³⁸⁷ Grup, ismini sanatçılarının konutlarının birbirine ve Sretensky Bulvarı'na yakın olması sebebiyle, buldukları mikro-bağlamdan alır.

³⁸⁸ Grup, ismini grubu oluşturan 7 sanatçıdan almıştır.

³⁸⁹ Grup, ismini kendilerine has üsluplarından alır. Sotsart İngilizce "Socialist Art" (Sosyalist Sanat)ın kısaltmasıdır ve Sosyalist Gerçeklik akımının ikonlarını alaya alarak yeniden ürettikleri sanat eserleri ile tanınırlar.

Bu üç grubun odaları, odalarındaki sergileri ve komün oda ve komün apartman hayatından esinlenerek ürettikleri sanat eserlerini anlayabilmek için, öncelikle Sovyet konut tarihine kısaca bakmak gerekir.

*

Kruşçevka'nın sunduğu mahrem oda, Sovyet kültürü için, Çözülme politikaları kadar önemlidir. Totaliter ve kolektif bir konut yapısının görece de olsa esneyecek olması ihtimalinin hangi sebeple bu kadar hayati olduğunu anlayabilmek için bir adım geri giderek, totaliter rejimin 1927-1953 yılları arasında Stalin dönemi sırasında nasıl sağlamlaştığına bakmak gerekir. 1917 Ekim Devrimi'ni takip eden yıllarda, devrimin sürekliliğinin yalnızca bürokrasi ve ülke politikasına değil sosyalizmin gündelik yaşam pratiklerine müdahil olmasına bağlı olduğuna inanan genç Sovyet hükümeti, Lenin önderliğinde, “sosyalizme yakışır yeni bir hayat yaratmak” idealinin bir sonucu olarak Sovyet gündelik hayatının her parçasına müdahil olan kapsamlı ve sistematik bir dönüştürme politikası başlatır. Bu politikanın merkezinde, geleneksel konut yapısının çözülmesi yatmaktadır. Çekirdek ailenin temel ihtiyaçlarına hizmet eden ve en temel tasarım prensibi mahremiyeti korumak olan geleneksel konutun aksine, Lenin hükümeti kolektif yaşamı destekleyen yeni bir tipolojinin gerekliliğine inanırlar. Gelecek olan onyıllar boyunca Sovyet konut tarihi ve tasarımının belirleyici etkenlerinden ilki, sosyalizmi tek binada tasarlamak planıdır.

Sovyet konut politikalarını etkileyen ikinci etmen, Sovyetler'in Çarlık Rusya'sının son yıllarından miras aldığı konut krizidir. 20. yüzyılın başı itibariyle, özellikle Moskova bağlamı orta-üst sınıf için tasarlanan burjuva konutlarından oluşmuştur, işçi sınıfı devrimden yıllar önce konut bulmak sorunuyla yüz yüze olup burjuva konutlarının bodrum ve çatı aralarında toplu olarak paylaştıkları odada yaşarlar. Devrimin ertesinde, endüstriyel bir işçi toplumu yaratma hayaliyle, sosyalist endüstrinin merkezi olan başkent Moskova, bir yandan halihazırda varolan konut kıtlığı ile başetmeye çalışırken, diğer yandan kırsal alanlardan Moskova'ya akın eden işçiler konut krizini çözümez boyutlara taşır.

Bu iki etmen gözönünde bulundurularak, iki aşamalı yeni Sovyet konut politikası yürürlüğe konulur:

Öncelikle, 28 Ekim 1917'de "Araziler Üzerine" başlıklı hüküm ile özel mülkiyet hakkı yasaklanır. Bu hükme göre, tüm özel mülkiyetler, tarım arazileri ve konutlar da dahil olmak üzere, devlet himayesi altına alınır. Ağustos 1918 itibariyle, tüm kentsel ve kırsal alanlar devlet kontrolüne girer ve kapsamlı bir 'yeniden konut dağıtımı' politikası başlar. Rusça'da "uplotnenie" (sıklaştırma) ismi verilen bir süreçte, öncelikle burjuva apartmanları kolektif olarak dönüştürülmeye başlanır. Uplotnenie politikasına göre: öncelikli olarak eskiden burjuva sınıfına ait ev sahipleri konutlarını diğer vatandaşlara açmaya zorlanır. böylece öncelikle varolan konutlar dönüşüme uğrar. "Saraylar İşçilere!" kampanyasıyla güdümlenen bu politika sonunda devlet özellikle Moskova'ya yeni göçen bireyleri geniş burjuva konutlarına yerleştirir. Bu yerleşim, eksantrik bir methodla yapılır. Matematiksel olarak bir bireyin hijyenik yaşamasına imkan verecek minimum metrekareler hesaplanarak, geniş burjuva konutlarının iç mekanları alçıpan bölmelerle bu hijyenik normları sağlayacak şekilde gelişigüzel bölünür. Haliyle, ilk komün oda deneyi, mahremiyet yarı çözüldüğü kübik bölmeler içinde başlar. (Figür 2.25)

Uplonenie'ye paralel olarak, Sovyet hükümeti 'sosyalizme yakışır' mekanlar tasarlama planını uygulamaya sokar. Bu ideale göre, çekirdek ailenin çözülebilmesi için, burjuvanın ve bireyin (özellikle kadının) köleliğinin simgesi olan mutfak konutun iç mekanından çıkarılmalıdır. 1920-1927 yılları arasında Soviet konut tipografisinde devrim niteliği taşıyan bu tasarıma "Dom Komuna" (Ev Komünleri) ismi verilir. Dom Komuna, bireylerin ferahça yaşamasına imkan veren sıralı odalarla beraber, bir ortak kantine, kütüphaneye, kreşe ve ortak kullanıma sahip olan banyo mahallerine sahiptir. 1920'lerin Konstrüktivist akımından etkilenen bu örnekler, sayıca az olsa da, biçimlendirdikleri tipoloji ilerleyen dönemlerde büyük Sovyet şehirlerinde konut tasarımlarına ilham olur.

Bu ilk deneyler 1927 yılına kadar sürerken, Moskova'ya kırsaldan göç akını devam eder. 1927 yılı itibariyle, hijyenik yaşama normu 6 metrekareye kadar düşer. Bazı konutlar tekrar bölmelere ayrılırken diğer konutlarda, sakinler görece mahremiyetlerini korumak amacıyla, eşyaları ve perdeleri kullanarak kendi alanlarının sınırlarını çizerler. 1927'de Stalinin devlet

başkanı olmasıyla ikinci beş yıllık Ulusal Ekonomi Politikası devreye girer. Dom Komuna'nın üretiminin maliyetli ve zaman alan bir proje olması öne sürülerek, Stalin dönemi mimarları öncelikle hijyenik yaşama normunu 5.4 metrekareye kadar düşürürler, ve varolan burjuva konutlarının talebe yetmediği görülünce Stalinka ismi verilen yeni bir konut tipolojisi tasarlarlar. Stalinkalar yeni yaşama normuna uygun olarak 5 metrekare olarak tasarlanan odaların, genişliği 1 metrekareyi bulan bir koridorun etrafına dizildiği, ve her katın iki ucunda komün mutfak, banyo mahalleri ve merdivenlerin bulunduğu çok katlı konutlardır. Eski burjuva konutlarının giderek küçülen ve Stalinkalar için yalnızca uyuma birimleri olarak tasarlanan odalar 'komün oda' ve Stalin dönemi boyunca konutlar 'komün apartman' (Komunalka) olarak anılmaya başlar.

Sovyet komün apartmanları kolektif yaşamın sınındığı bir devrim deneyidir. Komün apartmanlar, 1927-1955 yılları arasındaki süreçte, toplumsal kontrolün sağlandığı, statükonun sağlanıldığı ve Sovyet kolektif bedenlerin şekillendiği bir kurumlara dönüşür. Özellikle mutfak, koridor ve banyo mahali kamusal alanlar olarak tasarlanırken, komün odalar mahrem ve kamusal arasında kalan ve yeni bir tanımla kamusal-mahrem olarak anılan mekanlara dönüşür.³⁹⁰ Bu aykırı yaşam deneyi, 1955'te Kruşçev hükümeti tarafından yürürlüğe konulan 1871 numaralı hükümlerle sonlanır. 1955'i takip eden yıllarda 'novostroika' (Yeniden İnşa) olarak anılan ve Moskova şehrinin eteklerinde prefabrik Kruşçevka'ların yeşermesiyle sonuçlanan bir süreç başlar. İktidarın ana yayın organları 'bağımsız oda' propagandaları yaparken, Kruşçevka'lara yerleşmeyi bekleyen ve yerleştirilen binlerce insan Komunalka'ları terk eder. 1965'e kadar süren hızlı inşaa etme süreci sonrası, yalnızca Kruşçevka'lar değil, boşalan Komunalka'lar da mahrem odalara kavuşur.

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1960'larda Komunalka'lar henüz tam olarak mahremleştirilmemişken komün mutfaklarda başlayan yeraltı toplantıları, 1970'lerde sanatçı odalarına taşınır. Sretensky Boulevard sanatçıları, Kabakov'un Sretensky Bulvarı üzerindeki, Bulatov ve Vasilyev'in paylaştığı

³⁹⁰ Gerasimova (2002).

