

UTOPIA II: Russian Art and Culture 1930-89 (London, 25 - 26 Nov 11)

The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN, Nov
25-26, 2011

Ingrid Guiot

13.00 – 18.00, Friday 25 November (with registration from 12.30)

10.00 – 17.30, Saturday 26 November (with registration from 09.30)

Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Somerset House, Strand, London
WC2R 0RN

Following in the footsteps of the conference Utopia I: Russian Art and Culture in 1900-1930 – held at The Courtauld Institute of Art in May 2011 - UTOPIA II is designed as a chronological extension of the themes and topics raised by the notion of utopia as a specifically Russian construct. The period covered in the papers of the conference - from 1930s until 1989 - will span the final half-century of the Soviet regime. Intended as a broad interdisciplinary project, the conference will investigate Soviet notions of utopia and dystopia, through social, artistic, literary and ideological intersections. Potential subjects to be examined in the context of Utopia in Russian art and culture include: philosophy, painting, architecture, town planning, theatre, music, literature, and cinema.

The utopian intellectual tradition has a long history that some trace back to Plato's Republic, even though most scholars consider Thomas More's Utopia as the definitive starting point of modern utopian thought in the Western world. Utopia comes from the Greek *ou* (no) and *topos* (place) and implies both the no place and the (eutopos) good place; the not-yet and the possible, the nothing and the perfection.

Utopias conveyed as a transformation, are entrenched in the culture and time in which they have emerged. Utopia and Utopianism in Russian art and culture vary from concrete images of a better place to abstract notions of a future state of freedom; they also range from spatial to temporal models. Utopian ideas in Russia were defined not as ideas in direct opposition to reality, but as objects of potential historical realisation.

The conference is organised by the Cambridge Courtauld Russian Art Centre (CCRAC) and coincides with the exhibition at the Royal Academy 'Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture 1915-1935'. Following the conference on Saturday, the Royal Academy will host a special reception that will allow everyone from the conference to see the show.

To book a place: £25 (£15 Courtauld staff/students and concessions) Please send a cheque made payable to 'Courtauld Institute of Art' to: Research Forum Events Co-ordinator, Research

Forum, The Courtauld Institute of Art , Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN, clearly stating that you wish to book for the 'UTOPIA II' conference. For credit card bookings call 020 7848 2785 (9.30 - 18.00, weekdays only). For further information, send an email to ResearchForumEvents@courtauld.ac.uk

Organised by Drs Maria Kokkori and Maria Mileeva with Prof John Milner (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

Reference:

CONF: UTOPIA II: Russian Art and Culture 1930-89 (London, 25 - 26 Nov 11). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 15, 2011 (accessed Mar 28, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/2057>>.