

## Moscow x Detroit (Ann Arbor, 11–12 Oct 19)

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, Oct 11–12, 2019

Christina E. Crawford, Emory University

MOSCOW x DETROIT: Transnational Modernity in the Built Environment

Fall Symposium: October 11-12, 2019

Department of the History of Art, The University of Michigan

In conjunction with Amerikanizm: Russian Architecture in Search of a New New World, The Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal

Organizers:

Claire Zimmerman, University of Michigan

Christina E. Crawford, Emory University

Jean-Louis Cohen, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Between 1928 and 1932 a group of American architects and engineers, many of them affiliated with Albert Kahn Associates, migrated from Detroit to Moscow to build factory campuses as part of Josef Stalin's First Five Year Plan (FFYP). They set in motion over 500 construction projects and trained over 300 Soviet designers, technicians, and draftsmen in American methods of design and implementation. As architects from Detroit helped build Soviet factories (in notable cases with prefabricated components imported from the US), urban theories on linear city morphology as a fitting mode for industrialization blossomed in the USSR. English-language publications such as *USSR in Construction* featured these monumental achievements, depicting Soviet progress in culture as well as technology. "Soviet Detroit," as the industrial capital Nizhny-Novgorod would be called, was only one of many America-inspired cities developed during the first Five-Year Plan, which also included "Sibirsky Chicago" (Novosibirsk) and "Soviet Gary" (Magnitogorsk).

By 1932, most of the American experts had returned. Both before and after, American journalists celebrated their work regularly. As the US economy recovered from the Great Depression and moved inexorably toward war, architects and engineers who participated in Soviet industrialization performed comparable tasks back in the United States. Linear urbanism grew up around American conurbations, particularly in the Midwest, as new communities such as Livonia, Michigan, were strung alongside massive new linear industries. The impact of Soviet urbanism on these communities remains to be assessed.

The complex of industrial developments that unfolded between Moscow and Detroit has begun to receive notice in architectural and urban studies scholarship. New research focuses attention on the larger ramifications of this massive transfer of knowledge in both directions. Looking into these developments, the symposium coincides with the opening of *Building a New New World: Amerikanizm in Russian Architecture*, in November 2019 (Canadian Centre for Architecture, curat-

ed by Jean-Louis Cohen). *Moscow x Detroit: Transnational Modernity in the Built Environment* brings together historians of art, architecture, urbanism, and social history, to consider a critical moment in twentieth-century history that ramifies from the late 1920s through the later industrialization of the US and the USSR, affecting culture, global politics, and the built environment for decades after. It focuses on transnational exchange in both directions (initially toward the USSR, but also back to the USA), infrastructure development, and the impact of built environments (factories, housing, green zones) on cities of industry as they age.

## SCHEDULE

October 11, 2019 5:00 p.m.

Keynote: "Americanized Bolshevism and its new New Worlds"

Jean-Louis Cohen, New York University

UMMA Auditorium

Dinner for participants and selected guests

October 12, 2019

Symposium, Rackham Amphitheater

8:30-9:00 Coffee + tea

9:00-11:00 Session I: SURVEYING

"'Improve the Roads': Valerian Osinsky, the American Automobile, and the Campaign to Overcome Russian Roadlessness in the 1920s-30s"

Lewis Siegelbaum, Michigan State University

"The Art of the Standard: Andrei Burov discovers America"

Richard Anderson, Edinburgh University

"Foreign Specialists in Soviet Industry in the 1920 and 1930s: Forgotten History or Soviet Ideology? The case of Eastern Ukraine"

Oksana Chabanyuk, Kharkiv National University of Civil Engineering and Architecture

"A Monument to the First Five-Year Plan: Moscow's Palace of Soviets and the Afterlife of Amerikanizm through the 1930s"

Katherine Zubovich, Ryerson University

11:30-1:00 Session II: EMBEDDING

"Rationalization, Typification, Unification: New Strategies in the Planning of the Socialist City' during the First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932)"

Evgenia Konyshcheva, South Urals State University

"Citizen Kahn: Moritz and the Soviet Experience, 1929-39"

Claire Zimmerman, University of Michigan

"African-amerikanizm and Soviet Anti-Racism: Detroit Worker Robert Robinson in the USSR"

Christina Kiaer, Northwestern University

1:00-2:00 Lunch

2:00-4:00 Session III: ADJUSTING

"People Making Things, Things Making People: Americanism in Soviet Genre Cinema, 1927"

Robert Bird, University of Chicago

"'The searchlight of exact and impartial investigation.' Soviet memoirs of American technical consultants"

Christina E. Crawford, Emory University

"On the Line: Workers in the linear city,"

Robert Fishman, University of Michigan

"'To Eradicate the Vestiges': Ivan Nikolaev and the Reconstruction of Soviet Factories, 1933-1938"

Maria Taylor, University of Washington

Break 4:00-4:30

4:30 Closing discussion

Howard Brick, University of Michigan

Ronald Suny, University of Michigan

5:30 Reception

Reference:

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