Chistoprudy Bulvarı üzerindeki ve Yankilevsky'nin Ulansky Sokağı'ndaki odalarında buluşmaya başlarlar. Paralelde ise, "7" üyeleri, Sokov'un Bolshoy Sukharevsky Sokağı'ndaki ve Gerlovin'lerin Bolshaya Cherkizovskaya Sokağı'ndaki odalarında toplanırlar. "Sots Art" için yegane buluşma yeri Komar ve Melamid'in Leninsky bölgesindeki odalarıdır.

Bu üç farklı grup zaman zaman birbirlerinin odalarını ziyaret ederler, Kabakov'un odasında albüm gösterimlerine, Gerlovin'lerin odasında okuma seanslarına, Komar ve Melamid'in odalarında performans gösterilerine katılırlar. Fakat, 1975'te Sokov ve Gerlovin'lerin inisiyatifiyle "7" grubu sanatçıların katılımı ve Sokov'un ev sahipliğiyle ilk kolektif oda sergisi düzenlenir. Bu etkinlik, kolektif sergi pratiklerini benimseyecek olan Nonkonformist sanatçılar için, bir grup sergisini organize etme, küratorlük yapma ve belgeleme konusunda ilk deneyimleridir. Sokov'un odasında yaşama alanı sergi alanından ayrılarak, odanın duvarları farklı sanatçıların işleriyle yeniden tasarlanır. "Bahar Sergileri" ismi verilen etkinlik, "7" grubuna dahil olan her sanatçının evinde düzenlenecek şekilde yedi sergiden oluşacak bir serinin ilki olarak planlanır, ve tüm Nonkonformist alt grupları tek sergi altında farklı rollerde: izleyici/belgeleyici/tasarımcı olarak biraraya getirir. "Bahar Sergileri" Sokov'un odasında başlar, ve ne yazık ki orada sonlanır. 1976'yı takiben başlayan göç dalgasında pek çok Nonkonformist sanatçı Batı'ya yerleşir. Fakat, kolektif oda sergilerinin ilki olarak, küratorel olarak acemice olsa da, Sokov'un odasındaki sergi önemli bir yer tutar. Bu sergiden ilhamla, ikinci nesil Nonkonformist sanatçıların önderliğinde bir dizi kolektif oda sergisi düzenlenir, dahası, ikinci nesil sanatçılar, bu pratiği eşsizleştirerek sanat işlerini hem odalar için, hem de odanın eşyalarını dönüştürerek tasarlarlar. Oda sergilerinin evriminden bahsetmeden önce ikinci nesil Nonkonformist sanatçılar ve ilişki ağlarına dair bir analiz gereklidir.

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İkinci nesil Nonkonformist sanatçıları 1980'lerin başında biçimlenmeye başladı. 1980 itibariyle, Gerlovin'ler, Sokov, Komar ve Melamid, ve Shelkovsky Batı'da farklı şehirlere yerleşmiştir, ve yeni nesil sanatçılar geride kalan Kabakov'un akıl hocalığıyla biraraya toplanmaya başlar. İkinci nesil sanatçıların yine kendi fragmanları ve alt grupları olsa da

düzenlenen etkinlikler ve oda sergilerinde bütün sanatçılar sanat işlerini sergiler, sergileri/toplantıları belgeler, küratörlüğünü yaparlar. İkinci nesilde birbirine daha yakın isimler olan Andrei Monastyrsky, Nikita Alekseev, Irina Nakhova ve George Kiesewalter “Kolektif Eylemler” grubunu kurar. Paralelinde, Konstantin Zvezdochetov, Mironenko kardeşler ve Sven Gundlach “Zehirli Mantar” grubunu kurar. Vadim Zakharov, Viktor Skersis ve Yuri Albert “SZ” grubu altında çalışırken, Anatoly Zhigalov ve Natalia Abalakova “Totart” grubunu kurar. Her ne kadar fragmantal görünseler de, ikinci nesil sanatçılar birinci nesle göre daha bütünleşik ve neredeyse kurumsal bir tavır sergilerler. Farklı gruplar tarafından düzenlenen etkinliklere tüm sanatçılar katılır, böylece kolektif oda sergisinden önce kolektif hareketi/pratikleri benimserler.

İkinci nesil için buluşma mekanları, Alekseev’in Vavilov Sokağı’ndaki odası, Nakhova ve Monastyrsky’nin Malaya Gruzinskaya’daki odaları, Zakharov ve Skersis’in Zhigalov ve Abalakova’nın konutuna çok yakın olan Chertanavo bölgesindeki odalarıdır. İkinci nesil sanatçılar, yeraltı kültürüne ait her sanatçının kendisinin küratörü, sanat eleştirmeni ve en önemlisi arşivcisi olduğuna inanırlar. Bu sebeple odayı bir yeraltı müzesine dönüştürmeden önce, onun arşivlenmesi aynı derecede önemlidir. Tüm sanatçıların katılımıyla ve Zakharov, Kiesewalter ve Monastyrsky önderliğinde NOMA (Moskova Yeni Sanat Arşivi)’ni kurarlar. NOMA’nın ilk projelerinden biri komün odanın belgelenmesidir. “Atelyelerin Etrafında” ve “Odalar” ismini verdikleri iki paralel albümde, birinci ve ikinci nesil Nonkonformist sanatçı odalarını fotoğraflar, analiz eder ve tarihe not ederler. Bu duruş, ikinci nesil sanatçıların odayı kendi kurumsal sergi mekanları olarak sahiplenmelerinin ilk adımıdır. İkinci nesil sanatçıları ilk nesilden ayıran en önemli etmen, ilk nesil sanatçıların bir gün eserlerini müzede sergileyecek olma hayalleridir. Öncüllerinin aksine, ikinci nesil sanatçılar odayı sahiplenir ve yeraltı müzelerine dönüştürür.³⁹¹

Odanın belgelenmesi kurumsal bir yeraltı müzesine dönüştürülmesinin ilk adımıdır. 1982’de Alekseev, kendi odasının NOMA galerisine dönüştürülmesini teklif eder. Alekseev’in Vavilov Sokağı, 48 numaradaki odası, 1982-1984 yılları arasında bir seri Nonkonformist sergiye ev

³⁹¹ Skersis (2014).

sahipliği yapar. Sanatçılar galerinin APTART³⁹² ismini verir. APTART sergileri iki açıdan oldukça önemlidir:

Birincisi, öncül örneklere bakıldığında, APTART'tan önce organize edilen sergiler, sanatçının yaşama alanının kullanmaya devam edebilmesi amacıyla tek günlük sergilerdir. Aynı gün içinde, sanatçıların odaları önce sergi mekanına, sonra tekrar konuta dönüştürülür. 1982'de Abalakova ve Zhigalov'un odalarında düzenlenen sergiler dahil, odanın iki fonksiyonu: uyuma ve sergileme, hep ayrı tutulmuştur. Fakat APTART sergileri, 5-7 gün süren yarı kalıcı sergilerdir. Alekseev sergi mekanını konutu olarak kullanmaya devam eder.

İkincisi, Sokov ve "Bahar Sergileri" örneğinde tartışıldığı üzere, sergiler sanatçı odasında yapılıyor olsa da, sanatçının gündelik hayatına dair herşey sergiden ve sanat eserlerinden keskin bir çizgiyle ayrılır. Oda ya Sokov örneğindeki gibi sergi alanı ve yaşam alanı olarak ikiye bölünür, yada Abalakova ve Zhigalov örneğindeki gibi sergi için gündelik hayata dair herşey boşaltılarak bir beyaz küpe dönüştürülür ve sergi bittiğinde oda yaşama alanı fonksiyonunu geri kazanır. Fakat, APTART bu konuda eşsiz bir örnektir. Alekseev'in odası hem uzun süreli sergilere evsahipliği yapar, ki bu durum, sanatçının, günlük hayatın işlevlerini galeriye dönüştürülmüş odasına gerçekleştirmek durumunda olması demektir; üstelik APTART sergilerinde sanatçılar yalnızca odanın duvarlarını değil boş olan her yüzeyi (tavan ve zemin de dahil olmak üzere) kullanırlar, Alekseev'in eşyalarını sanat eserlerine dönüştürürler. Mironenko kardeşlerin Alekseev'in buzdolabını dönüştürerek ürettikleri "Novel" (Roman),³⁹³ ve Abalakova ve Zhigalov'un Alekseev'in yatağını dönüştürerek ürettikleri "Book-Object" (Kitap Objesi), önce odaya ait eşyaların, sonra da odanın kendisinin

³⁹² Alekseev'e göre Batı'dan kaçak olarak getirilen sanat dergilerinden öğrendiklerine göre, bir galeri mekana ve isme sahip olmalıdır. (Alekseev, 2007.)

APTART ismi, hem İngilizce Apartment Art (Oda Sanatı)'nın kısaltmasıdır, hem de APT sözcüğü Rusça'da "ART" olarak okunduğu için galerinin küreselliğine ironik bir göndermedir.

