Framing, Walking, and Reimagining Landscapes in a Post-Soviet St. Petersburg: Cultural Heritage, Cinema, and Identity

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St. Petersburg's image and identity have long been determined by its geographical location and socio-cultural foreignness. But St. Petersburg's three centuries have matured its material authenticity, recognizable tableaux and unique urban narratives, chiefly the Petersburg Text. The three of these, intertwined in their formation and development, created a distinctive place-identity. The aura arising from this distinctiveness functioned as a marketable code not only for St. Petersburg's heritage industry, but also for a future-oriented engagement with post-Soviet hypercapitalism.

Reflecting on both up-to-date scholarship and the actual cityscapes themselves, my dissertation will focus on the imaginative landscapes in the historic center of St. Petersburg in the post-Soviet society in terms of how they retrieve and reclaim the imperial heritage, its aesthetics, and mythologies, and in terms of the relationships toward images and identities of urban landscapes, proposed or desired by individuals, collectives, authorities, and developers.

One purpose of this dissertation is to challenge Toporov's mythopoetic space, based on dualism, and to reveal the urban heterogeneity and complexity in the new connections the city has made with the imperial past, when a new identity was required for the transitional period of the 1990s, the period of stabilization of the 2000s, and the rising political and international vulnerabilities of the early 2010s. The dissertation scrutinizes individual cases in the post-Soviet period, selected for their ability to showcase the aesthetic and narrative policies that spurred

discursive responses from visitors and residents: the Hermitage Museum; the Dostoevskii Memorial Apartment and its walking tour; Sokurov's and Balabanov's cinematic spaces; the architecture projects of the second stage of the Mariinskii Theater and the Okhta Center; public art and memorials. Each case reveals internal dynamics in creating a new aesthetics and a sensorium of its community. In exploring their internal dynamics, the dissertation relies on Bennett and Duncan's theoretical principle of museums, rooted on Foucault's discipline of the gaze, and on de Certeau and Lefebvre's re-claiming of the city space by human mobility.

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1.0 Introduction

St. Petersburg's image and identity have long been determined by its geographical location and socio-cultural foreignness, forcefully imposed by the Imperial court since Peter the Great. The image and identity of the Imperial city have been discussed and set in contrast to Moscow, to the provinces, and to the whole Russia. Since the founding of St. Petersburg in 1703 as a new modern capital on the frontier of the Russian Empire, the city was intended to be the "window to Europe," clearly oriented toward western European civilization. The new city, modelled on Amsterdam and later nicknamed the "Northern Venice," was planned and constructed by foreign architects; the art and rituals in its eighteenth-century Imperial court were dominated by immigrant groups of Germans, French, and Italians, and dispersed to the urban middle class a century later. Imposed foreign rituals and codes and the ontological gap between them and everyday life transformed the capital city and Imperial court into a "theater," which the Marquis de Custine could not miss in his visit during his exile after the French Revolution (de Custine 110, 357). Whether viewed from Europe or from Russia or Moscow, St. Petersburg could have been seen only from an external position with a conscious "awareness of artificiality" (Lotman, "Simvolika peterburga" 37). In this vein, the Imperial capital had played a role of "Other" inside the Russian territory.

Yet, in the nineteenth century, foreignness developed into a kind of cosmopolitanism, which could compete with the nationalism of Slavophiles as a form of Russianness. In his essay "Petersburg and Moscow (Peterburg i Moskva [1844])," Vissarion Belinskii wrote that, despite the absence of ancient monuments, "Petersburg itself is a great historical monument" (772). The absolute and dominant position of the Imperial capital in the cultural hierarchy conceived an authentic Russianness associated with cosmopolitanism and Imperialism. Versilov in Fedor

Dostoevskii's *Adolescent* (*Podrostok* [1875]) makes his speech that a Russian can only be Russian after being a real European (Dostoevskii, 13:375-6). In a similar fashion, the Russian philosopher Fedor Stepun wrote in his 1929 autobiographical novel that Petersburg is the most Russian city in terms of its anti-Russianness (qtd. Timenchik 118). Aleksandr Benois believed that the beauty of the city lies in its uniqueness, neither European nor Russian (Benois 2-4). In contrast, Moscow was considered to be home to Slavophiles, who attempted to find original Russianness and keep it intact and buffered from foreign influence. The coexistence and rivalry of the two capitals aligned with binaries in intellectual schools deeply related to the question of Russian identity in the nineteenth century. When one city was severely criticized for foreignness and inhumanity, the other claimed to retain more spiritual and authentic values in its built environment and representations.

These roles were reversed after 1918, when the Soviet authorities reconstructed Moscow into an international capital for socialism. St. Petersburg/Leningrad changed its function "from the seat of power to that of significant other" (Clark xi). The former Imperial capital has lost its previous weight in that dynamic and become "provincialized" in the 1930s, as the literary critic Viktor Shklovskii observed in 1927: "Petersburg is crawling to the periphery and becoming a bagel-city with a beautiful, but dead center" (18). While WWII and the Leningrad Siege brought considerable attention back to the historic center and its Imperial heritage, this rather solidified the concept of the city as a museum complex (Simmons; Maddox). The city began to occupy an unstable place as neither center nor periphery, as much in the virtual representations of urban texts as in its actual ability to project power.[1]

[1] Edith Clowes explains virtual representations of Moscow urban landscapes in the twentieth-century literature as "a literary *translatio imperii,* taking from St. Petersburg writers

In the post-Soviet era, a repeat reversal has not occurred: after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the city's aspirations to regain its position on par with Moscow have never been realized, as the financial crises and socio-political instability (and, consequently, the dilapidated infrastructure) from the Soviet years all culminated in the 1990s and attacked the city's economics more severely. Moscow emerged as the hypertrophic center, intact and enhanced. Despite frequent rhetoric about the posited rivalry between the two cities and Petersburg's new post-Soviet nickname as the "cultural capital," thanks to its imperial cultural heritage, the city is haunted by its increasing relegation to the periphery.[2] Its position vacillates between center and periphery, while working as "other" to Moscow and simultaneously as an "other" to the real peripheries as the second largest city.

Meanwhile, the passage of time and the city's sufferings under Soviet rule have resolved the century-long criticism concerning the city's lack of originality and spirituality. All the negative qualities of the mythopoetic city turned into evidence of the city's uniqueness, as attested by the writer Mikhail Kuraev's praise of the city's beauty in "its ambivalence" (19). The repressed narratives of the imperial history and the memory of many fallen Leningraders re-created the city's identities. Especially its imperial history and culture loom as part of a new Russian nationalism, as well as readily available resources for attracting tourists, when the new government sought "a-Soviet" narratives and heritages in the 90s.[3] The tricentennial celebration of the city's birth in 2003

Aleksandr Pushkin, Nikolai Chernyshevskii, and Fedor Dostoevskii the themes of self-will and state-enforced change and replanting them in Moscow" (Clowes 35).

[2] The nickname "cultural capital" became popular in official rhetoric from the late 1990s. For more details, see Hellberg-Hirn, pp. 242-251.

[3] This tendency would gradually disappear with the presidency of Vladimir Putin, who served as the head of the FSB before his appointment as the prime minister by President Boris Eltsin. Particularly, the return of the Soviet anthem marked the end of the a-Soviet, transitional era. In 2000 when Putin took office for the first time, the federal legislature approved the music of the Soviet anthem with newly written lyrics by Sergei Mikhalkov.

reached a peak in promoting and branding the city with its imperial heritage, while also marking a controversial success in the development of urban politics, economics, and culture. In this sense, the imperial heritages and their aesthetics at the historic center, the main object of discussion in my dissertation, carry local, national, and cosmopolitan valences. In global economies, with the support of the federal and local authorities, they easily turn into a brand or a commodity to attract more investors and tourists.

Despite its relatively short history of three centuries, compared to many other European and Russian cities, St. Petersburg contains complexity and a superabundance of city narratives. In this vein, scholarship has never exhausted its exploration and discussion about St. Petersburg, both in Russian and English, and nor have creative works done so. Yet, it is not an exaggeration to say that these scholarly discussions have been dominated by the theorization of semioticians who emphasize the structural dichotomy and dualism of the city as a mythopoetic space.

According to the Tartu-Moscow school semioticians Iurii Lotman and Vladimir Toporov the city not only became a text, but also a "mechanism," "generating a text" and "culture." (Lotman, "Simvolika peterburga" 35; Toporov 15).[4] The sudden creation of the fabled city *ex nihilo* resulted in the creation of "the most abstract and premeditated city in the whole world" (Dostoevskii, 5:101). According to Lotman, its lack of history and a working semiotic system "gave rise to a great wave of myth-making"; Petersburg mythology developed to "fill the semiotic void" (Lotman, "Simvolika peterburga" 36). Founded on a swamp, St. Petersburg developed two contradictory myths, generated by the "eternal struggle between the elements and culture" that manifested itself as the conflict of "water and stone" (Lotman, "Simvolika peterburga" 32): a great

[4] Translations here and throughout are Ann Shukman's, from Lotman's *Universe of the Mind*.

man-made city and its inevitable apocalypse. The official foundation myth developed along with an anti-myth: the city "built on tears and bones" of thousands of workers. While the official literature, such as works by the eighteenth-century writers Mikhail Lomonosov and Gavriil Derzhavin, praised the overnight construction of Peter's city as a victory over nature, urban lore tells of the city's eschatological fate, mythologizing Peter as the anti-Christ. The negative interpretations, later incorporated into the classic literary texts, took on a major role in the written tradition, beginning with Aleksandr Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman* (Toporov 45-49; Buckler 126-127; Clark 1-16).

The set of literary texts contributing to the Petersburg mythology is termed the "Petersburg text," synthesized and theorized by Moscow-Tartu group semiotician Toporov in the 1970s. The term heavily relies on the nineteenth-century literary tradition from Aleksandr Pushkin to the Silver Age poets, prominently Andrei Belyi, marking Konstantin Vaginov as the last poet. The descriptive details of the Petersburg text are based on dualisms that include authority vs. the small man, harmony vs. chaos, artificial vs. natural, original vs. imitation, and Petersburg vs. Moscow; similar imageries and lexical motifs repeatedly occur throughout the texts, making them into one integrated text, reaching toward apocalypse and salvation.

The Petersburg text is a precious byproduct of Peter the Great's achievement and of modernity, and, at the same time, a result of writers' painstaking efforts to create a new national text for this non-Russian city. In the text, St. Petersburg is not merely a setting, but the subject itself. It often appears as a ghost-city, reflecting the history of the deaths which occurred during construction and the vengeance of nature's fogs and floods; elsewhere, it appears as a city of sheer contrast between magnificent public spaces and the narrow, dark streets behind them. These two aspects—the ghost city and the city of contrast—deserve further comment: if the former

description endows the myth of the city with phantasmagorical characteristics, the latter, which implies the typical problems in the history of urban development, gives Russian writers the opportunity for psychological penetration into alienated, contradictory and pathological human minds. Those texts shape the way the city is perceived and remythologized; the myth still hovers around Russian contemporary culture and stands as an unavoidable monument in new representations of the city.

Despite the wide acceptance of the term "Petersburg text" in readership and scholarship, this theory was subject to criticism. The texts, tied together into a semantic unity and into one urban totality, suffered from a certain neglect of the multi-faceted diversity and eclecticism of the city, both from literary and empiricist perspectives. While the similar tropes of the foundational myth, built on bones and tears, could be found in the texts on Paris by Honor*é* de Balzac or Victor Hugo, the apocalypse and salvation myth with messianism could be read in the other texts outside St. Petersburg, such as Lev Tolstoi's *War and Peace*.[5] The 2005 collection of essays in *Does the Petersburg Text Exist?* (*Sushchestvuet li Peterburgskii tekst?*) questions the totality and representativeness of the Petersburg text, even though I. P. Smirnov, in his article "Petersburg: City of the Dead and City of the Living," partially justifies his work as a "restoration work to reestablish the traditional artistic understanding of Petersburg" in the late Soviet years, similar to works of Andrei Bitov and Iosif Brodskii (Markovich and Shmid 57).

Helena Goscilo notes Petersburg scholarship's conservative attachment to the "logocentric trough" and Catriona Kelly points out that "far fewer people have written about the post-revolutionary Piter than about the city before 1917" (Goscilo and Norris 61; Kelly, *St. Petersburg*

[5] For the comparison with the Paris texts, see Donald Fanger's *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens and Gogol*.

16), Petersburg studies have been mostly treated as the idea of a literary-cultural semiotic system, founded on the nineteenth-century literary canon, rather than as a city of dynamic, alternating social interactions among diverse cultures, ethnicities, and daily lives. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and spurred by anticipation of the city tercentennial in 2003, which drew scholarly attention to the city again, a new wave of studies examining the city appeared.

Publications of recent decades made contributions to widen the canon of Petersburg scholarship and reflect the diversity and complexity of the city. The Russian publications fill out and document the neglected or non-popular parts of its urban history: in Grigorii Kaganov's *Images of Space* (*Obrazy Prostranstva*), which discusses creative visual interpretations of urban images, the author introduces hidden, secret dream spaces of Petersburg/Leningrad in addition to the majestic landscapes of Imperial Petersburg. Some publications demythologize the abrupt construction of the demiurge, focusing on elements of the pre-history of Peter's St. Petersburg, such as the town of Nyen in Swedish Ingria (Sharymov; Musaev). In architecture, M. S. Shtiglits, *et al*.'s *Monuments of Industrial Architecture in St. Petersburg* (*Pamiatniki promyshlennoi arkhitektury Sankt-Peterburga*) brought to the foreground the industrial architecture of the imperial period and the early Soviet period, which had rarely received attention in the media. *Kraevedenie*, often translated as "local studies" or "regional studies," is active in various forms: Naum Sindalovskii has been publishing a series of Petersburg local studies, including folklore, legends, and myths, while websites like citywalls.ru and zhivoi-gorod.ru, run by residents and amateur historians as well as professionals, have collected a large amount of urban history. In addition, some publications have actively adopting a revisionist or challenging approach to St. Petersburg as a city-text. Especially cultural geography functions as a significant point of view to see and discuss the city in English-language publications, since culture has become an important

part in establishing a marketable identity and part of the politics and economics of cities, as Sharon Zukin's *Culture of Cities* and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *Destination Culture* point out.

The seminal books of the post-Soviet period on the cultural geography of St. Petersburg/Leningrad include Svetlana Boym's *Future of Nostalgia* and Katarina Clark's *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Clark's book observes the city's role in the formation of Stalinist culture. Applying the concept of dialogism, drawn from Mikhail Bakhtin, the book offers a new understanding about the cultural revolution, created by inconsistent and paradoxical relationship between the party and intellectuals and the anti-Bolshevik and the Bolshevik culture until the 1930s.

Boym explains the cultural geography of St. Petersburg in the mode of reflective nostalgia, in contrast to Moscow in the mode of restorative nostalgia. The two terms reflect the drastically contrasting socio-economic and political situations of the 1990s. While restorative nostalgia lays an emphasis on the word *nostos*, proposing to rebuild the lost home, which is often used as a way of reviving patriotism and nationalism through reconstruction of monuments from the past, reflective nostalgia underlines the word *algia*, which emphasizes act of longing and loss of the past, rather than reaching for its destination. The Petersburg zone in Leningrad was a "temporary autonomous zone, both a part of urban landscape and an atopia," where the young generation of the 1960s commemorated and cultivated Petersburg nostalgia in sites like the kitchen of the barely-survived Petersburg poet Anna Akhmatova in the Thaw; post-Soviet Petersburg is "rather an homage to Leningrad dreamers" (149).

Julie Buckler in *Mapping St. Petersburg* and Emily Johnson in *How St. Petersburg Learned to Study Itself* challenge the conventional textual discipline of examining St. Petersburg. Buckler's book paid attention to the "under-documented middle ground of St. Petersburg" (5): the term

"middle" encompasses the places of middle-class and eclectic buildings, as opposed to palaces and slums, and middling writers and their texts, long-forgotten, like the guidebooks and writings of provincial visitors. Combining architecture and literature, her encyclopedic project not only demythologizes the architectural canon of the monumental city of the Russian Empire, but also Toporov's monolithic Petersburg text. Meanwhile, Johnson's book engages with *kraevedenie*, exploring the texts that do not neatly fit into the literary canons, such as excursions and guidebooks. Her book highlights the preservationist movements associated with the World of Art group and pedagogical excursion movements, including work by Ivan Grevs and Nikolai Antsiferov that emerged in the early twentieth century, when the city aesthetics and history were reevaluated.

Preserving St. Petersburg: History, Memory, Nostalgia, an anthology edited by Helena Goscilo and Steven Norris, marked the 2003 celebration. It was an attempt to see the city from various angles, taking up the notion of a "museum city" and opening the introduction with Arkadii Ippolitov's essay "The City in a Porcelain Snuffbox," which won the 2003 Elle magazine's contest for the best essay on the theme of "My Petersburg" (Goscilo and Norris x-xi). Norris, in his last article on the 2003 jubilee, points out the museumification of the city images within the imperial past in the exhibitions and ironical alienation of residents during the celebration.

Elena Hellberg-Hirn's *Imperial Imprints* reflects up-to-date urban and cultural studies of St. Petersburg, which include folklore, mythologies, history, toponyms and images of the physical space. Her analysis calls attention to the dilemma of creating new cultural identities for then-upcoming anniversary: while the incompatibility of Soviet and imperial past led to a city of "ambiguous, unsettled identity," the conflicts among authorities, cultural elites, and ordinary citizens made the city a battleground for prestige, based on the internal cultural hierarchy (133; 350).

In contrast, Catriona Kelly's *Petersburg: Shadows of the Past* is a chronicle of daily lives in the late Soviet period, which have rarely received scholarly attention. Focusing on shopping venues, declining manufacturing factories, transportation systems, theaters, cafes, public and private spaces in daily lives, she claims a multiple existence of "different centres" of the city, dependent on individuals, resisting the idea of a "single historic centre" (98). Her observation of the city's transformation points out the city's pride in its "alternative values" of cultural tradition, as well as the fear about the "debatable" status of "cultural capital" (248).

Recent publications about St. Petersburg in this decade are largely dedicated to the gigantic construction projects that swept the whole city from the center to the outskirts, and the ensuing civic movements in the 2000s and the early 2010s. They focus on mainly the Gazprom Center, looking at the convergence of conservative aesthetics and progressive politics, and its influence on grassroot, volunteer movements, which later developed into the 2012 massive protests against the corrupted presidential election and Vladimir Putin's third term and continue until now, as of 2019.

My dissertation, reflecting up-to-date scholarship and engaging with the cityscapes themselves, will focus on the imperial heritage and its aesthetics at the historic center. As a living metropolis, the second biggest city in Russia with rich narratives, Petersburg cannot be characterized by a singular, totalizing identity. Considering a wide spectrum of urban objects that constitute the physical urban sphere and their embedded narratives that my dissertation incorporates, I mostly limit my discourse *thematically* to select controversial issues that show diverse actors and their ideologies and *spatially* to the historic center in St. Petersburg, politically and culturally the most promoted and privileged zone, with a short deviation in the third chapter. My purpose is not to document a palimpsest of the city, but to raise questions about imaginative landscapes of the historic center in St. Petersburg in the post-Soviet society: the relationships

between proposed or desired images and identities of urban landscapes by individuals, collectives and authorities, including those who see urban features largely in economic, financial terms. I will occasionally make a foray into the Soviet period in discussion, but the dissertation does not include the narratives about the Leningrad Siege and the Leningrad underground or non-official culture, such as Saigon, Pushkinskaia 10, or rock clubs in the late Soviet years. It does not mean that I underestimate their contributions to the city identity as the center of "Other" culture in contrast to the official culture during the Soviet years, but rather that I lay emphasis specifically on changing attitudes in retrieving the imperial past.[6]

As Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm have famously noted, a national identity is an imagined concept and founded on invented traditions. An identity, whether collective or individual, national or local, is a social construct. Identity-building proceeds in diverse areas, encompassing various ideas from history, culture, religion, and questioning on Russia's geographical, historical, and cultural missions; however, place-identity or local identity often resorts to heritage, both natural and man-made, which immediately distinguish the city from others. The river, canals, a row of façades in European-style architecture, their ensembles and low skyline constitute the typical cityscape that defines St. Petersburg. Its unique visibility helps to shape a place-identity, set in contrast to Moscow and all the other Russian cities. As Stuart Hall

[6] For the Leningrad siege and its legacy in the city's history and identity, see Lisa Kirschenbaum's *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941-1995: Myth, Memories, and Monuments*. Also, Steven Maddox's *Saving Stalin's Imperial City: Historic Preservation in Leningrad, 1930-1950* reveals how the imperial heritage and its preservation practices has naturally become a part of the Soviet history and culture. For the Leningrad non-official culture and its legacy, see Andrei Khlobystin's book *Schizo-revolution* (*Shizorevoliutsiia*), which documents an encyclopedic history of the city's art scene in the transitional period of the 1980s and 1990s.

points out, identity can be constructed "only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not" (4).

