

## A b s t r a c t s

Tatiana Vorozheikina  
Autocracy or Perestroika 2.0  
Can Russia escape from its path dependence?

Russia seems to be unable to leave the trajectory of its historical development as a patrimonial power. Once again, an autocratic regime is in power. The state is the fixed point of all political activity. However, the ability of the centralist state to control politics and modernise the economy is highly limited. The supposedly strong state is in fact weak, and is repressive and despotic precisely for this reason. Society is powerless, and the economy is dysfunctional. Under President Putin, power and property have merged to a degree never seen before, while the political process is intransparent and hardly institutionalised at all. The state development model has run into the sand. Unlike under Gorbachev, reform from above is unlikely to occur. The analysis of the failures under Perestroika and the wrong directions taken under Yeltsin are an indication of what is needed: pressure from below and reformist forces that combine social issues with the demand for participation and equality before the law.

Evgeniy Kazakov  
Against the “degradation of the nation”  
The campaign against musicians in Russia’s regions

In the autumn of 2018, 40 concerts were forbidden in Russia. In musical and political terms, an extremely wide range of different artists were affected. What they have in common is that they mainly attract a young audience. The method used followed a particular pattern: “outraged parents” contacted the local authorities and demanded that the performances be banned in order to protect minors from “destructive content”. Frequently, the police did indeed intervene, and in some cases, even the FSB or special units from the Ministry of the Interior. However, it is not a battle against the opposition that forms the backdrop to this campaign, but rather measures against hip-hoppers and rappers and a case of “moral panic”. The state is battling against purely fictitious risks with real means. In this way, the political leadership tries to increase its legitimacy.

Lena Jonson  
 Subculture and the mainstream  
 Art and politics in Russia, 1989–2019

In Russia, an anti-liberal subculture from the 1990s has become the aesthetic and political mainstream. Liberal thinking and art with an emancipatory purpose have been pushed to the margins. In the fine arts, this development is reflected in the increasing importance of the successors to Timur Novikov's New Academy, particularly Alexei Belyaev-Gintovt, who represent a New Realism that draws on the aesthetic of Socialist Realism and which extols the nationalist-imperial project of the Kremlin. The liberal performance art that during the 1990s was only indirectly political has become politicised, then criminalised and marginalised. These new style liberal artists avoid confrontation with the state. However, they perceive their art as a means for the ethical transformation of society.

Maria Engström  
 Cultural recycling  
 Metamodern flows in Russia's culture

In contemporary Russian film, music and fashion, a recycling of protagonists, aesthetics and ideas from the late Soviet underground and the post-Soviet years during the 1990s can be observed. What at that time were utopias of a Russian ideological and aesthetic alternative to the West are now becoming increasingly mainstream. The artists view the world through metamodern eyes. They fluctuate between hope and melancholy, empathy and apathy, between the modern search for meaning and the post-modern doubt about the meaning of everything. Their cultural practice is the harmless, commercially attractive imitation of a revolution. The culture of the metamodern fits in with the current central political theme in Russia: "Globalisation without westernisation", incorporation into the global market, while at the same time turning its back on the norms of the "first world".

Klavdia Smola  
 Alternatives instead of protest  
 A pragmatic change of direction in the new Russian art

Russian performance artists such as Pussy Riot or Pavel Pavlensky have attracted international attention with sensational acts. However, from the mid-2010s onwards – not least due to its lack of effectiveness – this form of "heroic" protest was replaced by a new type of resistance against the authoritarian regime. Groups such as "Partizaning" and "ZIP" no longer confront the state power, but instead, aim to transform society – using participatory art. For them, the goal is to re-interpret urban space and to shape it in a humane way. Many projects make aesthetic and political reference to the Soviet art of the early 1920s. At the same time, they are also related to the performances of the global do-it-yourself movement and the western minimalist art of the 1960s, as well as to the global trend towards "relational aesthetics".

Mark Lipovetksy

Cynicism in place of postmodernism

The story of a (calculated) misunderstanding

In Russia, the word “postmodern” has become an ideological battle cry. Opponents of the regime use it to describe the amoral policies of the Kremlin. The apologists of the Kremlin strongly criticise a “postmodern dictatorship” of the West, against which Russia must defend its national or imperial “values”. Both interpretations are misunderstandings. What the critics of the Kremlin mean is cynicism. What the apologists of the Kremlin do is cynical. They remove the essence of postmodern thinking that is critical of ideology and use the remaining husk of the term to describe an alleged process of self-destruction in the West and to legitimise their own reactionary project that is presented as being “modern”.

Maciej Urbanowski

With God and the nation against catastrophe

“Right-wing” literature in Poland after 1989

In Poland, since the collapse of the People’s Republic, a “right-wing” literature scene has developed. As was the case during the inter-war years, the phenomenon has many different facets. This literature reflects a political and ideological polarisation in society. The attitude of today’s “right-wing” authors is marked by traditionalism, patriotism, Catholicism, anti-communism, catastrophism and a mistrust of liberalism, globalisation and the modern era. “Right-wing” literature has emerged from its niche, is becoming more broadly received and is receiving positive reviews by literary critics.

Matthias Schwartz

A swamp called reality

Patriotism and counter-culture in Polish hip-hop

The hip-hop musical style, which developed in the ghettos of the major cities in the USA, was originally an expression of protest by the Afro-American youth against discrimination and marginalisation. Its general thrust was critical and emancipatory. In Poland, however, the hip-hop scene has not used counter-cultural codes and practices to spread emancipatory ideas. Instead they are used to disseminate authoritarian attitudes and nationalist-Catholic values. This combination of nationalism and counter-culture is not just a Polish phenomenon, it is a characteristic of the identity-defining scene in different countries.