³⁹³ APTART süresince, galeri ve yaşam mekanları öyle iç içe geçer ki, Alekseev'in odasında dönüştürülen eşyalar APTART sona erdikten çok sonra bile, sanat eseri ve gündelik kullanım arasında kalan yeni bir fonksiyon kazanır. 1987'de Alekseev'in odasında çekilen bir fotoğraf, Mironenko'ların Roman'ının hala kurulu olduğunu fakat Alekseev'in eski buzdolabını bir dolap olarak kullanmaya devam ettiğini gösterir. (Kieseewalter, 2014.)

nasıl hem bir sergi mekanı hem de bir sergi nesnesine dönüştürülebileceğinin en eşsiz örneklerinden birini oluşturur.

Sonuç olarak, 1984 itibariyle, odanın Nonkonformist bir mekan olarak kademeli yolculuğu, önce bir yaşam alanı, sonra bir üretim ve sergileme mekanı, ve son olarak da kendisi bir sanat eserine dönüştürülerek evrimini tamamlar. 1984'te KGB ajanlarının Alekseev'in odasına yaptıkları baskın sonucu, çoğu sanat eseri 'kanıt olarak' toplanır, bunu izleyen süreçte Mironenko'lar zorunlu askeri göreve gönderilir, NOMA sanatçılarının çoğu KGB tarafından sorguya alınır, ve sonuç olarak APTART sona erer ve sanatçılar bir süre yeraltına çekilir. Fakat, oda, Nonkonformistlerin sadece sergi mekanı değil, aynı zamanda sanat eserlerinin de konusunu oluşturur.

1975-1986 yılları arasında Nonkonformistler, yalnızca odalarda değil odaları çalışırlar. Odaları kullanımları kadar, ürettikleri üslup da çok özeldir. Daha önce belirtildiği üzere, Nonkonformist sanatçıları öncülleri olan yeraltı sanatçılarından ayıran etmen, kendi bağlamlarına ironik referanslar vererek ürettikleri bağlama-bağıl estetikleridir. Sovyet ikonlarından, gündelik yaşamından ve komün oda tarihinden ilham alınarak geliştirilen bu üslup, evrimini komün odanın bir enstalasyon/sanat eseri olarak yeniden üretilmesiyle tamamlar. Nonkonformist estetiğin evrimini ve referanslarını anlayabilmek için, Sovyet görsel tarihine kısaca bakma gerekir.

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Devrimi takip eden süreçte, bir taraftan konutlar kolektif yaşam idealine uyum sağlayacak şekilde dönüştürülürken, diğer taraftan yeni kolektif hayat ve sosyalizm ideolojisini dikte etmek için kapsamlı bir görsel propaganda başlatılır. "Yeni Yaşam" adı altında başlatılan bu kampanya, Çarlık kültürünün burjuva etkilerini silip, yeni bir Sovyet kültürü yaratmayı amaçlar. 1918'de Lenin, Anatoli Lunacharski ile yaptığı görüşmede, anıtsal propagandanın toplumun yeniden eğitilmesi ve örgütlenmesinde ne denli önemli olduğundan bahseder.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ Lunacharsky, 1918.

Lenin'e göre, sosyalizm öğretisini yaymanın en iyi yolu büyük şehirlerde önemli sosyalist düşünürlerin ve komünizm savaşçılarının anıtlarını inşa etmektir. Toplumun sosyalim öğretilerine aşina olmasını kolaylaştırmayı amaçlayan bu ideal, Ağustos 1918'de toplanan Sovyet Yöneticiler Komitesi tarafından yasallaştırılır ve "Lenin'in Anıtsal Propagandası" adıyla anılmaya başlar. 1918'i takip eden yıllarda Moskova ve Leningrad başta olmak üzere Sovyet şehirleri Marksist düşünürlerin devasa anıtlarıyla süslenir.

1927'de Stalin liderliğe geldikten sonra konut politikalarındaki değişime benzer bir şekilde Lenin'in Anıtsal Propaganda'sı da aykırılışır. Marksist düşünürlerin yerini Lenin ve Stalin'in devasa posterleri, heykelleri ve anıtları alır. 1932'de, sonucunda VkhUTEMAS'ın dönüştürüldüğü, eğitimin tekdüzeleştiği, ve Sanatçı Birlikleri'nin kurulduğu "Sanat ve Edebiyat Organizasyonlarının Yeniden Yapılanması Üzerine" başlık hüküm yayınlanır ve devletin resmi üslubu Sosyalist Gerçekçilik olarak ilan edilir. 1932'yi takiben Gerçekçilik üslubuyla yeniden üretilen ve devasa boyutlarıyla Moskova ve Leningrad'ın meydanlarını süsleyen Lenin ve Stalin imgeleriyle ilgili şair Vladimir Mayakovsky "Lenin sanki bugün yaşadığı gündünden daha canlı"³⁹⁵ ifadelerini kullanır. Stalin'in, kendi kişisel kültürünü oluşturduğu bu dönem ile ilgili yakın çevresine, "insanlar uğruna yaşayıp çalışabileceği bir krala her zaman ihtiyaç duyar"³⁹⁶ dediği bilinmektedir. Kruşçev'in 1955'te Stalin politikaları ve estetiğini kınadığı konuşmasına kadar, 1930-1950'ler arasında Stalin ve Lenin figürleri Sovyet şehirlerinin sınır taşı olur.

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İlk Nonkonformist sanat eserleri tam da bu kişisel kültürün yaratılması sürecinden yola çıkarak, ironik bir dille Moskova şehir mekanları ve onların sınır taşlarına dair izler taşır. Komar ve Melamid kendi portrelerini mozaikten yeniden ürettikleri "Çift Kişisel Portre"de (Figür 2.93) Lenin ve Stalin'in Sosyalist Gerçekçilik janrasıyla geleneksel olarak resmedildiği posterlere,

³⁹⁵ Lunacharsky, 1918.

³⁹⁶ Montefiore, 2015.

Lenin ve Stalin portrelerini kendi portreleriyle deđiřtirerek gnderme yaparlar. “Popler Sloganlarla Sovyet Tarihi” (Figr 2.92) isimli eserlerinde, Sovyet posterlerinde sıklca kullanılan sloganları alaycı bir řekilde dnřtrerek kendi pankartlarını retirler. Komar ve Melamid’e paralel olarak, Erik Bulatov 1976’da izdiđi “Krasikov Caddesi” isimli eserinde, hayali bir Moskova caddesini resmeder. Cadde, bir dergiden kesilip alelade yapıştırılmıř gibi grnen ve resmin merkezine yerleřtirilen Lenin portresi ile domine edilirken, izleyenlere arkası dnk olan diđer ‘anonim’ figrler Lenin’in varlıđına ok da itimat etmeden gnlk hayatlarına devam eder. Bulatov bu resimle, leđi kamıř anıtsallıđın Sovyet gndelik hayatının olađan bir parası olması durumuna gnderme yapar. Grldđ zere ilk Nonkonformist bađlama-bađıl sanat eserleri kamusal alanları ve grsel propagandanın kamusal alandaki gndelik hayata yansımalarını dert edinir. Zamanla bu odak, kamusal alandan komn apartman yařamı, komn apartmanda gndelik hayat ve son olarak komn oda mekanının yeniden retilmesine evrilir. Nonkonformistlerin asli derdi, Sovyet resmi propaganda aralarında betimlenenin aksine, kolektif yařamın varolan durumuna ve komn hayatın tatlı-acı gerekliđine dair birka sz sylemektir.

1970’lerin bařında Ilya Kabakov “ZheK” isimli bir seriye bařlar. Zhek, Sovyetler Birliđi’nde komn apartman komplekslerinden sorumlu olan komitenin ismidir ve kuruluř amacı komn apartman sakinlerinin gndelik problemlerini ozmek, kommunalkada gnlk iř blmn dzenlemek ve boř odaların dađıtımını sađlamaktır. Kabakov ncelikle devasa masonit levhalar zerine, Baumansky blgesinde hayali bir Komunalka’nın Zhek’inin ynetim izelgelerini ve iř blm listelerini hazırlamaya bařlar. Bunu takiben 1970’lerin ikinci yarısında, bu hayali Komunalka’da yařayan karakterler yaratmaya ve bu karakterlerin hikayeleri zerinden farklı komn odalar betimleyip resmetmeye bařlar. Bu resimleri Kabakov’un albm ismini verdiđi sergilenebilir mini panellerden oluřan ciltli kitapklara dnřtrlr ve odasında sergilenmeye bařlar. Kabakov, odasındaki buluřmalarda genellikle hayali karakterlerin hikayelerini canlandırır, kendi karakterlerinden alıntılarla albmlerinin sergilenmesini bir performans sanatına dnřtrr. (Figr 2.105 ve 2.106)