Unlike Moscow, where Stalinist reconstruction swept the whole urban terrain in the 1930s, many historic buildings from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century were left undemolished, at least in the central area of St. Petersburg. The material authenticity of the city space has worked not only as a source for the city's pride, but also as a driving force of civic activity dating back to the civic protests against the demolition of the Angleterre Hotel in the late 1980s.[7] The architectural façades and low skyline create a set of ensembles for the city tableaux, routinely introduced as a postcard image of the city. This material authenticity and the city's recognizable tableaux create a distinctive identity, along with unique urban narratives. Actually, these three characteristics of the city space are intertwined in their formation and development. Urban narratives, reflecting its topographical location, its history, and spatial interpretations of the city space, have developed over the course of three centuries and have shaped the dominant images of the city. In addition, the city's post-Soviet efforts to mark itself on the map of global economy brought world city images, which could be lamented as privatization, capitalism, and globalism from a conservative point of view. The aura arising from the authentic historic building, streets, decorative objects, etc., functioned as a marketable code not only for St. Petersburg's heritage industry, but also for a future-oriented engagement with post-Soviet hypercapitalism. They serve

[7] In his article, "Aesthetic Politics in St. Petersburg: Skyline at the Heart of Political Opposition," Aleksei Yurchak outlined the main arguments of the municipal government and groups of civic preservationists. The latter cohort could not see the value of a would-be reconstructed building since its material authenticity would disappear. In contrast, the city authorities emphasized that the building would look exactly as same as the original one, asserting the primacy of the building's modern renovation.

as the basic symbolic economy of the physical place that can easily transform into a place brand to be sold to tourists, investors, and locals.

I will selectively scrutinize individual cases in the post-Soviet period, selected for aesthetic and narrative policies that spur discursive responses from visitors and residents, either passive or active, either favorable or hostile. The cases encompass specific historic sites, cinematic spaces, architecture projects, and public art; each case reveals internal dynamics in creating a sensorium of community in dialogue with the past.

In describing visitors' and locals' engagements with the cityscapes, I put emphasis on the notion of gaze and walking. Urban subjects can engage in different types of walking: depending on the type of walking, people's engagements with the cityscapes differ from one another. Walking may take the form of local people practicing everyday life; of tourists with the utmost consciousness of every detail; or of the idyllic *flâneur*.[8] Walter Benjamin's *flâneur*, adopted from the French poet Charles Baudelaire, indicates the distracted gaze of a male stroller in the modern city, enjoying his solitude and idyllically observing the spectacles of the modern city. While it could be considered as a counter-gaze to the totalizing, panoptic view, he carefreely enjoys and accepts imposed aesthetics that unravels in front of him. In comparison, for Michel de Certeau and Yi-Fu Tuan, walking is one of the important tactics and manifestation to make a connection with specific places. According to de Certeau, walking is a purposeful performance, whether intended or not. While the dissertation is not about studies on psychology of subjective experiences of urban

[8] Filipa Matos Wunderlich conceptualizes it through the categories of purposive, discursive and conceptual walking. Purposive walking is a "'necessary activity' performed while aiming for a destination," which is a "walking task" (8). Discursive walking is a "spontaneous way of walking characterized by varying pace and rhythm," exemplified by *flânerie* in Baudelaire and Benjamin's writing. Lastly, conceptual walking is a way of "rethinking place as unfixed and site as performed,' which 'heighten awareness by rendering places strange," similar to Situationist groups' notion of *detour* or *derive*, citing J. Rendell.

subjects, I will use walking as performance, whether as a type of everyday performance, *flânerie*, or rituals, to ask a set of questions about the experiences of encountering the cityscapes and creating a shared emotional experience of community.

The first three chapters deal with the historical and aesthetic sensoria of the city that scholars, experts, and cultural elites created and that the federal and municipal authorities supported. These chapters engage with the tightly-trimmed and imposed aesthetics that are embodied in the museum arrangements, literary tours, and the films. All of them are heritages, "history processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing, into a commodity" (Schouten 21). The sanitized displays are accepted as emblems of truth, authenticity, and absolute pride, despite possibly varying degrees, but without controversies on their significance in the city identity.

The first and second chapters about the two main historic sites of the city, which respectively represent the two opposite sides of the Petersburg mythologies (a man-made city *ex nihilo* and its eschatological fate) and the two polarized images of the modern city (the sumptuous Imperial capital or shabby, dark backstreets), trace back its formative history and explore how they create a sensorium of community through ritualistic experiences: how the Hermitage becomes a local and national symbol and how it offers a transcendental experience of eternity and spirituality of art and history through film reels; and how the mundane spaces of Dostoevskii sites accounts for a Petersburg mythology where people can experience the past and present together and overcome the ossified monumentality of historic sites.

In these chapters, I resort on the notion of "seeing" in Tony Bennet and Carol Duncan's theories on museums as a key site for civic rituals. Proceeding from Michel Foucault's notion of disciplinary power and panopticism, Bennet explains how the development of museums brought

about civic seeing, where visitors embody civic lessons by following the specific arrangement of museum displays. Duncan explains that the public art museum was created from royal collections as a hegemonic ritual site to cultivate citizenship and develop a sense of national community when the nation-state emerged, exemplified by the Louvre Museum after the French Revolution. Audiences internalize the narratives and aesthetics that are framed by the authorities; visitors become shareholders of artistic and spiritual wealth, developing a national identity.

The third chapter exposes the cinematic space of the 1990s Petersburg, centering on Aleksei Balabanov, whose films established the mythology of the 1990s. In contrast to the popular usage of St. Petersburg's architectural heritage, Balabanov employs vestiges from the past to illustrate historical discontinuity. His characters walk throughout the city in vain and collect neither safe homes nor their identities: Petersburg landscapes lose its temporality and significance in the transitional apocalypse. The characters' corporeal movements and their (non-)engagement with decaying landscapes reveal traumatic psychology of urban subjects in historical rupture, which popular reading of spectator gaze have affirmed and elevated into history.

The last two chapters engage with the historic center and its aesthetics as contested sites that attract diverse images of new, alternative or revisionist cityscapes, while striving to continue the rhetoric of historical continuity: they result from the efforts of various actors to challenge and negotiate the city space, at the same time creating their own urban identity, whether they intended to or not. To reveal the dominant ideas that work behind such production, promotion, and maintenance of landscapes, these chapters use ideas about space borrowed from French theorists de Certeau, and Henri Lefebvre: they saw the city space as politically and economically charged. As Lefebvre wrote, city space is a product, marked, measured, marketed, and transacted; like any capitalist tool, the efficiency and functionality of its performance are studied and perfected and, as

a commodity, its representational form is re-stylized and reformed. But these theorists also believe that space has the potential to liberate human subjects from entrenched power relationships: Lefebvre asks the urban public to reclaim the city. De Certeau went further: the mundane activity of everyday life can be seen as resistance, as one focuses on fragmented images in contrast to the planner's panoptic, totalizing view. The French theories help to observe heterogeneity and randomness in transformation of the city space through ceaseless conflicts and negotiations among various actors, including everyday strollers or simple visitors. In addition, Pierre Nora's term of *lieux de mémoire* and his notion of memories, contrastive to history and heritage, play a pivotal role in defining certain sites, shared by some local communities, but rarely or controversially recognized by the authorities. In these chapters, I trace back the events that have dramatized tensions, led to an explosion of narratives, and triggered new human mobility. The cityscape, the cumulative result of political, ideological, and economical negotiations, expose the city identities that each actor dreams of in local, national, and global levels.

Furthermore, since in a global economic system where the tourism industry and investment industry serve as important constituents in the heritage and cultural landscapes of the historic center, I will often use the terms "branding" and "tourist gaze," borrowed from Barbara Klingmann's *Brandscapes* (2007) and John Urry's *Tourist Gaze*. According to Klingmann, in a heightened competition of global economy, cityscapes turn into marketable commodities that offer a new sensorium of urban spectacles, which ultimately leads to banal, hackneyed spaces. Urry's notion of gaze has evolved with new editions: while in the first edition (1990), inspired by Foucault's gaze of discipline, he sees tourism as the sightseeing of a systemized gaze, discursively organized by popular media as well as experts, in the second edition (2002), tourist gazing incorporates corporeal movements, which becomes especially useful in my discourse in the fifth

chapter; the third edition (2011) points out the dark sides of tourism, bringing out conflicts and negotiations between “gazers” and “gazees.”

I tried to treat equally all the levels and forms of discourses, historic and memory sites, and pieces of public art that are mentioned in the dissertation, without organizing them in hierarchy, despite the varying quantity of sentences I allocate in the text. In this dissertation, I aimed to explore the new updated version of cultural geography of a post-Soviet St. Petersburg through exploring frames of heritage, populace’s experiences of walking and seeing, and reimagination/ recreation of landscapes of various actors.

2.0 The Hermitage as Local, National, and Spiritual Ark

The State Hermitage Museum, one of the largest museums in the world, is undoubtedly the iconic monument of St. Petersburg in terms of its collection, architecture, and role as a cultural institution. As the main imperial residence and imperial museum, this building complex was not only the epitomic center of the empire's politics, but also of the city's aesthetics and culture.[9] The Hermitage on the Neva River constitutes the major panoramic scenery of modern-day postcard images. As the royal palace, separate from ordinary city lives, the Hermitage has always been a sort of city sealed away within the city; it is the only museum in the world besides the Vatican where the collection is presented in historic rooms with original interiors and furnishing, exuding an aura of material authenticity (Kelly 177). It is a perfect example of Foucault's heterotopia as a "place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages" in the project of "perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place" and as "enacted utopia," allowed to be realized in physical space by authorities in order to sustain their hegemonic ideas ("Of Other Spaces" 26).

The Hermitage is not only a prominent example of the grandiose imperial trace in modern Russia, a sign of the powerful metropolis that once ruled the empire, but also a symbolic representation of the city as the "cultural capital," an identity that the city dwellers proudly take in

[9] The main complex, located in the historic center along the Neva embankment, consists of the six historic buildings that were erected in different periods and styles: the Winter Palace, the Small Hermitage, Old Hermitage, New Hermitage and Hermitage Theater. Also, in 2014 the General Staff building, located on the other side of the Palace Square, fully opened to the public after modern renovation as a part of the Hermitage Museum. Additionally, the Hermitage owns several buildings throughout St. Petersburg, including the Menshikov Palace, the Imperial Porcelain Factory and the Restoration Center at Staraia Derevnia.

contrast to Moscow. In the late 1990s, the epithet "cultural capital" was widespread in the media. The title was no more than condescending lip service from Moscow for the former imperial capital and local elites frequently cited it in an ironical tone, jabbing at the lack of infrastructure and funding for the city in juxtaposition to the number of museums and their fame. But it soon became the official headline for global tourism in the media, reflecting more heterogeneous aspects of cultural heritage: both the nineteenth century, which has become classic regardless of whether its cultural products were official and unofficial, and the Leningrad underground art movement, which developed in parallel to the Soviet official culture.

As a prestigious federal institution and encyclopedic museum, the Hermitage Museum aggressively attempts to embrace all possible slices of culture and temporalities, incorporating contemporary art when it held Manifesta, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, in 2014 and including the Leningrad underground art with its exhibition in 2008 of Timur Novikov, whose work was accepted as historical after almost two decades. The opening of the General Staff Building across the Winter Palace and the establishment of the contemporary art department were part of the long-held, ambitious plan of director Mikhail Piotrovskii for a new era (Yawein and Piotrovsky). The expansion of the museum in its cultural platform and in its branches outside the city and Russia looks like creating an empire, now led by Piotrovskii. The museum embodies what Foucault defines for the museum or archive, reflecting an overarching desire to "enclose all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes" (26): while strategically trying to strike a balance between the international reputations and national interests, especially in the context of the resurgent conflict between the West and Russia from 2014 and the neo-conservatism growing in the Russian socio-political sphere, the museum serves as the epicenter of remaking the Imperial image in the 1990s

and 2000s, and simultaneously reflects the imperial desire to incorporate every slice of culture, space, and temporality.[10]

The Hermitage developed and accumulated a dual image as a monumental and a mythological space, witness to and subject to the turbulent history of the city, such that its role in the city and the state has drastically changed. This chapter explores how this space serves as a symbol of St. Petersburg and Russia by way of historical journeys: that completed by the museum itself throughout the twentieth century, the spiritual journey by the camera eyes in Aliona van der Horst's film *The Hermitage-niks* and in Aleksandr Sokurov's film *Russian Ark*, and finally the

[10] Beginning from the 2010s, artworks and exhibitions related to "gay-propaganda," "blasphemous themes," or political connotations have always evoked controversies from neo-conservative groups, as well as from the left-wing groups. Jake and Dinos Chapmans' exhibit *The End of Fun* in 2012 brought a huge scandal from the Orthodox Christian believers, due to its sculptural installation with tiny toy figures that portray the crucifixion of Ronald McDonald and teddy bears.

Also, in response to Russia's anti-LGBT law and the annexation of Crimea and following conflict in Ukraine, Manifesta's decision to exhibit in Russia encountered severe criticism from the world. Irish art curator Noel Kelly posted a petition to reconsider the location, insisting on Manifesta's withdrawal. The Russian radical art group *Chto delat'* announced their withdrawal from the biennale due to their dissatisfaction to the politically neutral stance of the Manifesta curators. Manifesta 10, due to all the efforts made by the Hermitage and Manifesta to hold the exhibition in a peaceful and legitimate manner, ended up in disappointment for those, who might have had high expectations.

On the other hand, if the Manifesta was an expansion of the museum as an independent institution that failed to make a connection with the city, the Palmyra project reveals the museum's status as a universal museum and federal institution. Piotrovskii visited Palmyra along with a delegation of cultural and scientific figures from Russia and UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Committee members Palmyra after recapture by Syrian forces in May 2016. The project could not be brought into discussion without touching on political and military issues, but Western mainstream media coverage of those was low, as the pompous showcase of the Mariinskii symphony orchestra concert at the Roman amphitheater in Palmyra, which was described with derogatory and hostile comments, overshadowed it. Presenting the visit to Palmyra in a positive view, the Hermitage proclaimed the Universal Museum's role as a cultural savior and revived the city's connection to its antiquities, along with its old epithet the Northern Palmyra. The Museum held a Day of Syria, which included a scholarly meeting and exhibition of the stocks of the Hermitage at the Hermitage Theater, as well as a public forum in the General Staff building that showed Aleksandr Dymnikov's photo of a peaceful Syria in 2009 and the hologram demonstration of Palmyra on May 2016.

mediated journeys taken by spectator-visitors of the museum. The new revival of the museum space in films as a site of mythology and ritual re-affirms the museum's traditional role and simultaneously endorses the spiritual and nostalgic mode of the past that came to fruition at the end of the first post-Soviet decade.

2.1 Hermitage and Its Relation To the City[11]

Once the imperial residence to which the museum of the imperial collection was attached, the Hermitage has long been an epicenter of power. The current low skyline of the city, considered by city dwellers to be one of the important heritage of city identity to preserve against the attacks of vulgar capitalism, was formed thanks to Nikolai I, who published a decree in 1844 that all new buildings be at least a *sazhen* (1.83 meters) lower than the Winter Palace, except church domes and spires.[12] Before the twentieth century, the grandiose plans of sovereigns and their authoritative architects often dictated how the urban center was planned. So too, in the period of Aleksandr I and Nikolai I, the "unbroken chains of related ensembles" were created (Ruble 34-5). The autocrat Nikolai I was well-known for his conservatism and nationalism; his decree literally shaped the cityscape, now considered to be the most unique and impressive part of the cityscape. No aerial view on the city was possible from any building except religious ones or from the Winter Palace at the center.[13] Like a fortress without the heavy wall, the building has an unimpeded view of the

[11] Precisely, the Winter Palace had served as a standard for the other architecture in the city. However, as the Winter Palace is now collectively known as a part of the Hermitage Museum Complex, here I title it the Hermitage to avoid complication.

[12] No structures in the historic center can exceed 40 meters in height.

[13] Visitors find that the dome of the Isaac Cathedral the only place to observe the city at the historic center, since the Hermitage roof is not available for ordinary visitors.

water and of the wide square that connects to the city, suitable for a view of entering visitors and military parades.

Following three revolutions and the birth of cinema, such a view from the Winter Palace emerges as threatening and oppressive, as projected in Vsevolod Pudovkin's ten-year-jubilee film for the Revolution *The End of St. Petersburg* (*Konets Peterburga* [1927]): Greco-Roman sculptures on the Hermitage roof look down on two poor peasants from the countryside, who appear extremely small compared to the statues in the foreground. The film positions the Hermitage as the most important site to occupy and conquer, as the symbol of the oppressive power.

Although the Winter Palace was no longer the main residence in the last years of the imperial family, it was the destination for Father Gapon and his followers in their march on Bloody Sunday in 1905. Since the Provisional Government after the February Revolution and the abdication of Nikolai II in 1917 inherited the Winter Palace to use as the main office, it fell under Bolshevik attack. The savaging of the Palace is dramatically described in *October*, another jubilee film by Sergei Eisenstein; the embellished scene of storming the palace is accepted by many as documentary, as it repeatedly appears in later media about the Revolution and the Palace. In the film, the extravaganza of the palace is savaged by soldiers devoted to the Revolution and mocked and ridiculed as a metaphor of vanity and corruptions in the Provisional Government.[14] In Eisenstein's cinematic images, which are deeply embedded within politics and ideology, the

[14] Aleksandr Kerenskii, the prime minister of the provisional government after the February Revolution, is identified with the art objects of the Winter Palace, aligned with metaphorical images of the beautiful muse-sculpture with a wreath in her hands, and the clock-peacock with its tail fully open.

Palace complex is indeed a secluded island, in isolation from most people's lives until it was conquered and nationalized.

The Hermitage has not always been an isolated city within the city. As a building complex, the palace contained everything necessary for its inhabitants (Zimin 396). Yet, in terms of human mobility and its sociological aspects, Susan McCaffray (67) rejects Zimin's observation that the Winter Palace is not terribly different from the General Staff building, which the two ministries inhabited, along with their workers in a residential area. She considers that the Winter Palace was an organic, integrated element of the city, both through commercial ties and the galas to which city folk were invited and through hiring people in the city and returning them to the city upon retirement or terminating their contracts with the court. The servants, mostly from the city or the imperial estates, served as ties that connected the imperial family to the urban populace.[15]

The history of the imperial residence and its inhabitants occupies a significant part of Hermitage mythology and the visual media that perpetuates it. It is the reason visitors stand in a long queue on the freezing Palace Square to look around the extravaganza of the Winter Palace, rather than enjoy the freer space in the new exhibition complex, the General Staff Building. However, rather than linger on the imperial history of the Hermitage, this chapter will primarily focus on the role and status of the museum in the twentieth and twenty-first century. A visit to the history of the imperial household will be mentioned as a part of the museum in detailed discussions of films that I will discuss later in the chapter, leaving the issues of whether the imperial household and the Winter Palace could be considered as an organic part of the city as a domain for other historical works.

