

Edited Volume: Time, Objectified. Soviet Temporalities and Material Culture

Deadline: Jan 31, 2022

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Call for Abstracts - Edited Volume

Time, Objectified: Soviet Temporalities and Material Culture

In what ways were Soviet temporalities unique, from a global perspective? How can studies of Soviet material culture provide a vantage point from which to address this question?

Time is hardly a new object of research in the humanities and social sciences. The last few decades have seen landmark works on the changing conceptualizations and experiences of time, written from the disciplinary standpoints of, among others, history (Hartog, Koselleck, Tamm), sociology (Bauman, Rosa, Zerubavel), philosophy (Gumbrecht, Lübbe, Osborne) and literary studies (Assmann, Berman). These studies have identified and explored multiple temporalities: the ways in which time is constructed, produced, instrumentalized, and negotiated by individuals and collectives, themselves embedded in time. As in the current animated discussion of modern and postmodern temporal orders, these investigations have been rooted in a Eurocentric framework.

Even so, researchers of the Soviet Union have been no strangers to this “temporal turn,” and have begun to creatively broaden the above-mentioned approaches in light of the socialist experience of time in the 20th century. However, while temporality figures as a subject in recent literature on Soviet culture (including literature, architecture, painting, cinema, and heritage), it is typically just one theme among others. As such, theories of Soviet temporalities remain fragmentary. Furthermore, the dominant, politically-centered approach has resulted in foregrounding the uses of “the” past and “the” future in the service of the communist project.

Acknowledging multiple and evolving experiences, perceptions, and representations of time, as well as the plurality of meanings embedded in notions of “past,” “present,” “future”, and “eternity”, this edited volume approaches Soviet temporalities in a more sustained and nuanced fashion. Specifically, we propose to approach it through the lens of the Soviet world of things. In so doing, we continue the dialogue initiated at the international conference “Temporality and Material Culture under Socialism” (July 1-2, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, MPI*), but focus our investigation on the Soviet Union.

Indeed, material culture, broadly understood, has the ability (or agency) to encapsulate and perform temporalities, and is a means for humans to experience and appropriate time. After all, things have an inherent temporality and a relationship to the broader culture of time. Furthermore,

while being a priori invisible and intangible, time is a material process (Ingold, Robb). A focus on material culture thereby allows us to ground the often abstract discussions of time by focusing on its tangible incarnations.

This approach dovetails with the burgeoning research on materialities in the USSR, which reveal that material culture had an intrinsic Sovietness, with unique ideological, economic and cultural characteristics, while also being embedded in global networks of production and exchange. Some of these studies have laid the foundations for a more systematic and sustained study of these objects' temporal dimensions (Cubbin, Friedman, Golubev, among others).

Being particularly interested in methodologies informed by comparative, global, and multiscalar approaches, and sensitive to distinctions between collective and individual experiences of time, we invite contributions on topics including the following:

- The "Sovietness" of temporalities, vis-à-vis Western or global socialist trends (for example, Soviet experiences of "presentism");
- Marxist conceptualizations of time and materiality, within the Soviet context;
- Critical approaches to the evolving categories of time in the USSR;
- Expressions of multiple and divergent temporal regimes in rural/urban, capital/ hinterland, RSFSR/national republics' material culture;
- Materializations of time in urban space: architecture, monuments, public art;
- Temporalities in musealization and heritagization processes;
- Biographies of things through time; representations and performances of temporalities in objects of everyday life;
- Bodily experiences of time;
- Mediations of temporal regimes by the producers of material culture;
- Circulation of material culture through space and time.

The edited volume will bring together multidisciplinary English-language contributions of approximately 6000-8000 words (including footnotes and bibliography). All submissions will be subject to peer-review. We are currently in contact with Routledge regarding potential publication of the volume in the "Series in Modern History."

Please send a biographical note and an abstract (250-300 words) - presenting your case study and methodology, as well as outlining the questions you will address - to the editors (kalashni@ualberta.ca) by January 31, 2022. Selected contributors will be invited to submit their manuscripts by July 1, 2022.

Editors

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Antony Kalashnikov, University of Alberta

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<https://www.khi.fi.it/en/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/2021/07/Temporality-and-Material-Culture-under-Socialism.php>

Reference:

CFP: Edited Volume: Time, Objectified. Soviet Temporalities and Material Culture. In: ArtHist.net, Jan 9, 2022 (accessed Jul 5, 2022), <<https://arthist.net/archive/35633>>.