Kabakov komn apartman karakterleri zerine alıřırken Yankilevsky kendi odasında “Kapı” isimli enstalasyonunu tasarlar. Bu enstalasyon komn odanın, koridora bakan kapısının bir

simülasyonudur. Komün odanın kamusal mahremiyetine kinayeli bir gönderme yapan bu kapı duvara açılır. Yankilevsky'nin odası komün koridoru simgelerken, duvarın arkasındaki hayali ve girilemeyen mekan, odanın temsilidir. Yankilevsky'nin enstalasyonu mahremiyet üzerine eşsiz bir referans niyetindedir. Kabakov ve Yankilevsky komün odanın kendisine odaklanırken 1970'lerde Gerlovin'ler günlük objelerden esinlenerek ve onları geri dönüştürerek heykeller yapar, Pivovarov Nonkonformist sanatçı odalarını betimleyen illüstrasyonlar yapar. (Figür 2.110)

1980'den sonra ise Nonkonformistlerin komün apartmandaki gündelik yaşama dair ürettikleri sanat eserleri, komün oda simülasyonu olan enstalasyonlara dönüşür. Bu simülasyonların ilk örneklerinden biri "Zehirli Mantar" grubunun üyeleri 1981'de Mironenko kardeşlerin odalarında "Drenaj" (Figür 2.117) ismini verdikleri bir enstalasyondur. Enstalasyonda Mironenko'ların odası yerden tavana dek uzanan beyaz bir kağıtla ikiye bölünür. Bu beyaz bölücü 'uplotnenie' için kullanılan bölücülerini temsil etmektedir. Aynı zamanda bir performansa dönüşen enstalasyonun sergilenmesi sırasında, grubun üyeleri, beyaz yüzey üzerinde delikler açarak odanın bölmesini parçalarlar. Enstalasyon komün odanın mahreme dönüştürülmesinin mimari ve sanatsal bir temsili olması açısından çok önemlidir. Bir yıl sonra, 1982'de Irina Nakhova kendi oda serisini üretir. üç aşamalı seride Nakhova kendi odasını boşaltarak odanın kendisini bir enstalasyona dönüştürür. Nakhova, Oda.1, Oda.2 ve Oda.3 ismini verdiği bu seride beyaz bir yüzeyle kapladığı odayı kademeli olarak siyaha dönüştürür. Bu enstalasyon serisinin en önemli tarafı, her odanın (enstalasyonun) inşa ve yıkım sürecinin belgelenmesi ve bu belgelemenin bütün serinin bir parçası olmasıdır. Nakhova bir yandan, Sovyet odasının herdem değişen durumlarına: bölnebilmesine, birleştirilebilmesine, inşa edilmesine ve bir anda ortadan kalkabilmesine referansla bütün performansını komün oda tarihinin bir soyutlaması haline getirir. Bu seride odanın inşası kadar yıkımı da önemlidir. (Figür 2.118 ve 2.119)

Bütün bu sürecin sonunda 1984'te Ilya Kabakov ilk odasını inşa eder, ve bu oda enstalasyonunun sonunda "bütüncül enstalasyon" ismini verdiği bir pratik üretir. Bu pratiğe göre, Kabakov bir oda/mekan enstalasyonu üretmenin en iyi yönteminin, sanat eserini yapay bir bağlam içerisinde, kendi bağlamından alınan elemanlar kullanarak bağımsız fakat

bağlamına bağlı olarak tasarlamak olduğunu öne sürer. Kabakov'un odaları, bütüncül enstalasyon prensiplerine uygun olarak, 1:1 ölçeğinde, gerçek eşyalar, fotoğraflar ve 'Sovyetlik'e ait görsel ve yazıncal öğeler içerir. 1984'te ilk odası olan "Odasından Uzaya Uçan Adam"ı inşa ettiğinde, Kabakov -komün odanın hijyenik standartlarına uygun olarak- 5 metre kare alçıpanla kapalı bir prizma üretir, bu prizmanın tek girişi vardır. Oda herhangi bir komün sakininin odası olarak tasarlanmıştır, fakat Kabakov bu sakinin hikayesi için albümleri için ürettiği karakterlerden birini kullanır. Oda, Kabakov'un Komunalka'larda dolaşarak topladığı eşyalar, Sovyet posterleri, kartpostalları, ve kurgu karakterinin kişisel eşyalarını barındırır, ki bunlar da Kabakov tarafından çöplerden ve atıl alanlardan toplanmıştır. (Figür 2.121) Oda, herhangi bir komün odanın özdeş bir yeniden üretimidir. Bu mimari perspektif, Nonkonformist pratiğinin oluşumunun son evresini tanımlar. Komün oda, onlar için, hem yaşama, hem sergileme, hem belgeleme, hem de sanatın objesi haline gelir.

1984'te APTART'ın KGB ajanları tarafından basılıp ikinci nesil Nonkonformistlerin büyük ölçüde dağılmasının iki yıl ardından 1986'da yeni devlet başkanı olarak seçilen Gorbaçev Sovyetler Birliği'nde "Perestroika" (İslahat) dönemini başlatır. Sovyet enstitülerinde başlatılan ıslahatlar, dönüştürmeler ve yeniden şekillendirmeler kısa sürede küresel iletişime açık bir toplum yaratır ve alternatif sanat dalları üzerindeki devlet baskısı esnemeye ve Sovyet resmi sanat çevresi yeraltı kültürü olarak anılan entellektüellerin 'resmi' titre kavuşmasına sıcak bakmaya başlar. Tezin ikinci bölümü, Nonkonformist sanatçıların üçüncü neslinin yetişmesiyle beraber yeraltı sanatının Perestroika döneminde resmi-gayriresmi titrler arasında kendisine yer bulmaya çalıştığı 1986-1991 yılları arasına odaklanır. Perestroika, Sovyet bağlamı için Perestroika geçişlik anlamına gelir. 10 yılı aşkın süredir tecrit altında çalışan Nonkonformist sanatçıları için bu atmosfer küresel ilişkilerin başlatıldığı, sınırlar ötesi sanatsal ortaklıkların ve Sovyetler Birliği dışına seyahatin mümkün olduğu yeni bir ortam yaratır. Fakat bu değişim ve geçişlik, öncelikle iki nesildir odalarda sergi yapan Nonkonformistlerin 'gerçek' sergi mekanlarına uzanan yolculuğun ilk adımıdır. Bu bölüm özellikle bu yolculuğu adım adım takip eder. 1986-1991 arasındaki dönem pek çok

Nonkonformist sanatçının Batı'ya yerleştiği, Kabakov'un göç etmesiyle başlayan dalganın sonunda üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistlerin oluşmasıyla sonlandığı bir dönemdir.

Öncüllerine göre daha esnek bir zamanda sanat yapmak imkanı bulan üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistlerin biraraya gelmesi, Odesa'dan gelen üç sanatçı : Sergei Anufriev, Larisa Rezun, ve Yuri Leiderman'ın 1984'te Moskova'ya gelmesiyle başlar. Üç sanatçı NOMA ve APTART ile tanıştıklarında Mironenko'lar çoktan zorunlu askeri görevleri için sürülmüş ve grubun diğer üyeleri sorguya, yada daha kötüsü 'tekrar Sovyetleştirilmek üzere' psikhushka'lara (zihinsel hastalıklar enstitüsü) gönderilmiştir. 1986 yılı itibariyle ikinci nesil tekrar toplanırken, Anufriev, Rezun ve Leiderman'ın yanısıra Pivovarov'un oğlu Pavel Pepperstein, Andrei Roiter, German Vinogradov, Nikolai Filatov ve Joseph Backstein ikinci nesil Nonkonformistlerle iletişim kurarak bu geniş çevreye katılır ve sonuç olarak üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistler şekillenir. Bu bölüm üç paralel oluşum üzerinden, Nonkonformistlerin odanın dışında sergi yapma pratiklerini ve müzede sonlanan yolculuklarını takip eder.

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1984'te German Vinogradov, Andrei Rioter ve Nikolai Filatov Khoklovsky Yolu üzerinde bulunan ve restorasyon için boşaltılmış olan bir kreş binasında gece bekçileri olarak çalışmaya başlarlar. İki katlı binanın alt katı parti yetkililerinin çocukları için bir gündüz okulu iken, üst katı konutlardan oluşur. 1985 itibariyle çoğunlukla boş olan üst katta iki oda kiralayan sanatçılar, önce odalarını Nonkonformist sergi mekanları olarak kullanmaya başlarlar. Kısa süre sonra, yan yana olan odalarını bölen "uplotnenie" dönemi bölücülerini delmeye başlayarak önce odalarını birleştirip 'kendi galerilerini' büyütürler. Bu mekana mimari müdahale, Nonkonformist tarihi için eşsiz bir deney başlatır. Sanatçıların "Kindergarten" adını verdikleri bu bütünleşik iki oda, APTART'tan sonraki ilk galeri olmakla beraber, Nonkonformist geleneğin odayı dönüştürmek pratiğini bir adım ileriye götürerek odanın mimarisine müdahale eder. Kabakov, Kindergarten deneyini 1980'lerin en heyecanlı deneyi olarak betimler.³⁹⁷ 1984-1986 yılları arasındaki kısa hayatında, Kindergarten öncelikle üç

³⁹⁷ Kabakov, 2012

sanatçının birleştirilmiş odalarında, daha sonra restorasyon için kapatılan kreşte düzenledikleri sergilerle, odanın dışına çıkan Nonkonformist serginin ilk adımıdır. 1986 boyunca, Kindergarten Perestroika'nın sağladığı 'geçirgenlik' politikasından faydalanarak Sovyetler Birliği'ne ziyarete gelen pek çok sanat simsarının odak noktası olur. Fakat, bu durum KGB için hala 'biraz kaygı verici'dir, 1986 sonunda üç sanatçı gece bekçiliği işlerinden kovulur ve odalarını boşaltmaları istenir.