[15] Yet, the courtiers in the palace read them as primarily rural peasants in origin and took their existence as their contact with the folk (*narod*). See more in detail McCaffray.

2.2 Hermitage: Birth of the Public Museum

The concept of the public museum grew out of the spirit of Enlightenment and nationalism: the Louvre, which successfully transformed from royal residence to nationalized museum, became a showcase for the Republic as a symbol of equality. The National Gallery in London was established by political demand, shaded with feelings of nationalism and patriotic sentiment and intensified by the wars against France.[16] The Hermitage as museum recapitulates the import and development of this idea in Russia.

Similar to the Louvre and many other princely galleries in Western Europe, the Hermitage museum began with a private royal collection purchased by Catherine the Great.[17] With her avaricious purchases in a period of high competition for art collecting in the European courts, Catherine earned acknowledgement as a patron of art and an enlightened monarch, an identity in which she was greatly invested. As a result, she made a significant contribution to the expansion of the imperial art collection, which could measure up to those of other European courts in a short time. Also, it was Catherine who expanded the Palace complex, adding the small Hermitage, Old (Great) Hermitage, which were built to house her initial collections, and the Hermitage Theater. Yet, as its name suggests, the building was constructed as her private salon. Built as her own secluded place and her collection, it was only accessible to a small circle of her "friends" and important envoys.[18]

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[16] See more in detail Duncan's "From the Princely Gallery to the Art Museum" in *Civilizing Rituals*, a milestone essay in critical study of museums.

[17] Catherine II purchased the whole gallery of paintings from Berlin merchant Johann Ernst Gotzkowsky in 1764. Her purchase was followed by the whole galleries of Bruhl in Saxony and Robert Warpole in London.

[18] In Aleksandr Sokurov's *Russian Ark*, viewers can see Catherine the Great in the empty Hermitage theater, watching the stage production, probably of the script she herself wrote, filled with a large number of actors and a luxurious set.

In 1852, the public museum opened in a newly constructed building named the New Hermitage, which was open to a wider audience. Influenced by then newly constructed museums in Berlin and Munich, where paintings, sculptures and the antiquities were put on public display, Nikolai I commissioned Leo von Klenze, who designed the first purpose-built museum Glyptothek in Munich, to design a new building between the Old Hermitage and Little Hermitage in 1838, after a major fire had damaged the Palace.[19]

But the museum remained largely invisible to the public until the end of the century. The limited number of entry tickets, strict dress code, and lukewarm interests toward non-Russian art in the art sphere following acute debates on national art prevented the museum from developing into the major public site of the city, despite the gradual increase in the number of visitors. Dmitrii Grigorovich's 1865 guidebook for the general public described it as an institution of enlightenment and national pride, but it did not enjoy popularity until the late nineteenth century. Filled with non-Russian treasure collections, it represents an ironic position that St. Petersburg has taken place throughout its history. When Benois finally proclaimed it to be the main museum in the Russian state, century-long debates on nationality in the arts were generally over (Dianina 122-144). As the city without history became the city of rich imperial cultural treasures to be preserved and protected after two centuries of its birth, this non-Russian art museum established its reputation as a cosmopolitan site with world-class collection.

After the October Revolution, the Hermitage was converted into a nationalized museum. The Palace building complex with a museum attached transformed into the State Museum with a

[19] In 1832, Nikolai I viewed the Berlin museum, which had been completed shortly before by Karl Friedrich Schinkel; in 1838 in Munich, Nikolai I saw Klenze's Glyptothek and Pinakothek, commissioned by the Bavarian king Ludwig I to house his collection of Greek and Roman sculptures. See more in detail Maya Gervits's article and Neverov and Alexinsky 32-34.

former imperial residence attached. The private apartments in the Winter palace were soon transformed into mere settings for the exhibition halls, along with the attempt to erase the history of the Hermitage as the imperial residence and to rewrite and rearrange the art history in a new Soviet ideology.[20] Despite the fact that the state's policy toward preservation of historic and artistic monuments were often contradicted during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly considering the secret sales of the valuable art works in the 1920s and 1930s, the Bolshevik leadership generally respected the architectural heritage and classic artworks in the imperial and noble collection, as the state's top cultural showcase. The government's official position was to keep art sales confidential, regarding them as abnormal and criminal (Norman 179-201).

Also, through political conquest, confiscation and nationalization, and quasi-colonial excavations in the Asian areas, including "trophy art" from the Nazis, the institution developed into a "universal and encyclopedic museum," the current definition of the Hermitage.[21] A new discipline started to bloom. Laying particular emphasis on archaeology and expanding its collections on display, the museum created new departments.[22] A 1956 English-language

[20] The private apartments were opened to the public. But, according to Vadim Nesin, in 1926 the authority decided to close the historical rooms of the Winter Palace, where the last imperial family has resided, since they evoked unhealthy curiosity in the public. Soon, the historical rooms were turned into a part of the exhibitionary halls for the Hermitage Museum.

[21] The State Hermitage Museum inherited all the treasures of the private collections after the revolution. The collections of the great aristocratic families, such as the Stroganovs and Iusupovs, were confiscated and brought to the Hermitage. The Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings arrived at the Hermitage from the Moscow merchants and art collectors, Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov. Their collection was housed in the museum of New Western Art after the Revolution. But the museum was officially closed in 1948 and the collection was split between the Hermitage and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow because the decadent bourgeois culture of the period of imperialism was considered inappropriate for the Soviet era. See for more in detail the chapters about St. Petersburg collectors and connoisseurs, the Shchukins and the Morozovs, and the New State Hermitage in Geraldine Norman's book.

[22] Under the Soviet years, the Hermitage gradually expanded its field and collection: the Museum created the Oriental Department (1920), the Department of the Archaeology of Eastern

guidebook to the Hermitage, published in Moscow, began its explanation with the excavated antiquities from the Altai and stressed the diverse cultures and ethnicities on display from the territory of the U.S.S.R., while the Winter Palace was introduced purely as architectural heritage rather than the imperial residence: visitors could only read the names of *architects* on the introduction page. The diverse collection allows the Hermitage to lay claim to an important position in the world, reflected in the 2003 Hermitage UNESCO Project report that says the Hermitage "reflects the openness of the Russian people towards other cultures" (Gibson 2).

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the historical narrative and the museum arrangement of the Hermitage encountered another turnabout. In the new post-Soviet era, St. Petersburg, with its ensemble of nineteenth-century architecture along the Neva River, owned a privileged landscape in the ongoing search for a new national identity. Excitement about the imperial legacy was clear throughout media coverage: the Romanov family and the imperial legacy were rehabilitated through books and films about the last imperial family, which were mostly embedded with a nostalgic and sentimental attitude to the past, as in Nikita Mikhalkov's film *Barber of Siberia* (*Sibirskii tsiriul'nik* [1998]) and in Gleb Panfilov's film *The Romanovs: An Imperial Family* (*Romanovy. Ventsenocnaia sem'ia* [2000]). Vadim Nesin's book on the history of the Winter Palace as the imperial residence during the reign of Nikolai II revived the lives of the private apartments in the Palace before its transformation into the museum.

The Hermitage successfully survived the transitional period in the 1990s despite enormous repercussions from the drastic decline in state funding that all cultural organizations experienced in Russia (Shekova 150; Cameron and Lapierre 71). Its incomparable collection and long-

Europe and Siberia (1930), and the Russian Department (1941), which includes the imperial clothes, porcelain, furniture and artworks from the Winter Palace.

established fame allowed them to quickly respond to changes and challenges. It transformed itself into a museum that focused on the imperial residence and Western paintings, which appealed to foreign sponsors and a broader range of tourists. As turbulent history required the whole country to engage in reinterpretation and new representations of its identity, the Hermitage easily occupied a prominent position for a new Russia and the city, whose old name had returned from Leningrad to St. Petersburg according to the 1991 referendum. It was not simply exaggerated self-admiration when "the Hermitage" was the museum director's straightforward answer in response to the question of what differentiates contemporary St. Petersburg from Moscow.

Whether intended as a resource for the creation of a new form of the state ideology or to simply as a dazzling extravaganza to put on display for commercial use, the idyllic return to the past culminated in the grandiose festival for the 300th anniversary to celebrate the birth of the city in 2003. The two important films about the Hermitage were released for the tercentenary: Sokurov's film *Russian Ark* and von der Horst's *Hermitage-niks: A Passion for the Hermitage*. Reflecting the attitude towards the past of the 1990s and the early 2000s, both films are a recuperation of pre-Soviet history and culture, parting away from Soviet history. The two films portray the essence of what the Hermitage aspires to be, as museum in a traditional sense and as historic site that bears the important memories of history of the city.

Van der Horst's documentary was commissioned by the Hermitage, in association with the Hermitage Friends Society of the Netherlands. Given this fact, the film serves as a part of an active advertisement for external funding and support and is filled with official and insider rhetoric about how to characterize the Hermitage (T. Smith). In *Hermitage-niks*, most of the art works shown in the film are from the icon collection and imperial collection of Western paintings. The main stories of five episodes depict how the museum workers struggle to preserve and protect them during the

Soviet period. In particular, the last episode of the film, dedicated to Catherine, who laid the foundation of the Hermitage, ends with a sequence of the restored portrait of the last emperor Nikolai II being put on display along with his predecessors, thereby completing the Tsar Gallery and the representation of the imperial history of the Hermitage (figure 1). By contrast, Sokurov's historical fictional documentary revives the imperial past with hundreds of extras in costumes on the luxurious theatrical setting through the brilliant technological feat of one single take. The auteur does not hide his deep faith in the sacred role of classic art for civilization, as the title "ark" carries a biblical connotation. In reviews, his film was frequently labeled a virtual tour guide of the Hermitage, both as a derogatory term and as a form of praise.

Figure 1 Hanging Nikolai II's Portrait in *Hermitage-Niks*

In the symbolic geography as well as topography of St. Petersburg, the Hermitage occupies a central role. Visiting the Hermitage is a ritualized practice for the locals and visitors regardless

of "how often" they have gone, to engage with the city and national history, as well as art education. Its existence and the ritual visit offer "cultural ownership" by the city community and the state.[23] The museum is a large educational institution for this cultural ownership, authorized and encouraged by the officials and elites, and a tradition from generation to generation to be acquainted with the city history and culture and to be raised as a Russian who appreciates the culture, history, and aesthetics. Through ritualized visits, residents easily accept and side with the cultural frame arranged by the Museum as inherent and natural to the city and the national culture. It is still considered to be a place for aesthetic and spiritual experiences, presumably regardless of generation.[24] Everybody in the city has his or her personal episode related to the museum.[25] Even

[23] Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, in their sociological study on the museum, argue that the ritual exercise of museum goers enhances cultural ownership among people of certain knowledge, excluding the less-educated labor class. He intends solidification of class identity, but it shares the same aesthetic idealism with Duncan's formation of a national identity through a ritual exercise in museum.

[24] Ol'ga Nesmianova published an essay on "How to differentiate native Petersburgers from the others" in the monthly journal *KLAUZURA*, based on her personal observation and experiences: in the list, she mentioned that native Petersburgers should have a personal connection with the Hermitage and should know where the exit is located in this labyrinthian museum. Even though she wrote a piece of warning that it should not be taken deadly seriously, in a half-joking tone before offering the list, the commentaries, mostly from those who claim themselves to be native Petersburgers of the nth generation. A few point out they have not visited the Hermitage for a long time, objecting to the idea that the Hermitage is a center of their personal lives. But, at the same time, some point out that the director is not actually a native Petersburger, as well, showing detailed knowledge on the museum.

The other web-based newspapers, *The Village* and *Bumaga*, while publishing special essays on the city, still chose the Hermitage, specifically the contemporary art gallery of the General Staff Building, as the site of inspiration and creativity for the young generation. Even though it is difficult to consider these essays and interviews as statistically objective without any subjectivity, they show a certain consensus that still dominates what the locals' cultural life is regardless of generations.

[25] The camera in Margy Kinmoth's documentary *Hermitage Revealed* (2014) follows a child, running around the museum, seemingly the childhood of the director Piotrovskii, but anyone could identify himself or herself as a child in the museum. Also, film critics, such as Arkadii Ippolitov, writing about Sokurov's *Russian Ark*, often brings up their personal experience in the Hermitage.

those who have not visited for a long time since school trips deem that the Museum must be open and permanently stay open at the heart of the city. At the same time, every Petersburger is wild to present their opinions about everything from the color of the Hermitage building façade to its exhibitions and future plans (Goncharov et al.).

Public museums with luxurious treasures and material authenticity is easy to coopt to symbolic representation for the city and the state, since that was the function they were created for and their collections are carefully selected and arranged for that specific purpose. According to Bennett's work on the birth of the museum in the nineteenth century, the institutions are involved in the "practice of 'showing and telling'" and collections displayed are "calculated to embody and communicate specific cultural meanings and values" (6). Especially for a major state museum like the Hermitage, what visitors believe they encounter in the museum space is Russia, "the state itself embodied in the very form of the museum," as Duncan puts it, describing the Louvre after its transformation into public art museum (26). The space of museums, which prompts visitors to assume a ritualistic walk through a series of the halls of historical importance and the imperial collection, works as a "powerful transformer, able to convert signs of luxury, status, or splendor into repositories of spiritual treasure – the heritage and pride of the whole nation" (Duncan 27). Yet, it is not simply the symbolic representation of the city and the state that is hammered into visitors' mindsets. If the public museum is a transaction between the visitor and the state, this transaction has been developed through a variety of narratives where official ideology and individual experiences have intermingled.

2.3 Hermitage as Comrade of Martyrdom and Suffering

Among these narratives, those set during the Leningrad Siege in the WWII are the most powerful and widespread. Since the outbreak of the war and its end, memories of the war have transformed into historical propaganda and national myth. Epic stories of heroic deeds, often manufactured and propagated by the state, are intermingled with tragic episodes of personal memories and the footage of destroyed ruins of the once-beautiful city to build up the durable myth about the Siege.[26] The repetitive narratives in official and unofficial rhetoric brought a new identity to the former Imperial capital and a new meaning to the Imperial heritage. Above all, they had the support of official ideology to boost patriotic sentiment and to mobilize the populace for the war against the Nazis. The Leningrad Siege has become one of the pivotal moments that set a clear identity of the Soviet city Leningrad with the honorary title of Hero City awarded after the war in 1945 by Stalin's order. During the Siege, the imperial architecture and treasures, some of which were neglected before the war, turned into the national treasures that should be kept intact from the enemies at any cost. Experts and volunteer Leningraders underwent hardship and painstaking efforts to save the glaring monumental architecture and treasures in the museums: the Hermitage museum was one of them.[27]

[26] Much has been written about Hermitage museum during the Leningrad Siege: the best-known books that offer an excellent overview of the historical events is Sergei Varshavskii and Boris Rest's *Triumph of the Hermitage* (*Podvig Ermitazha* [1969]): its English version is available under the title of *Saved for Humanity*. *The Saved Hermitage* (*Ermitazh spasennye* [1995]) is published on the fiftieth anniversary of the lifting of the Siege with more updated information, including the additional documents from the Hermitage archive, as it is commissioned by the Hermitage itself.

[27] See Kirschenbaum's book for more in detail about the construction of the myth about the Leningrad Siege; for an English-written source about the preservation of the monuments during the siege, see Maddox.

In official rhetoric, the sorrowful images of the empty Hermitage halls have been repeated. This iconic image is reproduced in Sokurov's *Russian Ark*, although the film generally avoids showing Soviet history: the historical figure de Custine opens the forbidden door and enters a morbid room full of empty frames, indicating the horrible time during the Siege. Also, the narratives of how the museum buildings and artwork suffered were repeated to celebrate victory and the city's heroic deeds during and after the war. A book published both in Russian and English in 1985 about the Hermitage during the Siege of Leningrad begins with the scene at the Nuremberg Trial after WWII, where then director of the Hermitage Iosif Orbeli presents himself as a witness to the Nazi's "destruction of Leningrad's cultural and art monuments" (Varshavskii and Rest 7). Such narratives contributed significantly to a mythology of the Hermitage that consists of the suffering and heroic deeds of the museum staff against barbaric and devastating force of the Nazi.[28]

At the same time, when threatened by the Germans, the fate of the Hermitage not only became a national concern for architectural and cultural heritage, but it also acquired a deep connection to the general public in the city as it shared the experience of suffering. The connection set in when the city's fate influenced the Hermitage, when the Hermitage could no longer be the "control tower" of the city, but rather was subjected to the city and its fate. When the war broke out, the Museum staff and volunteers from the city strove to save the precious artworks and the architectural monuments. The most valuable works were safely evacuated to Sverdlovsk by train.

[28] The heroic deeds and suffering of the Hermitage were set in contrast to the vicious Nazi troop, which was exaggerated in the typical war rhetoric. As Kira Dolinina indicates in her special essay dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Leningrad Siege, Orbeli's testimony in the Nuremberg was not necessarily false but an exaggeration. Vladislav Glinka, the chief of the history of the Russian culture in the Hermitage, claimed that Orbeli had exaggerated the gruesome situation and Mikhail Kosinskii, a historian specializing in arms in the Hermitage, suggested that the main target of the attack was the bridge rather than the Museum itself.

When the third train had to return since the Germans had completely encircled the city, the remaining works were kept in the basement and the exhibition halls were left with empty frames. The suffering and heroic deeds to preserve the valuable heritage were documented: in particular, the empty frames hung on the wall and a pile of sand, reserved to put out fires in the Hermitage galleries, serve as iconic images of the siege. Sufferings and struggles that city residents underwent together during the Siege strengthened local pride and local solidarity, grounded in its geographical and cultural heritage.

The Hermitage became an integral part of the city as it was threatened by barbaric and devastating Nazi forces. Also, narratives of suffering and heroic deeds dominate the space and humanize it. Damaged by bombardment, the building was frequently addressed as "wounded" as if it were a human being (Rozanov 19). In Roman Karmen's documentary film *Leningrad in Battle* (*Leningrad v bor'be* [1942]), the ruined architecture in the historic center was frequently juxtaposed with human bodies. The ruins of the Atlantes that support the portico of the New Hermitage especially produce an anthropomorphic effect and the impression of the city's organic body itself becoming a victim of the war. The fact that the Hermitage "suffered" together along with the city and its dwellers helps to create the myth of the site: Leningraders developed an emotional and personal attachment to the museum and its collection through official rhetoric intermixed with their own individual episodes during the Siege. The newspaper kept reporting on it and allayed people's concern for the safety of the Hermitage collection and buildings. After the blockade was lifted, *Izvestiia* told its readers that "Hermitage lived on" and prepared for a second birthday (Varshavskii and Rest 250-251).

Such a humanized version of the museum is expressed further in van der Horst's quasi-documentary film. *Hermitage-Niks* consists of straightforward stories given by the museum staff,

ranging from the simple art handler and the hall attendant to the upper-level curators and the director Piotrovskii. Each unfolds his or her personal story, while the camera hovers over the artworks to which they are emotionally attached.

