

Russian Émigré Culture: Transcending the Borders (Saarbrücken, 13–15 Nov 15)

Saarbrücken, Nov 13–15, 2015

Deadline: May 31, 2015

Marina Lupishko

International Conference "Russian Émigré Culture: Transcending the Borders of Countries, Languages, and Disciplines"

Saarland University (Saarbrücken, Germany), Department of Slavonic Studies

Scientific Committee: Prof Dr Roland Marti (Saarland University), Prof Dr Christoph Flamm (Musikhochschule Lübeck)

Conference Organisation: Dr Marina Lupishko (Saarland University), Dr Olga Tabachnikova (University of Central Lancashire, UK)

Invited Speakers: Prof Dr Mikhail Meylakh (Université de Strasbourg, France), Prof Emeritus Stephen Walsh (Cardiff University, UK)

The Russian emigration is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon that had a considerable impact on the cultural life of the 20th century, especially in Europe. The period after the October Revolution witnessed the first wave of Russian emigration, which, after a short period of euphoria and cosmopolitanism, became a rather hermetically closed entity, partly isolated from the cultural processes in Europe and often rejected by the mainstream Soviet culture. One of the tasks of the first wave of Russian emigration was to preserve, study, carry on and create Russian culture (Raëff 1990: 95). During the late 1950s-1960s, the renewed cultural exchanges of the USSR with the rest of the world resulted in another wave of emigration that went hand in hand with the dissident movement as soon as the short thaw ended. Perestroika changed the picture fundamentally, opening Russian culture towards the West. Today it is not yet clear whether the development will be reversed. At any rate, the process continues, adapting itself to the ever-changing global context.

Although the different waves interacted in some ways, a holistic look at Russian emigration is at its formative stage. It is clear now that the existence of Russia Abroad is a unique phenomenon of the 20th century. The planned international conference, in the wake of the one held in Saarbrücken in 2011 under the title "Russian Émigré Culture: Conservatism or Evolution?", will address the Russian cultural emigration, its representatives, and their artistic products in an approach that calls for a re-definition of the word "emigration" itself. It will focus on the process of self-transformation in a conscious or subconscious effort to push the borders of countries, styles, media, languages, and national identities in order to resist stagnation, censorship, or isolation.

The following topics, among others, will be addressed at the conference:

- understanding of the cultural canon: what constituted Russian "classical" art from the point of view of Russian émigré artists and their Soviet colleagues?
- the opposition of two literatures, two musics, two arts etc. – that of the USSR and that of Russia Abroad;
- collaboration between Russian avant-garde artists in exile and their Soviet colleagues;
- "inner" vs. "outer" emigration: how did a change of medium helped Russian émigré or Soviet artists to avoid censorship, isolation, or unemployment?
- assimilation of new cultural, linguistic or aesthetic idioms and rejection of the old ones;
- the "multiple" emigration cases: the consequences of the departure to yet another country or of the return to the Soviet Union (Russia);
- international and interdisciplinary interactions within the Russian émigré circles (the epitome of this tradition being Diaghilev's Ballets Russes);
- transformation of or search for national identity;
- non-Russians as part of Russian émigré culture;
- nostalgia and overcoming nostalgia (e.g. the double-residence cases);
- the impact of Russian émigré artists on the surrounding (e.g. European) cultural landscape;

Special sessions devoted to music, fine arts, and literature/poetry – and, to a lesser extent, drama, ballet, and cinema – are planned. The conference papers are expected to be published. Scholars are invited to submit proposals for papers of 20 minutes with a short abstract (max. 250 words) and a short bio (max. 100 words) before 31 May 2015 to both email addresses below:

Dr Marina Lupishko
Slavistik Geb. C 5.2
Universität des Saarlandes
66123 Saarbrücken
Germany
marina.lupishko@uni-saarland.de

Dr Olga Tabachnikova
School of Language, Literature
and International Studies
University of Central Lancashire
Preston PR17BE
England
otabachnikova@uclan.ac.uk

Reference:

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