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Kindergarten'ın boşaltılmasını takiben 1986'da "Zehirli Sarmaşık" grubu Mironenko'ların zorunlu görevlerini tamamlayıp dönmesiyle tekrar biraraya gelir ve Mironenko'lar, Gundlakh ve Zvezdochetov,'un insiyatifiyle 1989'da yıkılması planlandığı için boşaltılan Furmany Yolu üzerindeki 18 No'lu ZheK yönetimi altındaki binaya yerleşmek için izin alırlar. Tamamı boş olan bina, eski bir Komunalka'dır ve kısa süre içinde Yuri Albert, Vadim Zakharov, Larisa Rezun, Sergei Anufriev, Nikolai Filatov, Yuri Leiderman ve Pavel Pepperstein da Furmany'ye taşınır. 1987 itibariyle Moskova'nın ilk Nonkonformist sanatçı gecekondusu bu şekilde oluşur. Zvezdochetov'un sürreal bir deneyim olarak betimlediği³⁹⁸, Pepperstein'in "Çarlık mirası ve Sovyet gerçekliği arasında"³⁹⁹ Nonkonformist pratiğin vücut bulduğu bir deney olarak nitelendirdiği Furmany örneği iki yıllık kısa hayatı süresince Nonkonformist tarihnde bir ilke sahne olur: boş olan konutta sanatçılar ilk defa odalarını ve atölyelerini ayırırlar. Çürümeye terk edilen binanın 'uplotnenie' ile bölünmüş odalarında bir oda ve bir atölye sahibi olan sanatçılar, önce yaşama ve üretme mekanlarını birbirinden ayırır, daha sonra da geniş bir içbahçeye sahip olan konutun açık alanlarını sergi mekanlarına dönüştürürler. Furmany sanatçıları için bir kent gibi çalışır, aynı anda yaşadıkları, çalıştıkları, ve sergi yaptıkları bir bütündür. 18 numaralı konutun yıkılacak olması durumu, sanatçıların ikamet ettikleri mimari arka planla ilgili önemli bir farkındalık geliştirmesine ve Furmany'nin mimarisinin belgelenmesini başlı başına bir sanat eserine dönüştürmesine sebep olur. Çürümekte olan

³⁹⁸ Zvezdochetov, 2012.

³⁹⁹ Pepperstein, 2012.

binanın yıkımına kadar adım adım yapılan bu belgeleme işlemi, özellikle yıkım sırasında üretilen üç fotoğrafta Nonkonformist yolculuğun özeti gibidir:

İlk fotoğraf boşaltılmış ve cephesi yıkılmış olan bir sanatçı odasının iç mekandan çekilmiş bir görselidir. Boşaltılmaya başlanan cephede, pencereler Stalin döneminin yıldız yapılarından biri olan “Yedi Kız Kardeş” binasını çerçevelerken, çürüyen iç mekan bu binaya bir ön dekor olur. Nonkonformist sanatın resmi sanat ve mimarlığa karşıtlığına referans veren bu görsel hem bir belgeleme aracı, hem de bir sanat eseri haline gelir.

İkinci fotoğraf, yarısı yıkılmış bir cephede çalışan bir buldozeri gösterir. Nonkonformistler fotoğraf çerçevesinin kenarına ilıştirdikleri üç kavanoz çöp ile hem Kabakov’un toplayıp dönüştürdüğü ve enstalasyonlarında kullanırken “Sovyet çöpi” olarak nitelendirdiği günlük eşyalara, diđer taraftan da Nakhova’nın odasını yıkarken çekilen ve odanın parçalarını çöpe attığını gösteren serisine göndermede bulunurlar.

Son fotoğraf, artık neredeyse yıkılmış olan binanın kalan son duvarındaki bir grafitiyi gösterir. Grafitide “MO TS” harfleri belirgindir. “Moskova Merkezi İstasyonu” nun kısaltması olan bu harfler, Furmany’nin bir Nonkonformist kenti. ve dönemim alternatif sanat merkezi olduğuna referans verir.

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1986’da Kindergarten son bulmuş ve Furmany yeni kurulurken Sovyet hükümeti “Amatör Dernekler ve Hobi Klüpleri Üzerine” isimli bir düzenlemeyle Sovyet bireylerinin boş vakitlerini faydalı değerlendirmek için kuracakları hobi kulüplerinin kurulması ve devlet tarafından bu kulüplere yer tahsis edilmesi hükmünü onaylar. Bu yasal boşluktan faydalanan bir grup Nonkonformist sanatçı, 1987’de KLAVA (Avangard Kulübü) ismini verdikleri bir organizasyon kurarak hobi kulübü kisvesi altında Proletarsky bölgesinde yerel sergi salonunun boş bir odasını elde eder ve sergi mekanına dönüştürür. KLAVA, Nonkonformist pratiğin müzeye olan yolculuğunun son adımlarından biridir ve backstein, Prigov, Anufriev, Gundlakh

ve Zakharov'un aktif rol almasıyla kısa sürede alternatif sanat akımının önemli temsil mekanlarından birine dönüşür.

KLAVA'nın en özel tarafı düzenlenen sergilerin aykırı karakteri ve üç nesil Nonkonformist aktörü birarada sergilemesidir. Nonkonformist mirasın iki özelliğini: nesiller arası iletişim, ve alternatif mekanları sergi alanına dönüştürmek kabiliyetini temsil etmek isteyen KLAVA organizatörleri, kendilerine verilen klüp yöneticileri titrini kullanarak yalnızca KLAVA'nın sergi salonunu değil şehir içinde buldukları hapisane, psikushka ve hamam gibi yapıları günlük sergiler için kullanır ve sergi alanlarına dönüştürürler. Üç neslin katılımıyla yapılan bu sergilerin en önemlilerinden biri Moskova'nın tarihi hamamı Sandunovsky'nin erkekler bölümünde gerçekleştirilen sergidir. 1988'de düzenlenen bu sergiyi Backstein Perestroika'nın alternatif sanata karşı takındığı yapmacık kabulcü tavıra karşı bir duruş⁴⁰⁰ olarak tanımlar. Ocak 1988'te açılan sergi, halihazırda kullanımda olan buhar odasına kurulur ve hamam ziyaretçilerinin şaşkın bakışları altında duvarlara resimler, koridora enstalasyonlar ve havuz kenarına fotoğraflar yerleştirilir. Bu sergi 'eserlerin yokolması' için yapılan bir sergidir. Buhardan eriyeceği ve bozulacağı öngörülen sanat eserlerinin sergilenmesi, öncelikle Backstein'a göre "absürlüğü ve geçiciliğiyle tam bir Sovyet sergisi,"⁴⁰¹ ikincil olarak da Nonkonformist tarihin yapılıp bozulmak zorunda kalınan günübürlük oda sergilerine, ve çöpe atılmak için yapılan sanat eserlerine bir göndermedir.

KLAVA, bir taraftan Nonkonformistlerin alternatif mekanlarda sergi yapma geleneğini sürdürmesi açısından, diğer taraftan da bunu resmi kanalları ve resmi titrleri kullanarak yapması açısından önemlidir. KLAVA, Nonkonformist sanatçıların resmi olarak tanınması ve müzelerde yer almasına giden yolda önemli bir mihenk taşı olsa da, 1960'larda oluşmaya başlayan yeraltı kültürünün resmi kanallarla ilk muhatabiyeti ve resmi müzelerde sergi yapmak için ilk deneme değildir. Nonkonformistlerin üç neslin sonunda nasıl müze mekanlarında yer bulduğunu anlayabilmek için, 30 yıla yakın bir süre içinde yeraltı kültürünün resmi kanallarla imtihanına bir göz gezdirmek gerekir.

⁴⁰⁰ Backstein, 2014.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

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Yeraltı sanatçılarının resmi bir kanal aracılığıyla sergi yapma denemelerinin ilki 1959 Moskova'da düzenlenen Amerikan Ulusal Sergisi'ni takiben oluşan görece uluslararası ve esnek ortamdan cesaret alan Stüdyo Okulu akıl hocalarından biri olan Eli Belyutin aracılığıyla gerçekleşir. Sovyet Sanatçılar Birliği'nin (MOSKh) bölgesel kolu olan ve 1932'de kurulan Moskova Bölgesi Sanatçılar Birliği'nin 30.yıl kutlamalarına hazırlanan Birlik'e alternatif sanatçıların da işlerini sergilemesi fikrini götüren Belyutin olumlu bir cevap alınca dönemin bir diğer alternatif sanatçısı Ernst Niezvestny'yi ziyaret eder ve iki sanatçı Vladimir Yankilevsky ile işbirliği yaparak, üçünün ve Belyutin'in Stüdyo Okulu'ndan öğrencilerinin katılacağı küçük bir grup organize eder ve sergi hazırlıklarına başlarlar. "MOSKh'un 30. Yılı" sergisi 1962 yılında dönemin önemli sergi salonlarından biri olan Manege'de yapılır ve 'alternatif sanat' için binanın ikinci katı ayrılır. Kruşçev'in katılımıyla açılacak olan sergi ne yazık ki yeraltı sanatçıları için bir fiyaskoya dönüşür. Kruşçev'in ziyareti, alternatif sanatı resmi olarak kınadığı ve Niezvestny'nin bu sürecin sonunda Sanatçılar Birliği'nden atılarak kısa süre sonra New York'a göç ettiği, alternatif sanatın ve özellikle sanatçıların toplumun bir paraziti, sosyalizmin karşıtı olarak anılmaya başladığı uzun ve yorucu bir sürecin başlangıcı olur. Manege fiyaskosunun ardından yeraltına çekilen sanatçılar 1974 yılına kadar resmi kanallar aracılığıyla seslerini duyurmaya çalışmazlar.