In these interviews about personal experiences, the Hermitage's narratives of martyrdom expand to the whole Soviet era. The old curators and the director reveal personal episodes for the museum workers: how the staff fought to secure the collection against the Soviet regime, the war, and vandalism. The Hermitage suffered along with the city: the artwork, the museum staff, the architecture, the museum itself, the city and Russia underwent suffering and sacrifice all together. In addition to the emblematic story of preservation during the Siege, new narratives were added: how the museum staff and the treasures survived the purge, which could be only brought to the foreground in perestroika. In the 1920s and 1930s, the valuable items were sold off from the Hermitage for the cause of industrial and agrarian development, such as the purchase of tractors. The curator tells the story about rescuing icons during the anti-religious campaign. Also, the story of hiding van Dyke's painting tells the struggle and strife of the museum workers to protect art at risk of their lives, while the episode on the French painting exhibition tells how the staff cunningly fooled a Party member from Moscow and protected Picasso and Matisse by using the name of Lenin (van der Horst; Semyonova and Iljine).[29]

The later episode moves to the painting *Danaë* by the great Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn, which was the object of a big scandal: it was defaced by sulfuric acid and knife by a mentally

[29] In 1962, a commission descended on Leningrad from Moscow led by Vladimir Serov, the new president of the Academy of Arts demanded the closure of a display that they deemed exerted a bad influence on young artists. Antonina Izergina, the head of the picture gallery, read the decree nationalizing the Shchukin collection that noted its artistic significance and importance to popular education, signed by Ulianov (Lenin), forcing Serov to renounce his earlier demands (Neverov and Alexinsky 46).

disturbed man; workers managed to return it to display only in 1997, twelve years after the tragic event took place. In this episode, the painting is portrayed as a humanized object in the references of the staff and visitors. Not only the curator, who managed to restore the painting, addresses it as if it were human being, sympathizing with its "burnt body," but the attendant also describes traces of the incident left on the wall and stories of people laying flowers on the empty wall as they do in a mourning ritual. The expanded narratives on martyrdom of the museum curators, most often dependent on the curators' individual episodes, enhance their personal attachment to art works and the museum: sacrifice created the current museum and collection.

Suffering and sacrifice go along with a story of salvation. The Hermitage is a society of guardians of culture, who have protected the place like a temple for more than a century against vandalism, power, and war. The ideal image of the museum is best captured in the episode of the Azerbaijan art handler Vadim Kuptsov, who served in the Civil War before coming to work in St. Petersburg. The Hermitage is not merely a place he is proud to work at, but also a temple that saves and enriches human souls. Georges Bataille, in his account of the national art museum in *Documenta*, places the museum at a pole opposite to the slaughterhouse, which was forced to move outside the city after urban reconstruction. Describing the stream of people swarming at the exit to the Louvre on Sunday, Bataille compares the museum to a lung: where workers reconstruct themselves after a long week of work, "coming out purified and fresh" (21). Ultimately, the public museum replaces the church. Vadim, apparently mincing his words about what he experienced in the war, identifies himself with Rembrandt's *Prodigal Son*. His words summarize clearly an ideal type of advertisement: "Beauty rules here. It cured my wounds from the war." Making another reference to Dostoevskii's word "beauty will save the world" in his novel *Idiot* [*Idiot* [1869]), the painting and the museum serves as a modern temple of physical and spiritual beauty (8:317).

The myth that the museum and its collection were saved by "the people" allowed the museum to remain an integral part of the city. What makes the Hermitage special is that, through these narratives, the museum and its art works were now viewed with a different gaze. It is not only a simple public museum that requires visitors to enact a ritualized gaze. Through the accumulated narratives, people also consider the Hermitage as an emblem of what they suffered together, as an integral part of their city history. It is not simply an entity nationalized after the revolution or categorized as an aesthetic resource. Narratives of martyrdom enter the construction and it becomes a statement itself. The Hermitage as a whole is the monumental space that Lefebvre describes as a "collective mirror" (220). It offers each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage, not only because of its beauty and art created or collected by Russian ancestors, but because of its narratives held by citizens that "we suffered together and saved them." The museum serves as the whole statement that represents suffering and the struggle to save art and culture.

2.4 Hermitage as the Ark of for Eternal Spirituality

Compared to the straightforward fashion in which sentiments are evoked by personal interviews presented in *Hermitage-niks*, Sokurov's cinematic Hermitage conveys a similar message of martyrdom and spirituality throughout the museum with an emphasis on dazzling cinematic technique in an extremely theatricalized fashion. The museum serves as a conduit to the past, a theater for what would have been in the past, a venue for aesthetic contemplation, and ultimately "Russian ark" of spiritual temple that carries world art of eternity.

In *Russian Ark*, the Hermitage serves as both synecdoche and metaphor for St. Petersburg and Russia, while the camera is entirely confined inside the museum. In the tourist map, the Hermitage is often presented as the synecdoche of the city and the Empire. The museum constitutes a pivotal part of the city not only geographically and historically, but temporally, as the film compresses three hundred years of history into ninety minutes inside the Hermitage. The Hermitage and its artworks stand as an ark: through this biblical allusion, the museum becomes a microcosm of the city and the Russian history, regardless of its non-Russian displays.

The two time-travelers, the Marquis de Custine and the invisible narrator, take a stroll throughout the thirty-three rooms in the Hermitage. During this walk, the conversation between the French aristocrat, known for his travel writing about his stay in the Russian Empire in 1839, and the narrator, presumably Sokurov himself, reflects the centuries-old debate on Russian national identity from the birth of St. Petersburg.

On the centuries-old question of where Russianness lies, Sokurov has undoubtedly sided with the view that Russia is an integral part of the European heritage. The Hermitage itself recapitulates Russian rulers' desire to catch up with the European courts: Catherine's purchases in the period of high competition for art collecting and Nikolai I's opening of the public museum, then-popular in the European courts. As many critics have already pointed out, the director was highly selective and subjective in how he projected the museum spaces and historical scenes: he concentrated on the sovereigns who made significant contributions: a fleeting and blurry image of Peter the Great who laid the foundation of the city, Catherine the Great, Nikolai I, and Nikolai II, who is marked as the last imperial owner of the palace. The director primarily focuses on the residential place of the Winter Palace and the Western art out of the encyclopedic list of its display that also includes ancient and ethnographical objects. Similar to Duncan's analysis of the Louvre

and its contribution to French nationalism, the director excluded the wide range of archaeological artefacts and oriental art from Central Asia, Byzantium, countries of the Near and Far East, not taking into consideration the imperial desire to the East.[30]

As with these spaces, de Custine, admiring the Western masterpieces and the exact copy of the Raphael Loggias from the Vatican, criticizes the art and culture that belong to Russians are mere imitations without "ideas of your own" (figure 2). He denounces St. Petersburg as a "chimera." Then, he stubbornly refuses to admit the beautiful music he is hearing is composed by the Russian composer Mikhail Glinka. Yet this argument soon meets a turnabout when the French traveller and the voice-over visit the forbidden room implying the period of the Siege. After the visit, the narration follows that one million people died in the Siege. De Custine says it is a high price to pay, while the narrator answers with a Russian saying that freedom has no price, implying the price of human lives paid for the defense of the nation but also for the protection of the museum's European cultural heritage.

[30] Ironically, a few of Sokurov's important films set in the marginal, liminal geographical place in the Russian or the Soviet boundaries, such as Turkmenistan in the 1988 film *Days of Eclipse* and Chechenya in the 2007 film *Aleksandra*. See more in detail about the theme of liminality and empire in Sokurov's film in Nancy Condee's "Aleksandr Sokurov: Shuffling off the Imperial Coil" in *Imperial Trace* and Julian Graffy's "Living and Dying in Sokurov's Border Zones" in *The Cinema of Alexander Sokurov*.

Figure 2 Raphael Loggia in *Russian Ark*

The stance that Sokurov takes in his ode to the Hermitage and St. Petersburg is quite visible here, just like in van der Horst's *Hermitage-niks*. The sacrifice of Russians contributed to European civilization when they protected this spiritual, aesthetic temple, which goes beyond the museum, city or nation. The nuanced statement becomes apparent in the anachronistic encounter of the current museum director and his predecessors, Orbeli and Boris and Mikhail Pitrovsky at the Peter the Great Memorial Hall. While the worn-out velour and the phone surveillance of their conversations during the Soviet period indicate their hardship, they say that "we managed to preserve this though catastrophes." Sokurov cunningly transforms the clichéd epithet of "Russia as an imitator" into "Russia as a savior of the Western culture" from the turbulent years of the twentieth century. In this vein, Sokurov's cinema "reintegrate [Russian culture] into a European culture" and "renegotiate [its] place in the world" (Condee, "Aleksandr Sokurov" 181).

The critical nationalistic view is intermingled with a nostalgic attitude toward pre-Soviet history, which was at peak when the film was released in Russia for the tercentenary celebration

of the city's birth. The nostalgia is best visible in the scene of the last emperor Nikolai II and his wife, Empress Aleksandra. The camera tracks two women, Aleksandra and the nun, her sister Grand Duchess Elizabeth, walking along the portrait gallery of the Romanov family, which leads to the dining room of Nikolai II (figure 3). It is no less symbolic in emphasizing the demise of the Romanov family in the journey through the once-residential Hermitage. Also, the brightly-lit white dining room enhances a sense of tragedy in contrast to their upcoming misfortune in the Soviet periods. The film does not hide the director's sympathetic attitude toward the last Imperial family and pre-Soviet world.

Figure 3 Aleksandra and the Nun, Walking Along the Gallery of the Romanov Family in *Russian Ark*

Then, the camera follows the nun as she walks out of the dining room alone and overtakes her to enter the Great Nicholas Hall. The penultimate sequence shows an anachronistic intermingling of ephemeral figures from the last ball in 1913, the actors who appeared in the beginning, de Custine and the Mariinskii theater director Valerii Gergiev with his orchestra. While post-Soviet people exist together with pre-Soviet figures, the grand ball marks the final episode of the historic journey, followed by the majestic moment of the crowd leaving the ball. When the narrator asks de Custine to go "forward," the traveler from the nineteenth-century refuses, questioning "what is there?" The time traveler from the nineteenth century remains behind the camera that follows a stream of the crowd descending the Jordan Staircase.

The following sequence of the crowd at the staircases is a riposte to the Soviet cinematic images of the Hermitage: Pudovkin's last scene in *The End of St. Petersburg*, where a woman slowly walking up the stairs is swept up by the masses and Eisenstein's filming of the Winter Palace, where Bolshevik soldiers ascend the stairs to seize the palace in the film *October*. Sokurov's grandiose scene is a cinematic rehabilitation of the grand staircase and the Winter Palace, physically devastated by the Bolshevik soldiers and cinematically fragmented and ruptured by the montage technique of the revolutionary avant-garde cinema (Alaniz; Drubek-Meyer; Kovalov; Kujundzic)[31] (figure 4). Also, Sokurov's entire cinematic seizure of the Hermitage with the return of aristocracy could be regarded as the reenactment of the 1920 performance of the Winter Palace seizure for the three-year anniversary of the October revolution by the Soviet playwright and director Nikolai Evreinov (Condee, "Aleksandr Sokurov").[32]

[31] In addition, Oleg Kovalov in his analysis of the film makes a reference to Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*, seeing the Hermitage ark as a type of a battleship and comparing its most famous Eisenstein montage, the Odessa step sequence to the Jordan Staircase scene.

[32] Evreinov's event involved with eight thousand participants, a live orchestra of five hundred musicians, and an estimated audience of hundred thousand spectators. Sokurov's staging

Figure 4 The Grand Staircase Scene in *Russian Ark*

Above all, by capturing the museum space and three-hundred years of history in a single long take, the film creates the illusion of an unbroken flow of Russian history. This dazzling technical achievement connects the selective artworks and the fragmented historical scenes, and thus, bridges a gap between pre-Soviet and post-Soviet St. Petersburg and achieves a "view of Russian culture as a continuous tradition" (Komm). Thereby the film expands in its visual experience the original intention underlying the museum: the museum architecture offers transition from one to another realm of temporalities, space, and culture. Each room or corridor, marked by

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of the actors in the imperial costumes, instead of the Bolshevik soldiers with rifles, and Valerii Gergiev's orchestral music instead of the chorus sound of the *Internaionale*, marks the return of the Empire and elite culture in a post-Soviet consciousness (Condee, "Aleksandr Sokurov," 174).

doorways, is dedicated to a certain period, certain movement or civilization. In the New Hermitage, where the original interior of the early museum remains, golden plates are fixed on the top of each door frame marking the boundaries of geographical places and art schools displays. Most traditional museums, if visitors follow an instructed route, offer the continuous experience of a chain of fragments in history and culture, mostly in chronological order, to grasp the idea of a whole history in a single walk inside the museum, which Bennett calls an experience of "organized walking through evolutionary time" (186). At the same time, he compares the museum stroll to the relaxing urban stroll as a *flâneur*'s experience in an organized route (187).[33] But what distinguishes it from the urban stroll is, if I may use the words from Benjamin, that a museum retains the phantasmagoria of totality, the long, continuous experience of *Erfahrung*, in contrast to the disjointed urban experience of modernity, *Erlebnis* by displaying slices of different temporalities, geographical places, and civilizations in one space (Hetherington, "Museums and the 'Death of Experience'").

Russian Ark captures this nature, inherent in the museum structure, with dazzling cinematic techniques and theatrical traditions. Spectacles of different temporalities are visualized as choreographed scenes of historic figures whenever de Custine crosses a threshold. During the cinematic journey throughout the enfilade, the prevalence of door frames indicates fragmented slices of temporality, which converted temporalities into a spatial arrangement. Yet, the fluidity of the camera images allows stepping to different temporalities looks like a seamless movement through time and space. The fragmented remains of history, embedded in the architecture and

[33] Bennett, citing Meg Armstrong and Curtis Hinsley, explains the differences in terms of telling and showing of exhibition space. The difference between the two practices stems from the contrast between the official exhibition areas of the nineteenth-century American exhibition and the midways that accompanied them (186-188).

artworks in the Hermitage, are connected through walking experience of viewers and seamless shooting of the camera eyes.

Yet Soviet history is merely hinted at in the sound effects of bombing and passing visitors in marine uniforms, or presented as a detour from the journey. During the stroll, de Custine steps backward for the first time and opens a forbidden door, which Sokurov's voice insists be closed. On the grey-colored screen, the room appears full of empty frames, with a man sitting beside a coffin and threatening the time-travelers. This room marks the period of the Siege as a rupture in history, while the fluidity of the camera eye and movement veils a rupture of the whole Soviet history in the film.

The cinematic Hermitage is hermetically sealed off from ordinary space and time: when the film begins with the camera following the young people from the courtyard to the main palace, viewers can hear the sound of doors shutting off screen. The journey, confined inside the museum, ends with the last shot of the film shows a murky image of the river outside the window. In this floating ark, a perfect example of Foucault's "heterotopia" with "heterochronies," pre-Soviet history and post-Soviet history are connected and intermingled, while Soviet history is merely portrayed as a rupture through the use of the cinematic medium: they "suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations" of temporalities and spatial arrangement, which "they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" ("Of Other Spaces" 24).

At the same time, Sokurov expands the notion of meticulously constructed display and organized walking to an almost kitsch level, without hiding the theatricality that lies behind the museum space, as well as the theatricality of the Russian imperial court culture, as Lotman observed in his analyses on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian culture. The film begins with the narrator following a group of young people, including actors in Venetian masks, with a

voice-over questioning whether he should watch or play a part. Then, viewers see the backstage full of actors and Catherine, watching the performance of her own play at the Hermitage theater. The references appear in numerous extras taking poses in meticulous constructed choreography. The pompous ceremony given by Nikolai I to receive Persian ambassadors reaches the peak of theatricality, referring both to the performing actors in the museum cinema and the Imperial court. Finally, the actors in Venetian masks reappear towards the end and bid farewells to guests leaving from the ball, reminding viewers of the film and the museum as one whole spectacle. In this vein, historical figures that appear in the film appear as puppets, flickering moments and debris from the ruins of the past. They could be no more than Sokurov's ephemeral ghosts that appear in museum workers' romantic imagination in urban mysteries (Sindalovskii, *Prizraki severnoi stolitsy*). In this sense, attacks on the underdevelopment of characters and lack of narratives as sources of boredom in some anonymous, non-professional comments left on a film lovers website could be understood.

That is why close-up shots of human faces are rarely visible, unlike the director's other films or another film on the museum space from 2015, *Francofonia*, where centuries-old portraits of figures appear. Instead, the camera in *Russian Ark* lingers over the paintings that depict "eternal people," as de Custine murmurs, looking at Frans van Mieris the Elder's 1660 *A Young Woman in the Morning*. The camera often shows close-up shots of the paintings, leaving the frame outside of the film screen so that viewers could feel the images extend beyond the screen. While compressing the reel time of the three-hundred years of the Russian history into the real time of ninety-minutes, Sokurov brings another temporality of timelessness, framed in the artworks.

Frames are important in guiding audiences to correct focus, endowing images with special status, and finally keeping temporalities intact, therefore preserving eternality. Sokurov's film is

engaged with interplays among frames: museum's architectural doorframes that define and confine slices of temporalities, the screen frame the viewers are watching, and painting frames. For Sokurov, painting has been one of the highest forms of art, seen in his film about French painter Hubert Robert, the film *Robert: Fortunate Life* (*Robert. Schastlivaia zhizn'* [1996]) and the film *Elegy of a Voyage* (*Elegiia dorogi* [2001]). His film *Mother and Son* (*Mat' i syn* [1997]), shows his preoccupation with flat images on screen, particularly with its painterly allusion to German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich in the dreamy landscape. Tim Harte, in his analysis of *Russian Ark*, explores Sokurov's transitions between physical frames, between past and present, painting and live action, and mortality and immortality: a succession of frames contributes to a synthesis of art forms and immortality of art. Unlike the previous films, engrossed with the flatness of images, *Russian Ark* creates an illusion of three-dimensionality and positions the eternal artworks in the living sphere through "continuous internal framing" and "merging of the artwork and the live action" (Harte 53-54). In addition, the use of double narrative frames, the museum space, and the cinematic space contribute to these interplays.

The emphasis on painting frames and multiple layers of performances engaging with the paintings "transport the timeless sense of a painting across its framed threshold into the live cinematic action" (Harte 55). The French visitor found the blind sculptor Tamara Kurenkova interacting with sculpture through the touch of her hands. When she explains Anthony van Dyck's *Madonna with Partridges* to de Custine, viewers see the camera slowly focusing on the faces of Virgin Mary with baby Jesus and angels, leaving the birds behind the screen frame. But viewers can hear the sound of the birds chirping. Even as the cinematic Hermitage allows for a tactile experience of art, the image embodies into sound, crossing the threshold of the painting frame. It leaks into the screen and into the narrative space of the film in an auditory form. In the Rembrandt

room, de Custine meets the ballet dancer Alla Osipenko, who poses her hands in conversation with the painting, making a parallel image to the heroine in the painting *Danaë.* Aesthetic contemplations on the paintings are engaged with not only visual, but also lived experience, including somatic and auditory senses. Eternity overflows the painting frame to the living sphere of the museum space and cinematic journey.

The cinematic Hermitage achieves the synthesis and eternality of art, as well as history, through the camera unblinking eyes over threshold and plays with various frames. Much has been written about theme of liminality and mortality imbedded in Sokurov's film (Graffy; Harte; Iampolskii). The director's cinema aims at replicating "the sanctuary of death beyond the passage of historical time," and making the "invisible and immortal seen" (Condee, "Aleksandr Sokurov" 183). Although *Russian Ark* is neither typical nor representative of Sokurov's cinema, the Hermitage museum is a perfect place of liminality and immortality, at the same time, a complicated ideologically-laden, authentic place, which he could easily transform into an imaginative place and render the image natural in a post-Soviet consciousness at the peak of the imperial nostalgia and in the director's desire to re-position itself in the Western culture. The transcendental vision of art embodied in this museum, is unraveled for the spectators' virtual walk, not different from ritualized walk of citizens.

2.5 Epilogue

The contemporary museum has become an extension of the streets. In terms of control and surveillance, inevitably penetrating Foucault's heterotopia from within the real space, the museum is indeed a physically "sealed ark," an other space from everyday life, where entry requires not

only the purchase of tickets and security check-in, but also a long queue.[34] There is a code of ethics for museum visitors, such as no touch, no flash, no smoking, and etc. Yet, visitors' gazes and their engagement with art objects and space are not much different from those on streets. As Hetherington points out, museums, adapted to a world of consumerism and global tourism, become a "part of a bigger spectacle now to capture the experience *Erlebnis*" ("Museum" 602). In many of these cases, city walking tours include visiting major museums, along with watching city architecture and (window-)shopping at local shops so that visitors could "immerse oneself in the urban rhythm afforded by its brandscape" (Ibid. 602). At the same time, museums themselves conform to global tourism and capitalism, it gradually turns into a semi-open, cultural spot in the city. Museums try to enact such urban perambulation, incorporating fancy souvenir shops and upmarket restaurants inside the architecture, to appeal to diverse audience. Following the luxurious interiors, glancing at a variety of objects, and taking selfies, disjointed engagement with space can be found just like a *flâneur* in the Paris arcade and city shopping malls: a "distracted mode of reception" prevails.

