

TRESPASSING MODERNITIES

Trespassing Modernities exhibition by SALT will reveal the legacy of modern architecture in the former Soviet Union. Examples of exceptional practices by local architects working in the 1960s and 1970s followed by the critical approach of the Paper Architecture movement in the 1980s are brought together from the 15 countries that once made up the Union.

Installed throughout SALT Galata, the selection of scale models, drawings, photographs, films and ephemera that portray post-war life in the USSR will be on view from May 8 through August 11 with support by Kalebodur.

Almost 25 years after the corrosion of the Soviet Union, still little is known, beyond the former Empire's borders, about the social fabric that wove it together. Architecture and urbanism have been one of its strongest warps: creating a feeling of social unity and being one of the agents of its dissolution. This continent of architecture, afflicted by inner contradictions that enfolded within an homogenized space, is full of masterpieces waiting to be formally discovered. *Trespassing Modernities* explores this landscape and an approach of building for a fundamentally different idea of society.

All started in the thaw period of the Khrushchev years after Stalin's death in 1953. The new ideological call for modernization of the country led to an enormous extension of urban space. This continued into the final years of the USSR as economical crisis and dwindling material resources took their toll. The master architecture of Socialist Realism was rejected. A new urbanization was driven by an ideology of scientific and technological progress. It was conceived by local planning offices in each republic and executed to the standardizations of the construction industry. Architects experimented with concepts of international architecture and the legacy of Soviet Modernism of the 1920s. Rapidly an original Soviet language of

Late Modernism developed.

But already in the 1960s a critical countermove to this policy of industrialization of space and architecture arose. It took the historical old town as a point of reference. Architects and local elites understood their distance to the official canon of architecture as being a confirmation of their regional – or national – search for identity. Thus an architectural avant-garde, that defied the dominant politics of the central Moscow bureaucracy, was able to form in the republics. Both versions of modernism – the local modern and the Soviet-hybrid – reflected differently positioned modern lifestyles.

Trespassing Modernities is dedicated to the legacy of post-war Soviet architecture: to its masters and its specificities, its original styles and erratic buildings. It aims to offer a glance at a still existing void in the canonical history of architecture.

Trespassing Modernities
May 8 - August 11, 2013
SALT Galata

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The digital database of "Soviet Modernism 1955-1991" of buildings in the former Soviet republics (not including Russia) is kindly made available by Architekturzentrum Wien for browsing in the exhibition.

Supported by  **Kalebodur**

Image

Ministry of Transportation, Tbilisi, Georgia (1974)

Architects: George Chakhava, Zurab Jalaghania, T. Tkhilava, V. Kimberg

Courtesy George Chakhava's personal archive collected and selected by Vahram Aghasyan, Nini Palavandishvili and Lali Pertenava as a part of *Frozen moments. Architecture Speaks Back* curated by Joanna Warsza, Tbilisi, 2010

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