1974 yılında, Vitaly Komar ve Aleksandr Melamid sergi mekanlarında yeralamamak kuralının yasal bir boşluğunu bulup açık bir alanda sergi yapmak fikrine resmi otoritelerin sıcak bakmasalar bile müdahale etmeyeceği fikriyle 1960'ların önemli yeraltı sanatçılarından Oscar Rabin'i bir grup yeraltı sanatçısına ve projeye öncü olması için ikna eder. Bu fikirle Margarita ve Victor Tupitsyn'i, iki alternatif sanat eleştirmenini, ikna eden üç sanatçı, Tupitsyn'lerin konutlarının karşısında Balyaev bölgesindeki atıl alanda sergi yapmak için MOSKh'a başvurur. Sergi yapmamaları tavsiye edilmesine rağmen, açık alanda toplanmanın yasak olmadığını söyleyen MOSKh ile görüşmelerin sonunda 15 Eylül 1974'te "İlk Güz Açık Hava Sergisi" ismi altında 20'ye yakın sanatçının katılımıyla bir sergi açılışı yaparlar. Kısa süre sonra sergi buldozerler tarafından basılır, sanat eserleri parçalanır, sanatçıların bir kısmı gözaltına alınır ve bu sergi tarihte "Buldozer Sergisi" olarak anılmaya başlar. Her ne kadar

Buldozer sergisi bir fiyasko gibi görünse de, geleceğin Nonkonformistleri için iki önemli sonuç doğurmuştur:

İlki, sergiye buldozerle müdahale eden Sovyet hükümeti Helsinki İnsan Hakları Bildirgesi'ni ihlal ettiği gerekçesiyle nota alır, ve bunun sonucunda uluslararası bürokratik bir krizi engellemek için yearltı sanatçılarıyla görüşte de olsa işbirliği yapacaklarını duyurur. Buldozer Sergisi ile başlayan süreç ilerleyen yıllarda aralarında ilk nesil Nonkonformist sanatçıların da bulunduğu Moskova yeraltı sanatçılarının iki büyük sergi mekanında resmi sergi düzenlemesine olanak verir.

İkinci sonuç ise, olaylı biten serginin uluslararası basında yaptığı süksedir. Batı'nın Sovyet'lerde yeşermiş olan bir yeraltı kültürü ve sanatının varlığını öğrenmesinin yolunu açan bu süreç, Batı'dan önce pek çok gazeteci ve bürokratın, daha sonra da koleksiyoncuların Nonkonformistlerle iletişime geçmesini sağlayacak yıllarca sürececek bir uluslararası iletişim ve ortaklığın ilk adımı olur.

Buldozer Sergisi'ni takip eden yıllarda, uluslararası imajını düzeltmeye kararlı olan Sovyet hükümeti Nonkonformistlerin iki büyük sergi salonunda: 1975'te VDNKh'da ve 1978'te Gorkom Grafikov'da sergi yapmasına izin verir. Hatta MOSKh, Gorkom Grafikov ismi altında MOSKh'a bağlı "Grafik Tasarımcıları birliği" kurarak, alternatif sanatçıları çocuk kitabı illüstratörlüğü gibi 'zararsız' titrler altında Sanatçılar Birliği'ne üye yapmak ve bu sayede bir taraftan kontrollerini sağlayıp diğer taraftan sergi yapmak heveslerini gidermek gibi yollara başvurur. Kabakov, Bulatov ve Vasilyev gibi sanatçılar Gorkom Grafikov'a üye olsa da, MOSKh'un dileği hiçbir zaman gerçekleşmez ve sanatçılar 'boş vakitlerinde' yeraltı etkinliklerine devam eder ve kendi yeraltı kurumlarını kurarlar. 1978'deki Grafikov sergisi açıldıktan 20 dakika sonra 'teknik problemler' sebebiyle kapatılır. 1978 yılına gelindiğinde Batı medyasındaki hengame durulmuş ve Sovyetler'in uluslararası şöhreti kurtarılmıştır. Bu sebeple otoriteler önce alternatif sergi organizasyonları için ayak diremeye, daha sonra da sergi isteklerini reddetmeye başlarlar.

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1978'den itibaren önce odalarda, Perestroika'dan sonra buldukları diğer alternatif mekanlarda sergi yapıp kendi yeraltı kurumlarını biçimlendiren Nonkonformistler, nihayetinde 1987'de resmi olarak Sanatçılar Birliği'ne üye olan üç figürün: Leonid Bazhanov, Andrei Erofeev ve Viktor Misiano'nun kendileriyle iletişime geçmesi ve "Hermitage" ismi altında ilk Nonkonformist resmi müzeyi kurma fikirleri sonunda müze mekanına giriş yaparlar. Özellikle Bazhanov'un insiyatifiyle başlatılan Hermitage, üç nesil Nonkonformist tarih ve pratiğinin arşivi, galerisi ve uğrak mekanı olmak idealiyle başlar ve Profsoyuznaya Sokağı'ndaki sergi salonunda kurulur. Bazhanov yalnızca halen Moskova'da yaşayan değil, göç etmiş olan sanatçıların işlerini de sergilemek istediği için yerel koleksiyoncu Leonid Talochkin'in 30 yılı aşkın süredir biriktirdiği Nonkonformist koleksiyonunu kullanır, ve iki sergiden oluşan "Retrospektif: 1957-1987 Arasında Moskova Sanatçıları" başlıklı bir seriyle üç nesil sanatçının odalarda ürettikleri ve sergiledikleri işleri müzeye taşır.

Retrospektif sergisi teoride bir mihenk taşı olsa da, odalarda ve odalar için üretilen sanat eserlerini kendi bağlamlarından çıkarıp beyaz bir küp olan müze mekanına sokması sonucu, Nonkonformist pratiğin alamet-i farikası olan bağlama-bağıllığın bozunumun ne yazık ki ilk halkasını oluşturur. Özellikle sergide kullanılan iki iş bu durumun özeti gibidir. İlki Kabakov'un "ZheK" serisi için ürettiği masonit panellerden birinin duvara asılı olarak sergilenmesidir. Kabakov'un özellikle odasının zemininden tavana dek uzanıp bir duvarı kaplaması için tasarladığı sanat eseri, uzunca bir duvarda OscarRabin'in kavramsal işleriyle yanyana sergilenir. Böylece "ZheK" hem komün apartman ve organizasyonuna olan referansını, hem de odanın dışına çıkarıldığında ölçeğini kaybeder. İkinci örnek Mironenko'ların APTART serisinin ilki için Alekseev'in mutfak tablasının üzerine yerleşecek şekilde tasarladıkları "Güneşi Yenmek" isimli eseridir. Mironenko'ların buzdolabını ve televizyonu dönüştürerek yaptıkları serinin bir parçası olan bu sanat eseri, özellikle Alekseev'in odasındaki niş'i sahiplenirken müze mekanında hala Alekseev'in odasında bulunan buzdolabı ve televizyondan ayrılarak tek başına sergilenir. Kabakov'a benzer bir biçimde hem Alekseev'in odasına referansını ve bağlamını kaybeder, hem de içeriğini.

Hermitage’da düzenlenen sergi, Nonkonformist pratiğinin ve sanat eserlerinin bağlamının bozunumunun ilk halkasını oluşturur. 1975-1986 arasında oluşan, ve Hermitage’ın da dahil olduğu 1986-1988 yılları arasında odaların dışında dönüşmeye başlayan Nonkonformist pratiği, sanatı ve hatta sanatçı ağları müze mekanına adım atmalarıyla beraber bozunmaya başlar. Tezin son bölümü bu bozunmayı, özellikle Nonkonformistlerin Batı’ya yolculukları ve Batı müzelerinde yaptıkları sergileri üzerinden takipler.