In addition, such halfhearted engagement could be seen among local visitors, too. Much has been already written about the role of museums in their birth as major organs for the "instruction and edification of the general masses" and enactment of certain values and tastes (Bennett 6). This has been done not only by careful selection of collections, but also by specific itineraries that guides spectators in terms of Bennett's "organized walk" or Duncan's "ritualistic

[34] Foucault's theory on the relationship of power and knowledge, and surveillance system in the modern politics is a large influence in the interpretation of the modern museum as a regulating institution that developed along with concept of asylum, prison, school and etc. Bennett interprets the museum as "exhibitionary complex" not only to improve and teach the general public, but also regulate and discipline the masses. See Bennett, and more in Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment* and *History of Sexuality*.

walk." Indeed, the symbolic status of the Hermitage Museum does not dwindle, but low engagement and performances by the uninterested public are widespread concerns for all the traditional museums. On the day of my arrival at St. Petersburg in 2017, I engaged in conversation with a young Uber driver, who proudly introduced the city as full of culture and museums. But he soon confessed that he himself rarely visits any museum. But he "recently (*nedavno*)" visited the Hermitage with a girl. Obviously, the museum serves as one of the romantic date spots in the city center, while careful engagement with objects and space are of the secondary importance.

In the realm of spectatorship, the watching experience of Sokurov's *Russian Ark* could guide viewers' gazes, re-directing them to specific settings in the museum. The film introduces diverse narratives to the paintings, allegorical and religious reading, aesthetic contemplation, and spiritual experiences. In this sense, the criticism on the film as an instructed guide to the Hermitage is correct. When the film was premiered at the Hermitage Museum at night through 27th and 28th of May in 2003, viewers who finished watching the film left the theater and newly experienced their passages through the museum. Particularly considering that the festival and the special opening of the night museum are an experience of conviviality, the film experience and its reflective gaze could be taken back to the museum space and artefacts. During perambulation, the museum takes cinema viewers immediately back to the visitor's position: the cinematic experience turns into the visual experience, now accompanied with physical experiences. After watching the film, the distracted mode of reception changes into a mediated experience with allusions to historical imaginations. Similar to the eternal paintings, crossing the painting frames and being transported into the cinematic museum, viewers' experience crosses the screen frame and move into the physical museum space. Fresh memories of the film easily transform into body movement,

connecting the reel space and real space. This mediated experience could also be expanded for those who watched the film and came to the museum.

In addition, it is significant that the cinematic journey ends with the space with which the museum itinerary had begun. The scene of the descending crowd in the Jordan Staircase would be connected to the physical museum visit, since it is the main entrance of the museum: when the camera swiftly pulls back and the crowd walk towards screen, viewers experience becoming of a visitor, who has just passed the security at the threshold of the main entrance and stands in front of the Jordan Staircase, already full of other visitors.

Then, in the final shot, the camera turns toward the window and zooms up a murky image of the flooded river. It becomes a flat image, which fills the whole screen, made from digital post-production. Betraying that it is the flat screen spectators are watching, the film indicates the threshold status in their viewing. After a "rehearsal for sacred uptake," viewers are "prepared to embark on a potential second life" in a "more conscious state" (Condee, "Endstate and Allegory" 189).

When *Russian Ark* premiered at Cannes in 2002 and shown at the Hermitage as a part of the celebration of the city's birth in 2003, the Russian press was not favorable to the film, challenging the director's nationalistic mystical view of Russian culture, the nostalgic attitudes toward pre-Soviet history, and the sacralization of the museum space. The tercentenary celebration was accompanied by the criticisms and uneasiness of local intellectuals: the epithet "cultural capital" was often used with irony: the celebratory events were regarded as an ostentatious and pompous showcase for the Putin government to attract foreign investors and tourists, rather than as a festival for the local community. Some intellectual circles expressed their worries about whether the city would remain an open-air museum without development (Boym; Norris;

Hellberg-Hirn). This nuance could be also found in *Russian Ark*, when de Custine encounters post-Soviet guests in the small Italian skylight hall: he mentions formaldehyde, used in embalming human or animal remains, which questions the issue of preservation and the mummification of the museum and city.

In this atmosphere, the auteur's film, embedded with conservative ideology, was met by cautions about its dangerous national mythmaking that bore similarity with the newly arising government. The conservative cinema aesthetics without cuts, achieved by the most advanced technology of the time and brilliant choreography, sanctified the museum as the eternal temple of Russian souls, an outdated concept for twenty-first century museum practices. Also, the theatricalized version of Russian history and culture with its paradoxical relationship with the European culture is reportedly a "bad export version of Russia" (Kudriatsev).

Yet, with two decades past and the museum's encyclopedic expansion, the film could be regarded as a turning point of the early 2000s, at the threshold moment of Putin's new government and the end of imperial nostalgia in combination with the negation of the Soviet history. Sokurov revives the museum frame as a sacred temple of eternity and simultaneously embodies a frame of the metaphor that represents the glories and sacrifices of St. Petersburg and Russia, using the repetitive narratives captured in the museum architecture and dazzling cinematic techniques. The city legend that St. Petersburg was built on bones overlaps with the history of the Hermitage Museum, imbued with the blood of the twentieth century. Having been a product and, at the same time, a producer of power, it becomes an integral part of the city by sharing its fate with the city and citizens through the repetitive discourses on history and mythology of all the sufferings and hardship. Therefore, the symbolic geography of the Hermitage expands not only to the city, Russia, the imperial history, but also of the turbulent twentieth century and human sacrifices for world art,

standing as a synecdoche and metaphor for bigger frames of culture and history, which are unraveled through spectatorship of ritualized walk in bodies, as well on screen.

3.0 Making Dostoevskii Memorable in Leningrad/St. Petersburg

In 1997, new statues of Dostoevskii were erected in the two capital cities of Russia. The one in St. Petersburg was near the Memorial Apartment; the other was located in front of the Russian State Library, previously Lenin Library, in Moscow. The Moscow statue was constructed as a part of the celebration of Moscow's 850th anniversary. The prominent location across from the Kremlin marked the writer's central role in the new era. But the location and form of the statue was controversial, like any state-sponsored public project in contemporary urban society. Dostoevskii specialist Liudmila Saraskina strongly disliked the idea of putting it in front of a building carrying the name of Lenin, who had not liked Dostoevskii as an author. Above all, the awkward posture of the depicted figure—slipping off his seat—provided the visual touchstone for calling the statue "a monument to the Russian hemorrhoid" and a "new Russian" who turned his back on the readers in the Library and now faced the Kremlin (Shargorodska; Saraskina 320).

By contrast, the construction of the St. Petersburg Dostoevskii Monument followed a different path. Despite minor conflicts over the location for the statue, the monument was a long-desired project (Krutoiarskii). While the competition for the design of the statue was won in 1989 by sculptor Liubov' Kholina's studio, the project had to wait for years to be erected, due to the socio-economic crisis after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The erection of the Petersburg Monument proceeded peacefully; it was erected in a relatively inconspicuous location, where it was dwarfed by the architectural ensemble around it. On May 30th, 1997, during the monument's unveiling ceremony, then-governor Vladimir Iakovlev introduced the writer as a "very Russian and Petersburg writer" for both "Leningraders and Petersburgers." Thus, Dostoevskii's name is

acknowledged as an indisputably powerful cultural brand representing the city and Russia in the new era.

These two statues offer contrastive means by which to compare the socio-political and cultural atmosphere in the two capital cities in 1990s Russia. Yet, regardless of the differences in the level of controversy, aesthetics, and the propriety of their locations, the erection of these statues indicated Dostoevskii's rise as "a Symbol of the New Russia," as *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* titled an article about these two monuments in the post-Soviet landscape (Shargorodska).

Dostoevskii holds a well-earned place among nineteenth-century Russian writers, and St. Petersburg's Dostoevskii Museum is an indispensable site on the tourist and scholarly maps of the city. The memorialization of Dostoevskii was embodied in the physical fabric of Petersburg as the city began to reconstruct its local identity against the emergent Moscow-centric ideology of the late-Soviet and post-Soviet periods. In this regard, Dostoevskii's special position in cultural politics was far more than matter of his genius: in cultural politics, Soviet amnesia and the enduring Russo-Soviet need for "lived literature," competed with each other, sometimes devaluating his significance and at other times elevating him to the position of the writer who most intensely allows the readers to experience his life and literature. Dostoevskii himself enjoys a meta-status, communicating more about Russian history and St. Petersburg's urban life and memory landscapes than his "mere" works alone, similar to—indeed, part of—the meta-status of the Petersburg text.

Dostoevskii has been regarded as a "genuine" Petersburg writer by virtue of his significant contribution to the mystical image of St. Petersburg. If the Hermitage State Museum and its history are products of imperial and national discourses, the Dostoevskii memorial sites were shaped and formalized by his writings reflecting the dark side of the rapidly-developing metropolis and the local discourses that developed to keep its local identity throughout the twentieth-century. Both

museum discourses—that of the Hermitage and of the Dostoevskii sites—are deeply engaged with suffering and hardship in the city and national history; however, the Dostoevskii memorial sites engage significantly more with the Moscow-Petersburg and history-lived experience binaries. The establishment of Dostoevskii memorial sites stands out as an episode in which Petersburg's aspiration to take back priority of his commemoration from Moscow is emphasized in a recuperation of local and national heritage. Moreover, the walking tour, connecting Dostoevskii memorial sites, highlights a shift in the other binary of the Petersburg mythology by constructing an alternative historical experience of the nineteenth-century city and the twenty-first century urban stroll in everyday life.

Drawing on the semiotics of Lotman, Buckler has pointed out that the Petersburg mythology was originally developed in order to make up for the city's "lack of historicity" (127). Nineteenth-century writers, accepting the official rhetoric of the city as a great human achievement and its lore as a ghostly, apocalyptic city, developed and elevated Petersburg's polarized mythology into the classic text. Those texts were later grouped together in the 1970s as the "Petersburg text" by Toporov. The Petersburg text, which Toporov used as an example to define the symbolic structure of the supertext, generally refers to a group of texts in which the city creates a specific atmosphere and itself plays a pivotal role. Similar imageries and lexical motifs shared by the texts strongly influenced the general perception of the city and became fixed in interpretations of Petersburg as the unique characteristics defining the whole city.

In the three hundred years of the city's existence, Petersburg's urban narratives became more complex as they assimilated the turbulent and multidimensional history of the twentieth century. With this in view, recent Russian and foreign scholarship has challenged the Petersburg text, the idea of the literary city as a single symbolic cultural organism. Yet the Petersburg text

still has a powerful influence on the image of St. Petersburg. The diverse media that deal with St. Petersburg, where the city is simultaneously the object of research and the object of admiration, are unlikely to avoid references to the Petersburg text.

In the post-Soviet years, the Petersburg text continues to cast its shadow, as people invest the new landscape with new values. The Memorial Apartments, dedicated to the literary writers, are scattered throughout the city. But three names in particular dominate the physical cityscape: Pushkin, Dostoevskii, and Akhmatova.[35] Their memorial apartments are the most visited literary sites for Petersburg visitors, as well as for school children.[36] Since the city did not undergo massive reconstructions, as did Moscow in the Soviet years, the city fabric preserves the architecture, small streets, and topographical names of the past, maintaining their functions as repositories of narratives. Along with the continuous tradition of erecting plaques commemorating historic figures

[35] Gogol''s works play a pivotal role in creating an imagined landscape of the city. Yet, the absence of a memorial museum creates a vacuum in marking a sign in the physical fabric of the city. Instead, the statue of Gogol' is always crowded with visitors and tourists, above all thanks to its location near Petersburg's main street, Nevskii Prospect, which serves as both synedoche and metaphor for the phantasmagorical modern city in Gogol''s *Petersburg Tales*. The monument was erected in 1997 on Malaia Koniushennaia, a pedestrian zone connected to Nevskii Prospect, which is a "mandatory" walking place for visitors, arranged as one whole historic site that stretches from the Palace Square to the Moscow train station. In the mid-2000s, there was an initiative promoting a project to construct a memorial museum for Gogol' in St. Petersburg for the upcoming two-hundredth anniversary of his birth. It was not realized, due to a lack of funding and a lack of "authentic" materials relating to Gogol' (Paikov). Instead, a small memorial flat, consisting of a single room with materials related to his biography and works, opened in 2008 on Malaia Koniushennaia Street, where his monument stands ("Na Maloi Koniushennoi otkrylsia muzei Gogolia").

[36] According to the 2016 ranking of the museums in Russia, published by the Ministry of Culture, the Pushkin Museum had 383 thousand visitors, while the Dostoevskii and the Akhmatova respectively had 65.5 and 61.6 thousand ("Reiting muzeev Rossii"). Based on reviews in Google and TripAdvisor website, the Pushkin received most reviews, while the Akhmatova and Dostoevskii are competing for the second place. Meanwhile, the Akhmatova was the most recommended literary museum among TripAdvisor visitors as of November 2019.

and events from the Soviet years, post-Soviet monuments featuring writers have been erected and have become landmarks for tourists and residents alike.

Pushkin, as the father of modern Russian literature, earned an incomparably high status, notably marked by Dostoevskii's speech at the unveiling of the Pushkin Monument in Moscow in 1880; the 1937 Great Jubilee in the Stalin period reinforced Pushkin's status. As Clark wrote about the 1921 celebrations of Pushkin's jubilee, if Dostoevskii's anniversary gave rise to "memorable interpretive scholarship and debates among the intelligentsia," the Pushkin anniversary worked to "institutionalize the writer" (158-59). By 1924, as the state took responsibility for hosting the celebrations, the principal venue shifted to Moscow, even as the Pushkin Memorial Museum in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) was opened to the public in 1925 and became a state museum in 1927. The writer's fame ultimately became a cause for a major official campaign, which framed him in the 1930s as "national" and "communist" under the Stalin regime.[37]

In contrast to Pushkin's national status, the unique popularity of the Dostoevskii Museum can be considered in the context of the period when St. Petersburg/Leningrad reconstructed its local identity with site-specificity in reaction to the Moscow-centric ideology in the late-Soviet years.[38]

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[37] For more about how the 1937 Pushkin Jubilee was organized as a state project within the Stalinist project, see Sandler and Platt.

[38] Yet, citizens' attitude toward Dostoevskii is far cry from that toward Peter the Great or the great poet Pushkin, possibly due to the depressing atmosphere of his works and his hatred towards the non-Russian city. An interesting episode where the locals' preferences among these figures could be observed is the most recent project "Great Names of Russia." In this project, initiated by the president of Russia, the Russian airports were formally named after national heroes in December 2018. While the locals' top three preferences in the online vote included Peter the Great, Pushkin, and Aleksandr Nevskii, Pulkovo Airport ended up receiving the name of Dostoevskii, yielding the name of Peter to the Voronezh Airport. While people doubt whether this writer is an appropriate figure to represent the airport facility, as well as doubting the whole meaning of the federal project, online bloggers began to make a joke of it: people began to call for renaming the business lounges to "The Possessed" and "Idiots," the public terminal to "Humiliated

3.1 Revival of Local Memory

Considering the importance of St. Petersburg in Dostoevskii's life and works, a memorial museum in the city came into existence late: only in 1971, far later than the 1928 opening of his Moscow Memorial Museum, which was established in the Mariinskaia Hospital at the edge of the city, where Dostoevskii's father had worked as a doctor. Dostoevskii spent his childhood in the left wing of the hospital until he entered the Engineering School of the Russian Army at the age of sixteen. The archives located in the Russian Historical Museum (Moscow), to which the writer's widow Anna Grigorievna left his archives, formed the basis for the new museum. Until 1971, the Moscow site was the only museum dedicated to Dostoevskii on Soviet territory. The official decision to build the St. Petersburg museum was made in 1968. It was one of the most important moments in the history of Dostoevskii reception in the twentieth century.

In the first half of the Soviet years, Dostoevskii and his works were not widely promoted to the public, unlike works by other major Russian writers, principally Pushkin, Gogol', Tolstoi, and Gor'kii. The Soviet intelligentsia had an ambivalent relationship with the writer, whose religious and anti-revolutionary philosophy, deeply rooted in his works, could hardly be fitted into the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Nevertheless, in November 1929, Anatolii Lunacharskii, the first Soviet Commissar of Education, gave the inaugural speech at the literary meeting dedicated to Dostoevskii studies, noting that "in some cases, his works are harmful, but it does not mean that his works should be banned from the public library." Also, purely academic discussion of his novels continued, while Dostoevskii' reception fluctuated, reflecting shifting

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and Insulted," and the security checkpoint to "Crime and Punishment" (D. Ivanov). Eventually, the Pulkovo Airport decided to keep its original name, respecting the historicity of the name Pulkovo.

Party policy (Seduro; Pachmuss). Vasilii Fedorov's film *House of the Dead* (*Mertvyi dom* [1932]) reflects efforts to bring Dostoevskii into the Soviet system by portraying this conservative writer as a personality who was torn between revolutionary ideas and the dictatorial (official) pressure of religious and imperial ideas.

But the situation changed in the 1930s. Under Stalin's ideologically driven cultural politics, the name of Dostoevskii disappeared from school curricula (Ponomarev). Gor'kii criticized the writer at the 1934 Writer's Congress, where the doctrine of Socialist Realism was confirmed as the sole methodology for Soviet art. The first volume of *The Possessed* (*Besy* [1872]), published separately in 1934, where the writer's conservative ideology is inextricable from his anti-revolutionary thoughts, was ordered destroyed, and until Perestroika, it could be published only in the collected works. The short thaw period during the WWII allowed a Dostoevskii boom, only to be suspended with the beginning of Zhdanovism, which curtailed Soviet studies on Dostoevskii.

Moreover, in Moscow the Dostoevskii Monument, which had stood since 1918 on Tsvetnoi Bulvar' in the city center, was relocated in 1936 during the massive reconstruction to a comparatively remote place in the Moscow memorial museum.[39] While the museum might be considered an appropriate place to house a monument, its relocation meant that this writer was no longer visible in the bustling, central area of Moscow.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the socio-political atmosphere began to change: Khrushchev's era brought some limited economic, socio-political, and cultural improvements, which allowed some freedom in the media and helped create a more liberal mindset for the young generation of the sixties (*shestidesiatniki*). In this liberated atmosphere, the names of poets and writers

[39] Currently, the museum is easily accessible by metro; the nearest subway station Dostoevskaia, which began construction in the 1990s, but opened only in 2010, ceremoniously marked his name on the Moscow map so that this historic site is immediately visible.

condemned as anti-Soviet a couple of decades earlier reentered the public image of Petersburg. The young artists held meetings in the house of Anna Akhmatova, the only survivor among the Silver Age poets of the Stalin period and World War II, cultivating nostalgia for a pre-Soviet St. Petersburg. The seventy-fifth anniversary of Dostoevskii's death in 1956 marked a turnaround in Dostoevskii criticism, which resumed his vindication. The anniversary date was extensively commemorated, and the Moscow Museum was expanded to occupy a whole flat instead of two rooms. A new memorial plaque appeared in Dostoevskii's last apartment, where the Memorial Apartment would be constructed.[40]

As the 150th anniversary of Dostoevskii's birth approached, the Pushkin House began to prepare to publish a full edition of his collected works with detailed commentaries for the first time in Soviet history (Arkhipova). A vast quantity of articles on the writer was published in 1971; among them appeared articles that "avoided the superficial ideological argument" that would try to fit him into the Marxist-Leninist theses, a tendency of characteristic of Soviet criticism (Seduro 376). Toporov's famous article creating the concept of the Petersburg text was written in this period.[41] Not only was the return of Dostoevskii's name into official discourse a major step forward in Soviet literary history, but the establishment of the Dostoevskii Museum in Leningrad could be understood in association with Leningrad's local identity, which had been suppressed and shadowed by the hypertrophic, futuristic conceptualization of Moscow under communist ideology.

[40] In 1909, the first plaque was installed by permission of the City Council to memorialize the writer's death. It was replaced by the current one in 1956 (Ashimbaeva and Tikhomirov 19).

[41] The term "Petersburg text" first appeared in "On Dostoevsky's Poetics and Archaic Patterns of Mythological Thought (*O strukture romana Dostoevskogo v sviazi s arkhaichnymi skhemami mifologicheskogo myshleniia*)" in *Structure of Texts and Semiotics of Culture*, published in 1973. The article that elaborates the term, "Petersburg and Petersburg text of Russian Literature (*Peterburg i peterburgskii tekst russkoi literatury*)," written in 1971, was published in 1984 in *Semiotika goroda i gorodskoi kul'tury Peterburg*.

In the Khrushchev years, *kraevedenie*, often translated as "local studies" or "regional studies," began to arise in the form of massive civic movements that included not only educated elites and professionals, but also amateurs and enthusiasts, particularly concerning history and urban planning. Aleksandr Kobak, one of the leading activists of the period, later claimed these movements bore the characteristics of anti-communism.[42] But from the Party's point of view, civic activities clinging to conservative aesthetics in protecting local heritage were considered not so harmful. For example, in St. Petersburg, the non-state All-Russian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments (VOOPlik) was founded in 1965 with government permission. The large-scale demolition of churches and old buildings for the reconstruction of the city in the Khrushchev years fostered a reactive sentiment for the preservation of the past. At the same time, preservationism served as a convenient outlet for the expression of anti-centrist sentiments against official cultural policies, which tended to exclude everyone except officials and professional planners. By anchoring actions in physical resonances to the past, local residents created an inseparable link between place and people, forming a city identity that could be applied to themselves as one whole community.[43] In this sense, the reconstruction of Dostoevskii's heritage has had an intimate relationship with the city's atmosphere, where the young generation dreamed of a pre-Soviet Petersburg, and with the city's history, which is anchored not just in ideology or

[42] Kobak's interview on Tat'iana Selikhova's television program *Twilight of a New Era* (*Sumerki novogo veka*) documented the post-Soviet destruction of the historic architecture in St. Petersburg. The documentary was criticized by then-mayor Valentina Matvienko and disappeared from state television. Currently, it can be accessed on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=hT9jxs22ul0.

[43] Regardless of the fact that many Leningrad residents were immigrants from other cities and provinces, the local identity and pride are shared by all the people. In Sergei Minaev's novel *Souless* (*Dukhless* [2006]), the protagonist points out the irony that Peterburg's "spiritual loftiness" as "the former capital city" as opposed to Moscow is infectious even to those who came from provinces. His friend, who takes a pride and sympathy in the city history like a native, had actually come to St. Petersburg only three years earlier (61-62).

literary tradition but in its physical fabric. The reconstruction aimed to protect the city's heritage and local pride, which was suppressed under the Stalinist period.

In this vein, the writer's grandson Andrei Dostoevskii asserted the necessity of a museum in Leningrad on account of the writer's intimate connection with the city and local people. Until the official decision to build the museum was made in 1968 by the City Council of Leningrad, he sent several letters to the administrative body to advocate for the museum.[44] In a response to an official letter that questioned the necessity of a second museum, he criticized bureaucrats for their laziness and ignorance of the cultural inheritance of the city and strongly emphasized the importance of commemorating the writer in Leningrad.

> "Leningrad must take back its prior right" to correctly serve Dostoevskii's legacy and preserve the sacred memory of Dostoevskii [...] otherwise, only Moscow will be able to remember and celebrate the Petersburger Dostoevskii. […] It is unfair treatment to "our writer." […] Soviet citizens want the rightful remembrance for Dostoevskii: for many, Dostoevskii in Moscow is totally an unpredicted phenomenon![45] [...] There are not many signs of memories of Dostoevskii in the city. Many pass by his house and look for any signs of him, which are non-existent. [46] [...] The most Petersburg of all men is not commemorated appropriately in Leningrad, his "native city." Because of this incomplete cultural project, Leningrad has endured a great loss, which causes widespread disappointment.[47]

Ashimbaeva and Tikhomirov note that the opening of the museum was a long-awaited and rightful offering to Dostoevskii's memory (18).[48] The narratives of the museum construction commonly emphasized "people" and their everyday lives. At the time of its establishment, a local newspaper highlighted that the house is located in the midst of people's everyday lives: "you have

[44] TsGali F. 85 Op. 1 D. 56 p.1, St. Petersburg, Russia.
[45] Ibid. pp. 5-7.
[46] Ibid. p. 53.
[47] Ibid. pp. 70-77.
[48] The Moscow Museum staff fully supported another Dostoevskii Museum in Leningrad; they affirmed the necessity of a new museum in the city where the writer's name itself and his works represent the city (Personal interview with Ashimbaeva, May 2017).

passed by this house more than once. You saw the façade of the house […]" (Metlitskii, "Rozhdenie muzeia"). The article, which was published on the opening day of the museum, starts by indicating that the long-awaited day for Leningraders has finally come (Metlitskii, "Zdes' zhil Dostoevskii"). Ordinary people's enthusiasm and support for the museum were always a key component in the museum narratives, since—almost eighty years after the writer's death—nothing had remained in Dostoevskii's original flat; only the building itself remained. According to the museum director, Natal'ia Ashimbaeva, the newspaper and museum staff received random calls about furniture that had reportedly once belonged to Dostoevskii.[49] No matter whether such information was correct or not, the attention and participation of ordinary people in making the museum was consistently underscored.

In addition, in the 1980s the Dostoevskii Museum served as a venue for Leningrad writers. Club-81, the Leningrad unofficial writers' club, was set up in March 1981. Unofficial, underground literature and culture, developed throughout the sixties and seventies, partially received official recognition.[50] Club-81, sanctioned and sponsored by the KGB, held regular meetings in the Dostoevskii Museum, creating a spatial dialogue between the nineteenth-century Petersburg writer and the late-twentieth-century Leningrad writers. In this vein, the museum became an official place for intellectual freedom among local writers.

[49] Personal interview with Ashimbaeva, 31 May 2017.
[50] See Shneiderman for history about legalizing unofficial writers.

3.2 Local Memory into Sacred Memory

The creation of a museum space to commemorate, preserve and experience literary memories—indeed, to construct a whole physical space for memories—was understood to be only possible at a specific local site. In the late Soviet years, a Leningrad guidebook titled *Literary Memorial Places of Leningrad* (*Literaturnye pamiatnye mesta Leningrada* [1959, 1976]) displayed canonized routes for reading the cityscape connecting important places to each writer: in the 1959 edition, the chapter on Dostoevskii leads visitors to his grave in the cemetery, while in 1976, the pilgrimage centers around his last apartment, the memorial museum. Graves and memorial house museums are both placeholders for the loss of bodies that once existed and places to mourn the permanent absence of the genius. But, while cemeteries evoke the sentimental emotions of eternal loss, emphasizing the unbridgeable gap of the two temporalities of the deceased and the visitors, memorial apartments contrive to disguise the loss behind the lived-in setting, as if it were frozen in time.

Similar to the setting of the Pushkin Memorial Apartment and other memorial museums that followed later, this lived-in setting of the Dostoevskii Museum, driven by "maniacal empiricism," offers a framework outside of chronological time (Kelly, *Remembering* 198). The flat is set with a few objects that once belonged to Dostoevskii and period pieces of furniture similar to those once present, attempting to create a metaphoric space that symbolizes the writer and his time, which was made possible by the detailed, meticulous work of reconstruction and the collection of period furniture from archives, antique shops, and donors (Fedorenko). The apartment museum is intended to look mundane and natural, as if the original resident of the apartment had just left the house to run a quick errand. The theatrical setting of the objects allows the guides to offer anecdotes attached to each object, both authentic and periodic pieces, such as Dostoevskii's

stylish hat, Anna Grigorievna's account book and the rocking horse for their children (figure 5).[51] The museum setting tries to portray the writer's humble, everyday life as a human being, rather than a great figure, as the narratives unfold about Dostoevskii's financial difficulties, forcing him to write, and the tea-drinking habit he developed to stay awake in consequence. While the site of the museum is defined as a secular sanctuary, visitors' deep engagements with the writer's humble, everyday life allows them to de-sanctify the myth of the great figure.

Figure 5 Displays at Dostoevskii Memorial Apartment: Hat, Rocking Horse, Anna Grigorievna's Table

Yet, similar to what Sandler and Platt note about dual temporalities in the Pushkin Apartment, it is impossible to not notice the irrevocable loss of the writer Dostoevskii as well. The

[51] Nina Popova, the former director of the Pushkin Memorial Museum on the Moika, explains that its museum setting was based on a triad: historical documentation, original possessions, and the devices of a theater director. The triad operates in most of the other memorial museums for historic figures in Russia.

last room of his study in the tour, constructed as an exact replica down to the copy of the Sistine Madonna, comprises the most important part in the museum narrative.[52] This space symbolizes the final stage of his biography, where his final work was done and his life was completed; thus, it was labelled as "the most sacred place in the sacred" (Kholshevnikova). Random entry is prohibited, which enhances the sacredness. The clock in the study is stopped at the hour of Dostoevskii's death. During my visit in 2017, the voice of my enthusiastic guide immediately calmed down on approaching the last room and conveyed a mournful tone. His death mask is strategically displayed on the other side of the museum across the flat, dedicated to the chronological narratives of his literary life, so that his death can be seen as a mere absence from his home. But visitors cannot avoid the "virtual experience of a ghostly past," which culminates with "the awareness of being stranded in the present" (Platt 54).

In this sense, the Moscow Museum works better at retaining the illusion of immortality as the display focuses on his earlier life until the age of sixteen: the flat looks like the one the Dostoevskii brothers have just left for Petersburg. The guidebook, as well as my experience of the guide's tour in 2017, mostly describes family episodes of an ordinary boy who grew up to be a genius through reading and participating in family concerts, making (possible) references to his earlier life in his literary works (Ponomareva). The tour ends with a solemn remark about the pen that Dostoevskii used to write *The Karamazov Brothers*, which is displayed at the end of the long empty corridor, as if this corridor spatially symbolizes the long time span between his residence in the Moscow flat and his final days of writing in St. Petersburg. But the whole display does not evoke his death.

[52] After Dostoevskii's death, Anna Grigorievna invited the photographer V. Taube to photograph the cabinet in 1881. The current interior of the cabinet is a meticulous reproduction, based on this photograph. See Ashimbaeva and Biron.

Meanwhile, the Petersburg Apartment is similar to a part of a pilgrimage, which reminds visitors of the loss of the great figure of nineteenth century Petersburg. Based on the visitors' reviews on Google and TripAdvisor, most of them recognize the apartment as a reconstruction with period furniture. But, in this vein, they more fully appreciate the few authentic objects, displayed in glass, and people's meticulous labor on the reconstruction.[53] More emphasis is given to the nineteenth century setting of the apartment, as if they experience a chronological leap. Yet, such a setting is not uncommon among the other Russian memorial museums. What many reviewers love and emphasize as unique is the location itself, far from the main tourist circuit, in contrast to the aristocrats' glamorous architecture. Visitors especially appreciate the genuine St. Petersburg atmosphere in the neighborhood: Vladimir Church, which they recommend since Dostoevskii had often visited it, and Kuznechnyi Market, highly spoken of by foreign tourists.

The location of the museum has been highlighted since the opening of the museum and the Dostoevskii Monument, in Vladimir Square, one block away from the museum. Architect and graphic artist Boris Kostygov, in a 1991 drawing, pointed out that Vladimir Square is distinguished by everyday-ness (*bytovizm*), compared to the other locations, which were candidates for the future monument.[54]

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[53] I have specifically chosen these two sites, since they are visited by travelers from all over the world, which include English-speakers, Italians, French, Spanish, Swedish, Chinese, Japanese, etc. But, at the same time, I also found comments from Petersburg residents.

[54] Kostygov later published the collection of his graphic works for Dostoevskii's *Idiot* and *Crime and Punishment*. His illustrations continue the legacy of 1910s Petersburg graphics in the World of Art movement, led by Mstislav Dobuzhinskii and Aleksandr Benois. Counter to anticlassical sentiment, the two leading artists contributed to the revival of Neoclassical aesthetics. The preservationist movement, with a link to the World of Art, has exerted an influence upon the general imagery of the Petersburg landscape in the 20th century, including the imagery that Antsiferov describes. See Chapter Two in Johnson and Chapter Two in Clark.

In the ceremony opening the Dostoevskii Monument in Vladimir Square in 1997, the writer Andrei Bitov delivered a speech in which he emphasized the importance of the event's location between "church and market." It represents not only Dostoevskii's subjects, but also the new rising values in the 1990s in the post-Soviet Russia. This monument, adjacent to the subway station and the market, serves not only as a photography spot for visitors, but also as a meeting place for residents and a place where commuters can grab coffee and pies from a food truck on the way to work or home (figures 6). Without doubt, this location itself was a risk. Fewer visitors, compared to the other places near Nevskii Prospect, is only the second concern. More importantly, since it is located beside the subway station and the market, vendors, mostly old women, often sell vegetables and flowers along the walls of the museum. The director said that she requested them in vain not to do this. While the juxtaposition of the sacred shrine of the pilgrimage alongside commuters, vendors, people standing and chatting evokes a jarring effect, visitors appreciate the surroundings as a continuation of Dostoevskii's literary landscape featuring real people and their sufferings. Their reading triggers a fusion of fictional and physical landscapes, and the present and the past. Visitors have to integrate the three different landscapes: the imagined landscape described in Dostoevskii's works, the historical landscape of the nineteenth century, and the present landscape that they visually perceive.

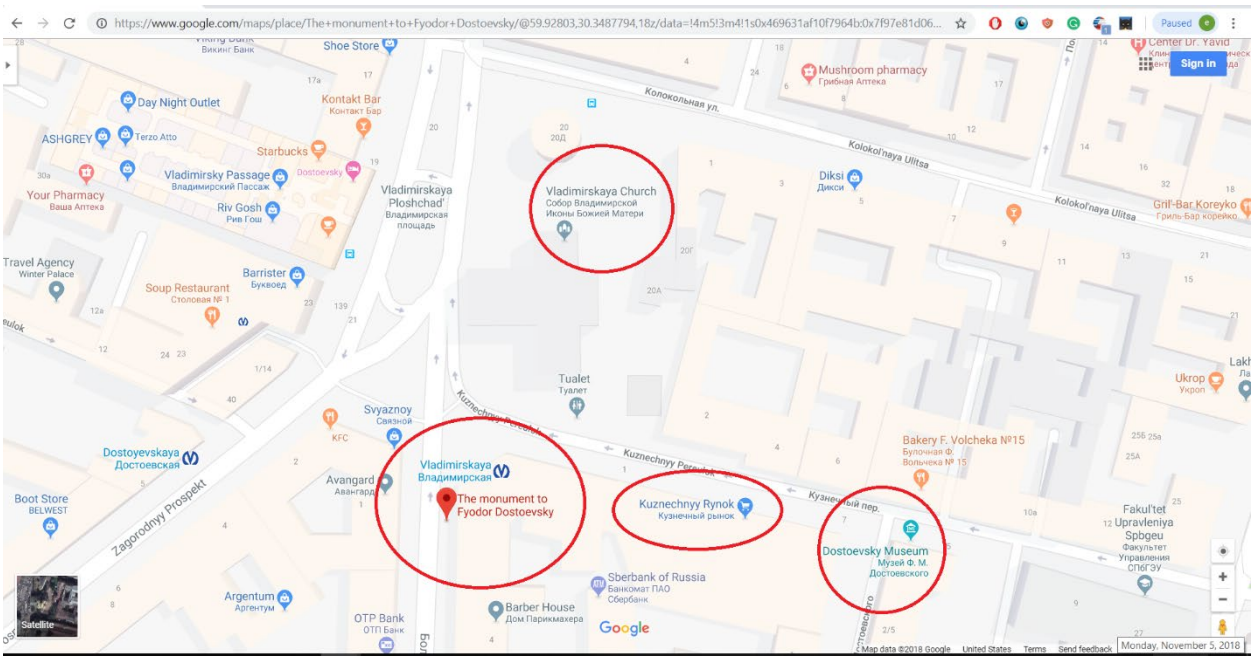

Figure 6 (From Up to Down, Left to Right) Vladimir Church, the Monument to Dostoevskii and the Metro Station Vladimirskaia, Kuznechnyi Market, and Dostoevskii Museum on Google Maps

3.3 Performance of Cultural Memory

Understanding St. Petersburg through literary texts has been shaped by the popular practices of literary tours for more than a century.[55] Antsiferov is a key figure in the theoretical

[55] See more in detail in Buckler, "Armchair Traveling." Literature-themed guide tours hearken back to the nineteenth century: the 1838 book *Strolls with Children around St. Petersburg and Its Environs* by V. Burianov and the 1898 guidebook *The Sights of St. Petersburg: Reading for the Folk* by D. N. Loman guide the city through a "dense textual cultural thicket" (Buckler 85). Burianov's guide book, which contained frequent citations from Aleksandr Pushkin's verses, asked for pre-required reading of the previous guide books on city history and sights: Aleksandr Bashchutskii's *Panorama* and Pavel Svin'in's *Memorable Sights,* and above all, the writer Nikolai Karamzin's twelve-volume *History of the Russian State*. Also, Loman's book guides visitors to Peter the Great's history, with citations from Pushkin's narrative poem "Bronze Horseman," simultaneously encourages readers to pay a visit to monuments of cultural figures, such as Pushkin, Lomonosov, Gogol', Vasilii Zhukovskii, and Ivan Krylov. But in this chapter, I will begin with the Russian historian Nikolai Antsiferov, whose 1923 book *Dostoevskii's St. Petersburg* shaped the

development of these tours, including the Dostoevskii tour. His book *The Soul of Petersburg* (*Dusha Peterburga* 1922) is a journey in search of the "*genius loci*" in the city fabric that is reflected in literary texts. This effort could be defined as a new way of interpreting St. Petersburg, which was described as the "city of tragic imperialism" after the 1917 Revolution (*Dusha Peterburga* 13). For the author, previous political and social representations of the city, based on imperialism, had lost their legitimacy as a cohesive force. Instead, he adopts another cohesive force to make sense of the cityscape: literature, embedded with mysticism and associated with physical locations. In his essay, the mythical substratum that sustains the Petersburg myth moves from the imperial construction of Peter the Great to the figurative structures of literature. Looking at the evolution of literary images of the city as a reflection of its soul, Antsiferov's city guides attempt to constitute a historical continuity and make a symbiotic connection to the past. He views the city as a cultural organism that bears a personal image with a soul and, thereby, constructs a city myth. In this sense, the literary trails, beginning with Antsiferov and practiced for almost a century, could be understood as Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. In an era when "there is so little memory left" and "there are no longer *milieu de mémoire*, real environments of memory," these walks were intentionally designed to supplement lack of central remembering organs and recuperate a bygone era threatened by oblivion.[56]

Meanwhile, his *Dostoevskii's Petersburg* (*Peterburg Dostoevskogo* [1923]) is more of a technical pedagogical guidebook, grounded in his research into topographical and literary facts; it forms a basis for contemporary literary tours, which follow a structure of visiting specific sites,

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Dostoevskii route. He combined the disciplines of urban studies and literature, making a significant contribution to the creation of the city's unique "personal image" and "aesthetic wholeness" (Stepanov 10).

[56] See Nora.

reciting passages from books, and relating anecdotes from the author's biography. Dostoevskii tours are particularly indebted to his use of specific local sites as a source of literary inspiration and the documentary quality of his writing.[57] Young Dostoevskii, along with many of his contemporaries, worked on feuilletons collectively titled the *Petersburg Chronicle* in the newspaper *The Saint Petersburg Record* in 1847. Such writing allowed him to explore the city as a *flâneur*, taking on the literary persona of a dreamer in the 1840s urban sphere of St. Petersburg, which influenced his later post-exile works in their style and in their theme of the "mysteries of Petersburg" (Fanger 481).[58] According to Toporov, Dostoevskii is considered the "genius designer" of the Petersburg text, an artist who developed his own cityscape in a full-fledged form (Toporov 15).