Tezin üçüncü bölümü Nonkonformist pratik ve estetiğinin Batı müzelerine taşındıktan sonraki bozunumlarına odaklanır. Bu süreç 1988’de Sotheby’s Moskova’da düzenlediği açık arttırmayla başlar. Sotheby’s Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Simon de Pury insiyatifiyle ve Sovyetler Birliği Kültür Bakanı Sergey Popov işbirliğiyle düzenlenen açık arttırma Perestroika sonrası Sovyetler Birliği’nin geçirgenlik politikasının serbest piyasa ekonomisine girişinin simgesi olur. Bir taraftan Sovyetler Birliği’nin Batı kültürü için saklı ve bir o kadar da gizemli olan bağlamı ve kültürü bir tüketim nesnesine dönüşürken, diğer yandan özellikle bu etkinlik sosyalizmin çözülmesinin ilk sinyallerini verir. Sotheby’s pek çok Nonkonformist için Batı izleyicisiyle kurdukları ilk iletişimidir ve bozunumun ilk sinyalleri, açık arttırmanın sonunda, rekor rakamlara satılan Nonkonformist sanatçı işlerinin ardından yazar Andrew Solomon’ın tanık olduğu iki ziyaretçi arasındaki konuşmada özetlenebilir. Solomon’a göre iki ziyaretçi satın aldıkları ürünleri birbirine karıştırdıktan sonra, “önemli olanın eve bir hediyelik eşyalarla dönmek olduğunu”⁴⁰² söylerler.

Sotheby’s, Perestroika sonrası Batı seyircisinin Sovyet sanatına, özellikle Sovyet yeraltı sanatını bir popüler kültür nesnesine dönüştürmesinin abartılı bir gösterisi olsa da Nonkonformistlerin Batı müzesi ve sergilerindeki deneyimleri, Sovyet bağlamı ve tarihinden bihaber olan bir seyirci grubuna, kendi estetiklerinin bir Sovyet paradisi olduğunu anlatmakla geçecektir. Sovyet bağlam bağıl işleri bağlamsızlaşırken, Nonkonformist sanat işleri ironisini kaybedip Batı seyircisi için olgusal gerçek haline gelir. Fakat, Nonkonformistlerin Batı

⁴⁰² Solomon, 1991.

müzelerine yolculuğu ve Batı'da az da olsa tanınırlığı Sotheby's etkinliğinin yıllar öncesine dayanır.

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Perestroika her ne kadar Nonkonformist sanatçılara seyahat özgürlüğü sağlamış olsa ve ilk ve ikinci nesil Nonkonformistler Perestroika öncesi nadiren de olsa Batı'ya göç etmek fırsatı bulsa da, Nonkonformist sanatçıların Batı'daki ilk sergileri sanatçıların değil sanat eserlerinin seyahat etmesiyle mümkün olur. Buldozer sergisini takiben Nonkonformist sanatçıların Batı'da tanınmaya başlamasının ardından sayıları az da olsa Nonkonformist sanat eserlerini biriktirmeye başlayan bir grup koleksiyoner ortaya çıkar. Bu koleksiyonerlerin bir kısmı Batı menşeli, diğer kısmı ise yerel yeraltı figürleridir. Moskova Nonkonformistleriyle yıllarca iç içe çalışan bu yerel koleksiyonerlerin arasında daha önce bahsi geçen Leonid Talochkin, Margarita ve Victor Tupitsyn, 1979'da Paris'e göç ettikten sonra vatandaşlıktan çıkarılan Igor Shelkovsky, ve Buldozer sergisindeki rolü yüzünden sınırdışı edilen Aleksandr Glezer sayılabilir. Talochkin, Moskova'da kalıp koleksiyonunun genişletmeye karar verirken, Tupitsyn'ler New York'a, Shelkovsky ve Glezer Paris'e yerleşerek ilk Nonkonformist uluslararası iletişimi sanatçılardan uzakta ve yurtdışına çıkaramadıkları sanat eserlerinin fotoğrafları, vidyoları ve diğer kayıtları aracılığıyla gerçekleştirirler. Bu dört göçmen figürün ortak özelliği, Nonkonformist sanat işleri yerine onların temsilleri üzerinden bütün bir Nonkonformist akımının tanıtımını yapmalarıdır. Tupitsyn'ler NOMA arşivlerinin Moskova'dan gizlice gmnderilen fotoğraflarını kullanırken, Shelkovsky "A-YA"⁴⁰³ ismini verdiği bir dergi yayınlamaya başlayarak Moskova'da üretilen ve belgelenen işleri bu dergide basar.

Yerli koleksiyonerler Batı'da Nonkonformist sanat eserlerinin temsilleriyle sergiler düzenlerken, Batı menşeli ilk Nonkonformist koleksiyonerler bürokratlardan oluşur. Bu durumun asıl sebebi, 1970'lerde Sovyetler Birliği'ndeki ziyaretçi sınırlamaları sebebiyle, yabancı ziyaretçilerin büyük çoğunluğunu bürokratların, azınlığını ise gazetecilerin

⁴⁰³ "A-YA" ismi Rusça'nın ilk ve son harflerinin biraraya getirilmesiyle bulunur.

oluşturmasıdır. Fakat, 1970'lerde Nonkonformist sanat hala resmi üsluba göre çok aykırı olduğundan, bu koleksiyoner bürokratların sanat eserlerini yurtdışı seyahatleri sırasında kaçırmaları gerekir. Bunun için bavullarını kullanan bürokratlar için sanatçılar bavul boyutunda eserler üretirler, ve bu eserler sanatçılar arasında “Bavul Sanatı” olarak anılmaya başlar. Bu koleksiyonerler arasında üç figür, kaçırdıkları eserlerle Batı’da sanatçısız sergilerin ilklerini gerçekleştirirler.

Norton Dodge, New York’ta yaşayan bir gazeteci ve daha sonrasında bürokrat 1960’ların ikinci yarısından beri sık sık ziyaret ettiği Moskova’da Nonkonformistlerle yakın ilişkiler kurar ve biriktirdiği koleksiyon, New York’ta Tupitsyn’lerin yardımı ile “Amerika Modern Rus Sanat Merkezi” isimli galerinin ana koleksiyonunu oluşturur.

Paul Jolles, aslen İsviçreli bir diplomat, 1950’lerin ikinci yarısından itibaren sıklıkla ziyaret ettiği Moskova’da özellikle ilk nesil Nonkonformistlerin eserlerini toplamaya başlar. Hatta bu sanatçıların pek çoğu Paris’e yerleştiklerinde Jolles, Centre Pompidou’nun direktörü Jean-Hubert Martin ile tanışır.

Son olarak, New York menşeli koleksiyoner Phyllis Kind, Perestroika’nın hemen öncesinde Moskova’yı ziyaret etmeye başlar, ve özellikle ikinci ve üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistlerin işleriyle ilgilenir. İlerleyen yıllarda New York’ta düzenlenecek olan sergiler Tupitsyn’ler, Dodge ve Kind ortaklığı sonucu ortaya çıkar.

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Özellikle Perestroika’nın getirdiği ümle beraber 1986-1991 yılları arasında Batı’da yoğun olarak Nonkonformist sergiler düzenlenmeye başlar. Sanatçılar rahatça seyahat etmekle beraber, büyük bir kısmı da Batı’da özellikle iki şehre göç eder: Paris ve New York Nonkonformist göçmen sanatçıların Batı’daki merkezleri olur.

Gerlovin'ler ve Komar ve Melamid gibi 1970'lerde New York'a göç eden sanatçıların aksine Kabakov Perestroika'nın ve Vasiliev Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının hemen öncesinde New York'a yerleştiklerinde Dodge, Tupitsyn'ler ve Kind sayesinde çok uzun zamandır New York sanat piyasasında tanınmaktadırlar.

Diğer taraftan Shelkovsky, Rabin ve Glezer gibi 1970'lerde göç eden sanatçıların aksine Alekseev Perestoika'nın hemen ardından Paris'e yerleşir ve Shelkovsky ve Jolles tarafından önceden sağlanan bağlantılar sayesinde tanınan bir sanat insanı olarak çalışmaya başlar.

1970'lerden itibaren oluşmaya başlayan bu karmaşık bağlantılar ağı sayesinde, Nonkonformist sanatçılar Perestroika sonrası ilk olarak yıllardır hayalini kurdukları uluslararası ortaklıkları kurmak için, ve Batı'lı sanatçılarla bütünleşik bir sergi yapmak için çalışmalara başlarlar. Sınır ötesi ortak sanat üretme hayali Komar ve Melamid henüz New York'a yerleşmemişken sanatçı ve sanat eleştirmeni Douglas Davis ile beraber ürettikleri ikili bir fotoğraf serisiyle özetlenebilir. "Aramızdaki Çizgi Nerede?" isimli çalışmada, Komar ve Melamid'in Moskova'da ellerinde İngilizce bir pankartla, Douglas Davis'in ise New York'ta Rusça aynı soruyu soran bir pankart tutarak çektiirdikleri iki fotoğraf iki tarafa da gönderilir ve kalın siyah bir çizgiyle ayrılan bir montajla birleştirilir. Komar ve Melamid bireysel olarak, 1976'dan sonra New York'ta bu hayallerini gerçekleştirirler, fakat Nonkonformist sanatçıların bir bütün olarak Batı'dan bir grup sanatçıyla çalışması ancak Perestroika'dan sonra gerçekleşir. 1986 yılında Moskova'yı ziyaret eden Batı Almanya'lı kavramsal sanatçı Lisa Schmitz, şehirde geçirdiği bir yılın sonunda çoğunluğu ikinci ve üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistlerden olan bir grup sanatçıyla bağlantı kurar ve Batı Berlin'den Bomba Colori isimli bir grup ile ortak bir proje yapmaları için sanatçıları ikna eder. Sergi için Almanca ve Rusça 'sanat' kelimesinin bir karışımı olan "Iskunstvo" kullanılır. 1988'de Alekseev, Monastrysky, Nakhova, Prigov, Mironenko'lar, Gundlakh, Zvezdochetov ve Zakharov'un aralarında bulunduğu Nonkonformistler Batı Berlin'e seyahat eder. Schmitz'in çabaları sonucu sergi mekanı olarak ayarlanan ve atıl halde bulunan eski Westend Bahnhof tren istasyonuna yerleşen sanatçılar, sergiden önce iki hafta kondüktör odalarında konaklayıp, hem çalışıp, hem yaşayıp ve daha sonra da sergi yaptıkları bu mekanı bir model Komunalka'ya dönüştürürler. Üstelik, Nonkonformistler, kendi estetik miraslarının önemli bir parçası olduğu için,