In the 1930s, despite less attention being paid to Dostoevskii in the official guidebooks, the locations of his sites were marked with brief comments on the tourist maps of 1933 and 1937. *Literary Memorial Places of Leningrad* in 1959 provided information about the Dostoevskii pilgrimage route. Academician Sergei Belov wrote about his excursion in his 1983 manuscript for the Dostoevskii guidebook: he worked on the excursion route for the Dostoevskii tour with the help of the writer's grandson Andrei Dostoevskii, beginning in 1963, and led the excursions for twenty years, inviting many students, workers, and well-known guests, such as Andrei Tarkovskii and Heinrich Böll (Belov 1-2). Co-working with Likhachev, he published the Dostoevskii route in

[57] A visual representation of Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* can be found in Sarah J. Young's project *Mapping St. Petersburg* on the website, www.mappingpetersburg.org/site/?page_id=494. The website offers the literary cartography and describes the use of Petersburg space in Dostoevskii's writing, pinpointing the locations on the map. The research elaborates ambiguities in the 1860s cartography. For more about topographic research referring to the fictional characters, see Likhachev, Dunaeva, and Tikhomirov.

[58] In Dostoevskii's novella "The Landlady (*Khoziaika* [1847])" the narrator writes about the protagonist Ordynov: "more and more he found it pleasing to wander about the streets. He stared at everything like a *flâneur*" ("The Landlady" 266): translation from David McDuff.

The Literary Gazette (*Literaturnaia gazeta*) on June 28, 1976. The literary route for students was also published: Iurii Rakov's *In the Footsteps of Literary Heroes* in 1974.

Currently, visitors may pursue the Dostoevskii route by themselves, since its maps and guides are available in online and offline publications. Some private companies run their own tours, but the paper is based on my experience in 2017 with the Dostoevskii tour conducted by the museum. The Dostoevskii tour is mainly rooted on two focal points: the museum at Vladimir Square and Sennaia Square.[59] They are distinguished from other tourist sites that are surrounded by well-preserved (or well-reconstructed) buildings of heritage as well as expensive eateries and tawdry souvenir shops, such as those on Nevskii Prospect. The locations play a significant role in the Petersburg narratives by highlighting the city's everyday-ness in the past and the present. In this vein, the Dostoevskii tour transforms everyday space into a cultural destination, even as it invests the city with its unique cultural identity. The tour turns Petersburg into an "open-air imaginary museum," but without transforming it into a theme-park, separate from historical context (Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* 58).

[59] Antsiferov introduced the two routes: the Svidrigailov route in the Petrogradskii District and the Raskol'nikov route in the historic center. Since the Petrograskii District has drastically changed and only the tour in the historic center is offered, I will not talk about the Svidrigailov route.

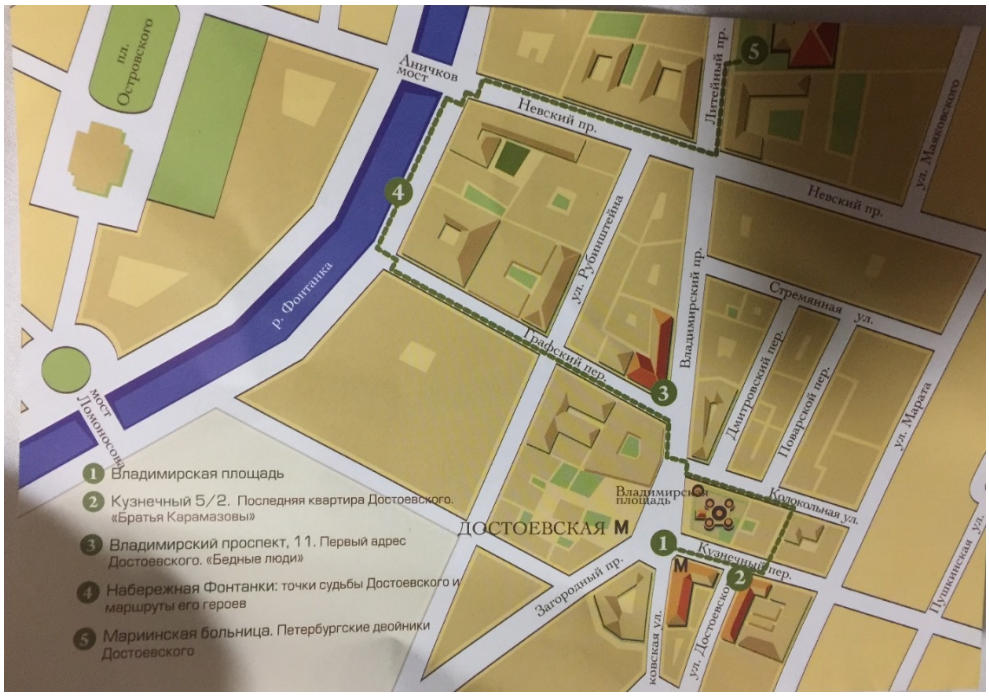

Figure 7 Visitors' Map for the Vladimir Square Route, Distributed at the 2017 Dostoevskii Festival

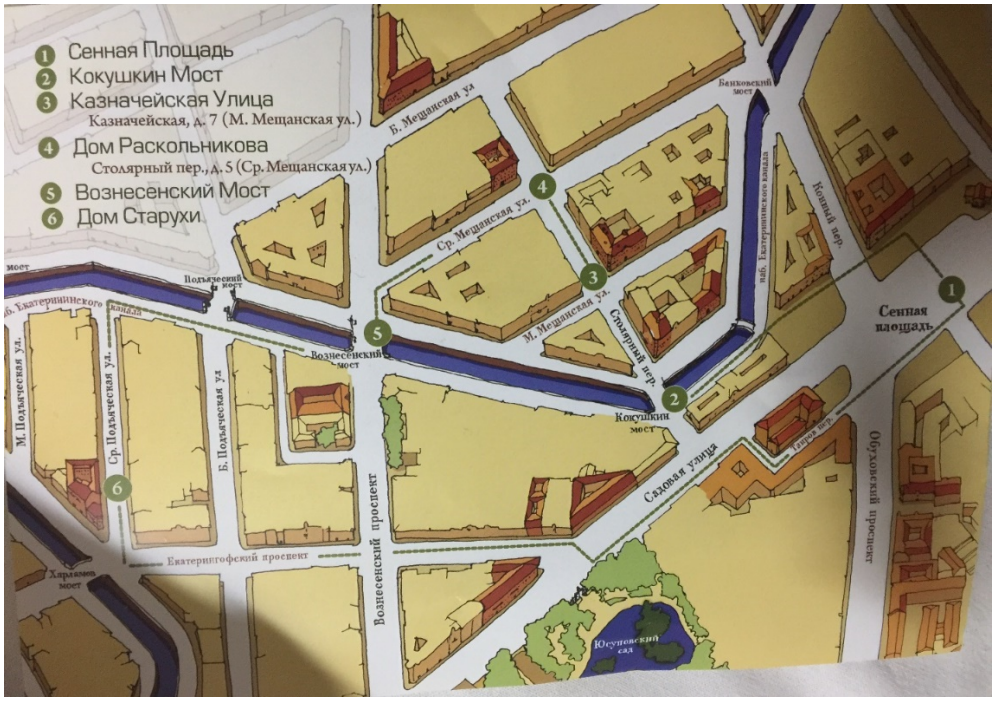

Figure 8 Visitors' Map for the Sennaia Square Route, Distributed at the 2017 Dostoevskii Festival

Known as the Dostoevskii Zone, Sennaia Square represents the dark side of the polarized landscape of the nineteenth-century modern city: backstreets, shabby courtyards, the squalid world of markets for the poor, gambling dens, cheap taverns, and brothels (figure 8). Yet, in the twenty-first century, the Square has transformed itself into a bustling modern square with transportation hubs and shopping malls. Despite a few buildings that survived two centuries, such as the guardhouse where Dostoevskii served three days for the violation of censorship codes, the square rarely evokes the nineteenth century Dostoevskii setting. The contemporary construction of the city signals the place and Dostoevskii's book. Yet, similar to the museum setting, it is not the authenticity that matters, but the "aura of authenticity" (Sandler 76).

The museum guide tried her best to make visitors understand the nineteenth-century Sennaia Square, where Raskol'nikov feverishly rambled and kissed the earth; she used the mural and the map inside the Sennaia Square Metro Station to point out historical incongruities of abundance in the mural since this place is a market for the poor. But the significance of the tour lies not in the development of accurate understanding of the historical landscape, but in the articulation of a complex of imaginative landscape: visitors should bring their personal experience of reading; reconstruct a historical representation of the nineteenth century, given by the guide; and articulate hidden layers of the present landscape at Sennaia. The description of the past shapes the present perception of the city, balancing presence and absence through reimagination. Readers, *flâneur*, and tourists reconstruct the lost past and in doing so recuperate the meaning of Dostoevskii's writings. The literary tour involves toying with absence and presence, and the past and the present.

Such attempts to bring the past into the present can be also seen in the 1994 Exhibition in the Dostoevskii Museum, regarding the selection of an appropriate location for a new Dostoevskii Monument. The exhibition of graphics written by architect and graphic artist Kostygov served the purpose of reimagining the best possible ensemble of a Dostoevskii monument with the surrounding environment. Among the graphics, the illustrations for the potential monument at Sennaia display an effort to bridge the historical gap and create a continuity: Kostygov's imaginative landscape contains the Assumption Church, which was demolished in 1961 during one of the anti-religious campaigns.[60] Despite the insignificance of the church in Dostoevskii's writing, its inclusion in the illustration represents not only a new value in the post-Soviet years but also a whole, ideal past to recuperate. Kostygov, in his comments, emphasized the need to necessarily reconstruct the church along with the monument (figure 9). His illustrations recreate a whole ensemble out of the buildings in a new post-Soviet cityscape, interpenetrating the past cityscapes with the present and making whole the scenery of historical continuity.

[60] The church has been under reconstruction since 2014. The construction site was completely invisible to pedestrians due to the high fence in 2017 when I visited the site.

Figure 9 Kostygov's Sites for Monument: Monument at Sennaia Square

The literary walk in the post-Soviet period serves as a remedy for historical isolation and assists the modern city *flâneur* in peering into the fragmented past: the experience of the physical fabric of the city provokes lost memories of the past like those experienced by the person who roams through the Arcade of the Second Empire in Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*. According to Benjamin, it is the material culture of the city that provides the shared collective spaces where consciousness and the unconscious, past and present, meet (Buse and et al., 52). The re-imagination or reconstruction of the nineteenth-century cityscape bears special significance in the post-Soviet landscape as an effort to bridge the seventy-year gap of Soviet history.

Walking becomes reading the signs and reimagining a continuum between the past and the present and between fiction and history. The Dostoevskii Museum and the literary tour best exemplify how the hypertextual city and extant space are intertwined in the imagery of the city. In the reimagination of visitors, *flâneur,* or tourists*,* biographical and fictional landscapes constantly blur as if Raskol'nikov and Dostoevskii lived in the same space and time. Visitors continue the practice of reading the signs indicating where fictional events (never) occurred over one hundred years ago and where an author's protagonists (never) dwelt. Fictional landscapes have always served as a double to the real topography of St. Petersburg. The site, in turn, makes the fiction present. Iosif Brodskii mentions in his essay "Guide to a Renamed City" that "you can't distinguish in St. Petersburg the fictional from the real" (80). The imagined landscapes captured by the writers are fused with the physical landscape and constitute Petersburg mythology: whether it is called as a soul by Antsiferov or the Petersburg text by Toporov. Near Sennaia Square are located the Raskol'nikov house and the pawnbroker woman's house. On the façade of the Raskol'nikov house is fixed a plaque, which says that "the tragic fates of the people in this part of St. Petersburg served Dostoevskii as the basis for his passionate sermons on good for humankind" (figure 10).[61] Dostoevskii's portrayal of people's tragic fates is inscribed like a memorial, like a witness not only to fiction but also to the history of the city and nation. His narrative is absorbed into the city's turbulent history and its fate. If Toporov's Petersburg text, according to Smirnov, is a "restoration work to reestablish the traditional artistic understanding of Petersburg" in the late Soviet years after decades of suffering tragic imperialism, the Revolutions, and the Leningrad Siege in WWII, then walking the Dostoevskii route becomes a pilgrimage for city-readers to perceive those

[61] The plaque was installed in 1999; this solemn inscription on the Raskol'nikov plaque was written by Likhachev and the writer Daniil A. Granin.

sufferings imposed upon the city and its endurance since Dostoevskii's time (Markovich and Shmid 57).[62]

Figure 10 The Memorial Plaque, Dedicated to Raskol'nikov's House

Moreover, reading is a personal experience while a walking tour is more likely to be engaged in collectively. Performances of the memorial route are practiced by visitors who share a knowledge of and emotional attachment to the site and the past. The shared experience operates as an open-community channel. Through collective repetitions of lived experiences, a series of sites becomes an internalized, social collective memory. The tragedy in people's reading of Dostoevskii's books overlaps with the city's history and expands to the twentieth-century city

[62] According to Smirnov, Toporov's work plays a similar role as works of Andrei Bitov and Iosif Brodskii in the late Soviet years.

fabric, triggering an emotional catharsis in readers. In the post-Soviet years, the Dostoevskii walk serves as one way to communicate with the past and share sentimental emotions for city-readers within a cultural network.

At the same time, the Dostoevskii Museum in St. Petersburg has begun to engage in active promotions to challenge monotonous museum culture and embrace cutting-edge technology and a new paradigm of promoting local heritage: it has held an annual festival on the first of July since 2003, involving multiple walking tours, theater performances, and other cultural activities. This event reflects efforts to keep pace with the present time and involves complex engagements between local residents and tourists in transit. It temporarily mobilizes time frozen in the museum, bringing the existence of the museum up to the surface, while catalyzing human activity and emotional attachment to the specific site and history, which leads to a reliving of the past and reaffirmation of local images and identity.

Figure 11 The Caricature of Dostoevskii on the Dostoevskii Festival Website

In addition, a new image of the writer in the souvenir culture not only revives the past but also enhances such experiences: for example, the kitsch caricatures of Dostoevskii used in the posters and on the website for the annual Dostoevskii Festival on the first Saturday of July. The image of a big-headed and small bodied Dostoevskii creates a sense of intimacy, similar in a way to how the museum narratives try to portray him as an ordinary human being. Unlike his well-known image as solemn, engrossed, and pessimistic, this simplified caricature can be easily transferred onto souvenirs, creating a portable material and memorable brand image. Souvenir culture, prompted by inevitable commodification, helps visitors to trigger memory and enhances intimate perceptions of and their connections to the writer and his space (Hitchcock and Teague; Gordon; Stewart). The souvenir, which "represent 'secondhand' experience" of its owner, "speaks to a context of origin through language of longing," as Stewart puts it (Stewart 135).

Dostoevskii's sites represent local memories secured through his texts, preservationist efforts, and walking practices. The texts and efforts are organized into empirical memory experiences for visitors ready to experience a palimpsest of the urban space, where they might confirm both the literary history they arrive already knowing and the emergent knowledge manifested through fragments of the past embedded in the contemporary landscape. In this way, the Dostoevskii Museum and the walking routes bear vital significance in studying the post-Soviet desire for and remembrance of ideal images of the past. Their revival through visitors' reading of fragments of past landscapes and the shared activities of walking performances enhances historical continuity and a sense of community in St. Petersburg. The key contributions of the writer and his museum reaffirm their unique meta-status in Petersburg narratives, providing definitional roles in the city's identity, which competes against Moscow-centric ideology, and is embodied in a newly visible images in the late-Soviet and post-Soviet period.

4.0 Aesthetic Degradation in the Transitional Period

This chapter observes the virtual cityscape of the 1990s and early 2000s on screen, mainly exploring unique cinematic images of cities in decay and degradation. While the previous chapters mostly focused on the urban landscape in practice, as directly involved with the official or state-sponsored projects to reconstruct the past and therefore a new identity for an upcoming era, this chapter explores the diegetic construction of cityscapes on screen by individual artists, or retrospective reflections of the city in transition. As I selectively explore several films produced in the 1990s, with a particular focus on Aleksei Balabanov's films, I will from time to time refer to the films of other periods. With its focus on images of ruins, decay and degradation, the cityscape of this chapter sets a contrast to the desired or inspired cityscapes of the urban planning practices striving to keep the city intact without any sign of dilapidation.

Balabanov is frequently introduced as a Petersburg director since he mainly worked in Leningrad/St. Petersburg in the Lenfil'm Studio for most of his career, shooting his films mostly in St. Petersburg and its suburban areas. However, this kind of referential geographical literalism or geographical veracity, where the film is discussed in a context of shooting locations, is only of secondary importance in cinematic city. The cinematic capability of "place-making" through *mise-en-scène*, camera movements, and editing surpasses geographical veracity and allows the creation of a unique and distinctive landscape of the city.

The cityscape turns out to be a pile of selective local sites and ruins of a once-presumed modernity. The props and backdrops from the remnants of the past could be understood in connection with Benjamin's concept of "rag picker" and his study on ruins in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*: "allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the realm of

things" (178).[63] Citing the art critic Karl Gielhlow discussing a Dürer print, Benjamin asserts that each detail or fragment is not of organic importance in explaining and defining the whole (174-5). Piling up fragments does not reconstruct a complete truth, the past. The fragment of ruins, which had been aestheticized in the romantic fascination with the phenomenon as a part of totality, can in fact play only a supplementary role in reimagining what has gone before. In this sense, Balabanov's city of *fin-de-siècle* industrialism and modernism, now dilapidated and abandoned, is reminiscent of the obsolete Paris arcade in Benjamin's writing. Like a rag-picker, the filmmaker brings the "refuse" of the city to the fore and exposes it to the screen, without allowing sufficient fragments to reconstruct a complete past or identity, let alone truth in the cinematic world. In this context, Balabanov conjures up an estranged space of an apocalyptic dystopia in his films. His cityscape is often different from what we know empirically. He often defamiliarizes the city by avoiding landmarks, minimizing panorama shots, and inverting the traditional urban perspectives.

But the city mythologies, already embedded in spectators' memories, constitute another layer of narratives, making comments on the places, characters, and plots, as the director clarified that he does "not want to be overly influenced by classics, just informed by them" (Norris, "Memories of Aleksei Balabanov"). Moreover, cinematically empty space can already carry narratives before any event or protagonist imbue its space of certain narrativity. Space that bears no *a priori* relationship with the film's narrative and is rendered merely as a theatrical background not only to suggest a story's authenticity, but also to render up a sense of "place" to viewers

[63] "Rag-picker" is the metaphor that Benjamin used for his textual practice in *The Arcades Project*. Benjamin borrowed this word from Charles Baudelaire. Urban space serves as mnemonics to explain the past and its unfulfilled dreams. Benjamin, writing as a *flâneur*, unearthed and collected the "refuse" and "detritus" in the liminal space of the city, as he learned from Baudelaire's writing. See more in detail "Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism."

familiar with the geography.[64] Therefore, while his city is "everywhere and nowhere," his films are discussed in constant dialogue with the city mythologies and narratives (Kuvshinova 62).

4.1 Aesthetic Degradation in the Cinematic Cityscape

Architecture and cityscapes in film are an indicator of a system or structure of a fictional society: a city in decay, frequently concomitant with abandoned sites and ruins, corresponds to disorder, chaos, and a lack of state authority. Such framing of the living environment is prevalent in the artistic representations of the cityscape in urban dystopian cinema, whether including post-revolutionary films, post-war films and criminal films. These films frequently use abandoned and neglected parts of cities with shabby, crumbling architecture and dirty streets. Their plots center mainly around the dark sides of the cities, where violence and cruelty dominate: dirty courtyards, backstreets, night streets, police stations, and prisons, either set in big cities or provincial ones. Against the backdrop of a crumbling world, protagonists in frustration wander around labyrinth-like city streets.