enstalasyonlarında kullanmak üzere Moskova'dan getirdikleri eşya ve materyalleri kullanmakta ısrar ederler. Bu durum Westend Bahnhof'un Komunalka'nın bir simülasyonuna dönüştürülmesi durumunu kuvvetlendirir. Üstelik daha sonra enstalasyonlarda kullanılan bu Sovyet eşyaları, Sovyet bağlamının dışında yapılmış olmasına rağmen, sanat işlerinin ölçeklerinin ve bağlam-bağıllıklarının bozunumunu görece de olsa engeller. Özellikle iki örnekte, Zvezdochetov'un "Venedik'in Barikatları" için Moskova'dan getirdiği dolap kapakları, ve Zakharov'un "Furmany'den Sonra: 2. Bölüm" için kullandığı ve odasından taşıyıp getirdiği sandalyeler, Nonkonformist sergisinde kendi bağamlarını yeniden yaratmalarına yardımcı olur.

Iskunstvo örneği, Nonkonformistlerin hem işlerindeki Sovyet ironisini, hem de bağamlarından aldıkları referansları koruyabildikleri nadir örneklerden biridir. Fakat, Nonkonformist tarihin mimarlıkla iç içe olan unsurunun özellikle ve birbirinden ayrılarak sergilendiği üç örneğin inceleneceği sonuç bölümü, tam da estetiğin, pratiğin ve hatta Sovyet odasının Batı'daki yeniden üretimi sürecinde nasıl bozunuma uğradığını gösterir.

Bu üç örnek: Komün odanın yeniden üretildiği, Kabakov'un "10 Karakter" sergisi; Nonkonformist oda sergisinin yeniden üretildiği, "APTART Tribeca'da"; ve Nonkonformist sanatçı odasının yeniden üretildiği, "Odalarda" sergisidir.

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New York'a yerleştiğinde çoktan bir fenomen olan Kabakov 1988'de Ronald Feldman Galerisi'nde Moskova'da ürettiği karakterlerin her biri için bir komün oda üretip, bu komün odaları birbirine bir komün koridorla bağladığı "10 Karakter" sergisini açar. Sergi için galerinin içine alçıpanndan yapılan kapalı bir kutu inşa edilir. Ziyaretçiler bu kutuya bir kapıdan girdiklerinde, kendilerini yeniden üretilmiş bir Kommunalka'nın koridorunun başında bulurlar. Kabakov bu sergi için kullandığı bütün eşyaları, Sovyet posterlerini ve kartpostalları Moskova'dan getirir, ve Batı seyircisi için anlaşılır olabilmesi için komün koridorun duvarlarına komün apartmanın mimari tarihi, uplotnenie, komün yaşam ve komün yaşamın

gündelik objeleriyle ilgili bilgi veren pasajlar yapıştırır. Kabakov'a göre Nonkonformist eserin Batı'da anlaşılabilir kılınmasının iki yolu vardır: birincisi, eseri/enstalasyonu Sovyet bağlamından koparıp hibritleştirmek, ikincisi ise bütüncül enstalasyon pratiğinde savunduğu üzere Batı galerisinin içerisine kendi bağlamını inşa ederek "esere uzaylı olan batı bağlamını" dışarıda bırakmak. Kabakov "10 Karakter" ile başladığı bu inşa biçimini bugün bile sürdürmekte ve bir Sovyet işinin Batı müzesinde sergilenbilmesinin tek yolunun kendi bağlamının olduğu bir strüktür inşa etmek olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Kabakov komün oda enstalasyonlarını yaparken, Tupitsyn'ler 1986 yılında APTART galerisini New York'ta tekrar üretecekleri bir sergi düzenlemeye karar verirler. Amaçları 1982-1984 arasında yapılan serginin tarihini kendi arşivleri ve Shelkovsky'nin A-YA'sında yayınlanan sergi fotoğraflarını kullanarak retrospektif olarak yeniden üretmektir. Fakat özellikle Margarita Tupitsyn'e göre Batılı izleyicinin Nonkonformist geleneği ve bağlama bağlı estetiğini anlayabilmesi için, işleri yeniden Batı mekanında üretmeden önce arşivin sergilenmesi gerekir. Bir tarih öğretisi niteliğindeki bu fikirle, Tupitsyn'ler Tribeca, New York'taki New Museum'da "APTART Tribeca" da sergisini açarlar. Bu sergi bir arşiv sergisi olduğu için, sergiye müzenin köşesindeki L duvar ayrılır ve Margarita Tupitsyn bu duvarı 2 yıl boyunca düzenlenen APTART sergilerinin kolajlarıyla doldurur. Fakat, Nonkonformist tarihe ve estetiğe bir girizgah niteliğinde olan bu sergide, APTART'ın alamet-i farikası, bağlamı ve anlamı olan Alekseev'in odası fotoğraflarda dahi olsa görülemez. Sanat eserleri yalnızca kendi bağlamlarından çıkarılmakla kalmaz, referans alarak üretildikleri oda sanat eserlerini birarada tutan arka plandan daha fazlası olamaz, çünkü APTART arşivi sergilenirken sanat eserleri arşivlenmiş fakat Alekseev'in odasına dair bir veri kullanılmamıştır. Haliyle, odasını kaybedeb oda sergisi, iki boyutlu bir kolaja dönüşür ve işlerle beraber oda sergisi fikrinin aktarılması da bozunuma uğrar.

Odanın ve serginin yeniden yaratılmasının ardından, ikinci ve üçüncü nesil Nonkonformistlerle Perestroika sonrası iletişime geçerek resmileşmelerinde önemli bir rol oynayan sanat eleştirmeni ve küratör Andrei Erofeev, Tsaritsyno Museum bünyesinde üç sergiden oluşan bir seri organize eder. Bu sergiler Nonkonformistlerin yolculuğunu dekonstrükte ederek sergilemeyi amaçlar: İlk sergide Nonkonformist objeleri, ikinci sergide

Nonkonformist sanatçı odaları, ve son sergide Nonkonformist sanatçı biyografileri sergilenir. Özellikle ikinci sergi, 1991'de Bratislava'da açılan "Odalarda", sanatçı odasının yeniden üretilmesi açısından bu çalışma için çok önemlidir. Bu sergi için, Erofeev, Nonkonformist sanatçılardan yanyana sergilenecek olan sanatçı odaları inşa etmelerini ister. Herbir sanatçı, sanatçının odasını kendi kavramsal çerçevesiyle bir sanat eserine çevirirken, Konstantin Zvezdochetov'un tasarladığı "Şeffaf Suların Odası" isimli enstalasyonu diğerlerinden ayrılır. Bu enstalasyonda, Zvezdochetov'un kurguladığı oda Sergei Mironenko'nun Kiesewalter tarafından hazırlanan "Odalarda" albumunde kullanılan fotoğrafının bir replikası gibidir. İki fotoğraf paralelde analiz edildiğinde, Zvezdochetov'un sanatçı odası için verdiği refereansların komün oda, atölye ve müze arasında kalmış, hiçbiri fakat hepsi birden olabilen özgün bir yapı olduğu görülür. Tartışılan sergiler komün oda ve Nonkonformist pratiklerini farklı biçimlerde yansıtsalar da, hepsinin ortak bir derdi vardır odanın ve sanatın Batı'da yeniden üretilmesi sürecinde Sovyetliğini kaybetmemesi. Sovyetler Birliği dağıldıktan sonra dahi devam eden bu kaygı, bugün bile Kabakov'un hala ürettiği komün odalarda, ve Zakharov'un Berlin'de bugün yaşadığı evi kolektif bir sanatçı evine dönüştürdüğü "FreeHome" projesinde görülebilir.

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Adı / Name : SENEM
Bölümü / Department : MİMARLIK TARİHİ / HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) :

“FORMATIONS, REFORMATIONS, DEFORMATIONS”
TRACING ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE COMMUNAL ROOM IN THE WORKS
OF SOVIET NONCONFORMIST ARTISTS: 1975-1991

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans / Master** **Doktora / PhD**

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