Images of ruins were also used as a tool to portray the city in transition from the Imperial city to the Soviet one. Citing Viktor Shklovskii's essay about Petersburg in 1921, Polina Barskova indicates that his comparison of the city with ruins in Piranesi's engraving is one of the central devices of the text, used to "create an aesthetic filter between the observer and the painful reality" (695). Using this approach, Andreas Schönle interprets the cult of ruins among the post-

[64] Here, I would like to loosely follow Mark Augé's term in a way of thinking place and space in cinema: "anthropological place" as "space in which inscriptions of the social bond [...] or collective history [...] can be seen" (Auge viii, 42).

revolutionary art as the artists' individual ways of responding to historical trauma: artists, such as Mstislav Dobuhzhinskii, Pavel Shillingovskii, and Anna Ostroumova-Lebedeva, "distanced themselves from the disturbing spectacle of ruination" and "created aesthetic rationale that located beauty in uncontrollable historical changes (*Architecture of Oblivion* 145). In this vein, aesthetic and moral degradation in the portrayal of city lives could be understood as the artists' own aesthetic response to the atmosphere of the 1990s.

The selected films by Balabanov and others discussed in in this chapter were mostly released in the 1990s, with some examples from the late 1980s and the 2000s, and engage with images of urban dystopia in their portrayals of a city in transition from Leningrad to St. Petersburg. A sense of insecurity and uncertainty runs throughout both the narratives and the architectural settings. Above all, postcard images or touristic sites are not dominant on the screen. If a landmark appears, it is no more than an indication of characters' locations, best exemplified in the opening sequence of Aleksei Sakharov's *The Staircase* (*Lestnitsa* [1989]) and the rear shot of the Bronze Horseman in Balabanov's *Brother* (*Brat* [1997]), similar to the Bronze Horseman as seen in the Len'film logo.

Some films continued or adopted the cinematic language of *chernukha*, a popular artistic trend during the perestroika years. An emphasis on sick, ugly, barbaric, and immoral aspects of a society, received as "true to our life," reflected the imminent collapse of the social and economic system during the late perestroika years. Dark, bleak cityscapes and dirty, claustrophobic environments emerged as an appropriate background for a world of violence, cruelties, rape and alcoholism, frequently represented without any resolution (Graham 9; Isakava 202; Horton and Brashinsky 11). Their plots mainly center around crowded communal apartments, dirty courtyards, backstreets, police stations, and prisons. Such gloomy atmosphere and prevalence of death might

resonate with the necrotic images of Evgenii Iufit.[65] His radical cinema in the late 1980s and 1990s captures performances related to decay, violence, and death in black-and-white, avant-garde style.

In addition to citing certain aspects of a *perestroika* aesthetic, the 1990s films reflected their own socio-economic situation, the period of *likhie gody* (wild or tumultuous years), characterized by disturbing and anomalous chaos, created by socio-economic instability. The collapse of the societal system and the vacuum of power blurred the boundary between legal and illegal activities; "lawlessness" was widespread among the officials and on streets, which was followed by dilapidation of infrastructure, corruptions, and crimes (Kotkin 128-89).[66] In particular, the post-Soviet Petersburg earned notorious a nickname as "the capital of crime" in the 1990s, not only due to corruption and street crime, but also because of several high-profile murders, such as the political assassination of Galina Starovoitova, the leader of the party Democratic Russia in 1998.[67]

Popular culture reinforced this infamous reputation by actively embracing the theme of the banditry: the television serials *Streets of Broken Lights* (*Ulitsy razbitykh fonarei*) and *Petersburg*

[65] Evgenii Iufit was an exhibitionist, photographer, and film director, who led the Necrorealist movement and later joined the film company CTW Film Company established by Sergei Sel'ianov, where Balabanov mostly worked. He practiced the "necrophilic themes and images with a superrealism of detail and an irreverent playfulness" in his films, such as *Werewolves Orderlies* (*Sanitary-oborotni* [1984]), *Woodcutter* (*Lesorub* [1985]), *Spring* (*Vesna* [1987]), *Suicide Monsters* (*Vepri suitsida* [1988]). Dobrotvorskii points out that "necrorealism is an 'attitude toward a distorted world,' suffocated by a totalitarian system that still exists, a world of corpses without a soul, a world of walking dead" (Lawton 230-231) See Yurchak more in detail about this movement.

[66] Stephen Kotkin points out that involvement of state officials in business could be rather identified as "pre-corrupt," since corruption presupposes "the prevalence of rule-regulated behaviour, so that regulations are identified and prosecuted" (128).

[67] However, S. Chuikina notes that some politicians and media figures tended to exaggerate the amount of violent crime in the city as a part of campaign against Vladimir Iakovlev, then-Petersburg governor. She cites Afanas'ev's article "Komu vygodno nazyvat' Peterburg «Kriminal'noi stolitsei Rossii»?" in the newspaper *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti* (65).

Bandits (*Peterburgskie bandity*) and Balabanov's film *Brother*, all set in St. Petersburg, enjoyed huge popularity. Notably, *Streets of Broken Light*s produced sixteen seasons and ran for eighteen years after its premiere in 1998. Balabanov's *Brother*, one of the films I will focus on in this chapter, was more than a commercial success. It immediately drew a cult following that made the director and the leading actor Sergei Bodrov Jr. into celebrities. The main protagonist Danila Bagrov instantly became the hero of the 1990s that Russian film audience had long waited for (Solntseva; Dondurei; Lavrent'ev). The generation who spent their youth in the 1990s reportedly cannot imagine this period without referring to the film and its hero (Gusiatinskii).[68] In retrospect, the film has been considered an "ideal illustration of prevailing myth about the *likhie* 1990s (Boiarinov); most of reviewers at *Kinopoisk*, a Russian website on cinematography, name it as a reflecting mirror of 1990s reality.

In this sense, the degradation of the beauty and grandiosity in the cityscape is apparent in the 1990s films in a similar fashion to Dostoevskii's portrayals of nineteenth-century Petersburg. Importantly, the films mostly avoid capturing any well-known glimmering scenery of the city, such as shots of historical landmarks or the beautiful façades along the water. Rather, they focus on the dark sides of the city behind the beautiful façades.

Dmitrii Svetozarov's *Arithmetic of Murder* (*Arifmetika ubiistva* [1991]) begins with a striking opening sequence. The film reveals a dream-like sequence of the city: a wide angle shot of landfill, where spectators can hear the cries of seagulls, is superimposed on a shot of city roofs under gloomy sky. The camera tilts down on the façades of a shabby building with multiple

[68] In 2001, after the release of *Brother 2*, which was accepted with some disappointment, *Iskusstvo Kino* published a series of discussions on the *Brother* films; Gusiatinskii, then an eighteen-year old student in film school, published an essay defending the films from his perspective as a member of the generation that spent its adolescence in the 1990s.

windows, rapidly moves through arched tunnels to the dirty courtyard and enters the door of darkness, which cuts into garbage. Since this thriller-detective film mainly follows the story of investigating a tenant's murder and focuses on the protagonist in wheelchair, most of events takes place inside the claustrophobic communal apartment, filled with animosity among the tenants. Rats dominate and threaten the house; the dilapidated architecture and frequent symbolic image of rats indicate the moral, social, and aesthetic degradation of the represented community.

In Iurii Mamin's *Window to Paris* (*Okno v Parizh* [1993]), St. Petersburg consists of dirty courtyards, gloomy streets, and a cramped, crowded communal apartment, where chickens are running around. The dreary cityscape sets a clear contrast with brightly sunny Paris and the heroine's white, modern apartment. When the heroine accidentally finds herself in St. Petersburg, she wanders around the streets, full of trash, dirt, and bonfires.

In the television serial, *Streets of Broken Light* the plot engages with police officers' investigations of local crimes and their minor conflicts and frustrations. In this context, most of the events in the seasons of the 1990s took place in dirty courtyards and backstreets against the background of dilapidated buildings, as reviewers noted, "from the point of view of a garbage disposal" (qtd. Prokhorova 521). The city is full of bandits, drunkards, and humiliated people. The wintry landscape enhances the depressive and gloomy mood that dominated the city of the 1990s, sometimes making direct citations of the city's cultural mythology, such as Dostoevskii's irrational, depressive world. In the episode *Looking for High-Risk Work* (*Ishchu rabotu s riskom* [1999]), the wealthy man Ugriumov hires Grisha, demobilized from the army, in order to murder his unfaithful wife. They meet three times: at the Bronze Horseman, at the monument to the Decembrists in the Peter and Paul Fortress, and at the abandoned factory. In their first meeting, the camera briefly captures the rear of the Bronze Horseman and tilts down to the shot of Grisha in front of the granite

base of the monument, who briefly looks up the statue before Ugriumov arrives. When they are leaving, Ugriumov casts a furtive glance at the statue as if to check something, then turns around. The scene shows a criminal scheme planned at the city center even in daylight, behind the city authority's back. In their last meeting at an abandoned site with garbage bags, Ugriumov reveals his true evil identity and tries to kill Grisha instead of paying him. When another crime series, *Petersburg Bandits*, was launched in 2000 and depicted a beautiful, visually excessive cityscape as the capital of the Russian Empire, its director Vladimir Bortko pointed out in an interview with Oleg Sul'kin that his portrayal of the city was a reaction to "the visual debasement of Petersburg in *Street of Broken Lights*" (qtd. Prokhorova 521).[69]

If the beauty of the city appears on screen, its significance is depreciated along with the hopeless life or ethical downfall of the protagonists. In Ivan Dykhovichnyi's *Music for December* (*Muzyka dlia dekabria* [1995]), the characters seemingly sustain comfortable lives on the surface, just like the beautiful façades of the buildings in St. Petersburg: the emigrant-artist Larin, who achieved fame abroad; his former lover Anna; her wealthy husband; her daughter Masha; and her daughter's *fiancé* Mitia. Yet, everybody is encountering existential crises in the city of transition. Suffering from nostalgia, Larin arrives in St. Petersburg only to realize its permanent losses. Anna's *novyi russkii* husband after several attempts ends his life by suicide and Anna ends up in the asylum. In the interiors, empty spaces with white walls under repair are everywhere, indicating a period of transition, while the granite banks and the façades are shot at low angle from boats on the river; they are often presented as captured in reflection on the water or on screen of Mitia's art

[69] Each episode features different styles, dependent on directors and the development of the seasons. Especially from the third season, the general atmosphere of the drama changes considerably as city conditions became better in the 2000s. From the eighth season, the camera captures the city in spring and summer more often: police officers wander around the Neva River, beautiful parks, and fancy cafes, and tourist parts of the city.

project. The river flows nonchalantly, indifferently, and mirror-like, just like Mitia's face as he listens to Anna's confession about her abortion.[70] Each character is trapped in the past and their egoism, without an escape to the future.

The following sections in this chapter will describe and analyze the cinematic space of Balabanov's four films set in St. Petersburg in chronological order: *Happy Days* (*Schastlivye dni* [1990]), *Brother*, *Of Freaks and Men* (*Pro urodov i liudei* [1998]), and *Stoker* (*Kochegar* [2007]). The selected films best reflect Balabanov's aesthetic response to the 1990s, incorporating the popular style of cinematic language and the socio-historical situations of the 1990s, and recreate this period through de-historicization and de-aestheticization into ruins of the city, apocalyptic emptiness, and urban subjects' meaningless movement. Balabanov's aesthetic response to the transitional period was mainly to create a nonchalant and indifferent city and to exaggerate the subjects' traumatic experiences from war and the collapse of society in the city space.

4.2 City without Memory and Past

4.2.1 *Happy Days*

In artworks or writings, ruins, especially of classic architecture, generally appear as a conduit to the past, evoking melancholy for a lost world or serving as a warning to human's future.

[70] Natalia Bratova interprets this scene as a representation of the narcissistic degradation of the characters and the city itself: close-up shots of Mitia and Anna reveals Mitia's nonchalant expression and Anna's smile on her lips, when confessing about her "murder" of 22-week-old baby with "sincerity and simplicity" (142).

However, Balabanov's cityscape neither provides an array of the past that can formulate history nor takes part in forming an emotional bond to its heroes' memories. The director's ruins, as an index of catastrophe, hint at an apocalyptic rupture of the present in a flow of history. Without any special landmark attached to them, ruins merely serve as an aesthetic background in the films or conjure up a vision of abandoned sites of post-apocalyptic world. The city lacks historical, psychological and, in total, existential depth.

Such descriptions of space and time emerge in a rough, but straightforward way in *Happy Days*, which is not only considered a prologue of the director's career that brought him to the Cannes Festival in 1992, but also a touchstone for the key features of his cinematic cities. In this minimalist art-house film in a black-and-white, viewers can have a peek at his distinctive early use of soundtracks and of aesthetic frames, such as empty trams, and his films' self-reflexivity.

The anonymous hero, suffering from amnesia and just released from the hospital, roams through empty streets in search of shelter and—more comprehensively—his identity. High-crane shots and panoramas from a bird's-eye view emphasize the city's oppressive force on the hero: a wide, empty square covered with snow and a man walking alone (figure 12). The imperial architecture in the background frames this open space and diminishes his existence into a tiny figure. It offers aesthetic weight to the scenery, without bringing historical depth to the world where the protagonist is wandering. The city appears threatening with its abysmal openness that traps him within its time and space.

Figure 12 Hero, Trapped in Wide, Open Space in *Happy Days*

The hero cannot escape from this desolate city of apocalypse. His wandering around the city is no different from the movement of other objects on screen. Moving objects are merely driven by mechanical forces: trams running on tracks without making any stop; the ballerina figurine in the music box endlessly spinning around; the clocks ticking in Sergei Sergeevich's room. The clocks are not meant to indicate a linear course of time: rather, the circular movements of their hands serve as an ironical counterpart to the hero's wandering of the city. Viewers may recognize time has passed by a baby's birth, damage to a poster, and the death of his only acquaintance in the city. But no progress has occurred for the hero and the city. The hero's wandering endorses the absurdity of human life, from which he can never escape, while the

ominous music score of Richard Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* makes an allusion to the hero's destiny.[71]

The city is desolate: the uniqueness of Balabanov's cinematic space lies in its mood of desolation and emptiness, strongly emphasized by absence of sound, typical in everyday city life. The city not only lacks human bodies; the urban objects that would provide any evidence of a living social community or any trace of the hero's previous life are also missing. The name of the amnesiac hero changes from Sergei Sergeevich to Peter to Boria, dependent on whoever names him. The nameless hero, looking for a shelter, moves from one place to another: Sergei Sergeevich's house, the blind man's basement, the cemetery, the prostitute's house, and then finally a boat, bearing a resemblance to a coffin.

Period indices and allusions generated by the set hark back to the 1920s: trams, a phonograph, empty streets, the half-ruined grandiose house where the torn-out floor lays bare the scaffolding of the building[72] (figure 12). Restlessly moving trams were a prominent symbol of *fin-de-siècle* industrialism and urbanism in St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century.[73] Yet, Balabanov's tram runs without cargos or passengers, and without stops or destinations. Its ominous sounds, frequently heard beyond the window frames, recalls the haunting image of the apocalyptic horses hovering over the post-apocalyptic world.[74] The trapped hero in a desolate square is reminiscent of Akakii Akakievich when he is robbed in FEKS's silent film *Overcoat* (*Shinel'*

[71] A Flying Dutchman in the German legend, on which Wagner's opera is based, is permanently destined to sail the sea in the boat.

[72] Images of running trams indicate a direct reference to the 1920s, reminding of Nikolai Gumilev's poem, "The Tram That Lost Its Way" ("Zabludivshiisia tramvai" [1921]) and Nikita Mikhalkov's film, *A Slave of Love* (*Raba liubvi* [1976]), which is set on the 1920s.

[73] About the appearance of tram and its representation in the early twentieth century literary texts, see Tapp's "The Streetcar Prattle of Life."

[74] Trams in Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* (*Master i Margarita* [1967]) could be read as the modern version of the horses bearing forth the apocalypse (Bethea 186-229).

[1926]).[75] At the same time, the prostitute's house is decorated with antiques from the Imperial period of the pre-Soviet eighteenth and nineteenth century (figure 13). Sounds of bombing hint at time of the Great Patriotic War. In the film, not only space but time is vague. All the remnants that could be possibly seen in the cityscape of the troubled past are packed together. It can be the 1920s and 30s, or after the Great Patriotic War, or, indeed, the year 1991, as the period of the Soviet Union and Leningrad was ending. It is not only the hero who drifts through the city without finding an identity and home; the spectators also drift in the ambiguous cityscape, not figuring out to which period the city belongs. The city space spills out like museum storage after bombardment and plundering, without any label or instruction to make the artifacts readable. The index of the past does not create a coherent text about the city or about the identity of the hero. It is deprived of its own history and meaningful coordinates of beings. In this sense, the city provides no assistance in restoring the hero's memory.

[75] The film *Overcoat* (1926) was created by FEKS (Factory of Eccentric Actors), founded in 1921 by Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg. The film is based on Gogol''s short stories, "Nevskii Prospect" ("Nevskii prospekt" [1835]) and "Overcoat" (*Shinel'* [1842]). The whole film is constructed on the sharp contrast between black and white, and between light and shadow, shot by Andrei Moskvin. The scene where Akaki Akakievch gets robbed of his coat in an empty, wide square, covered with snow on a St. Petersburg wintry night, is one of the iconic renditions of the nineteenth-century "virtual St. Petersburg."

Figure 13 Torn-out Floor and Skeletons of the Building in Prostitute's House in *Happy Days*

Figure 14 Antique Furniture in Prostitute's House in *Happy Days*

Balabanov's city seems to remain in the previous era. But the empty city is full of mishmash from the past, dilapidated buildings, ruins, and refuse in the post-apocalypse, left without human activity. The film resists totalized and coherent mapping of the city space and time. The city of the post-apocalypse could not find a way to retrieve its identities through the remnants of the past and therefore the hero also could not discover his identity inside the city space and time. In this vein, Balabanov's city and hero remain without returning to history and solving the problem of the identity the film posed in the beginning. The past and its aesthetics serve as more of a burden, and the soundtracks, hovering over the hero with ominous sound, serve as alarming punctuations of endless repetition.

The director brings the remnants of the past to the screen, without allowing fragments to reconstruct a complete past or identity, let alone truth in the cinematic world. By jumbling the remnants or juxtaposing the shots of the ruins and carrying no specific meanings of its own for the arrangement, the film eventually nullifies the city identity that has accumulated in architecture and sites. It lets go of the crystallized images and the familiar city's coherence collapses in the cinematic city. Balabanov creates an intricate game for spectators that engages with the "symbolic oversaturation of the city," but eventually hollows out its meaning (Toporov 35).

The city lacks organic, living bodies and has stopped developing as an organic entity. No technological, social, moral, and spiritual progress can be detected in this world, with no memory of the past embedded in the cityscape or characters. Some ruined buildings and the obsolete metal objects help viewers to conjure up what could have been in the place in the past, but they never form an organic totality of coherent space and time, leaving the cityscape as a mere theatrical site.

At the end, the apocalyptic scene dissolves into the last shot, which has the register of a child's drawing (figure 15 and 16). It strips the portrayal of apocalypse and abandoned ruins of its pictorial, aesthetic quality. It deprives the possibility of registering the pictorial scenery with ruins and trams in either a romantic or realistic way, completely de-aestheticizing the apocalypse scenes.

Figure 15 The Last Scene of Tram in Flood in *Happy Days*

Figure 16 The Last Scene Dissolving into Childish Drawing in *Happy Day*

This is the city without its identity and without its repository of essential imagery. The film captures a post-apocalyptic space, a vacuum to be filled in transition, without any clue of the future. Balabanov's cinema embodies the dark sides of the Petersburg mythology. Emptiness, gloominess, and ghostly figures of the characters hark back to the prophetic curse laid down Peter the Great's first wife Evdokiia, "Petersburg will be empty."[76] The world of absurdity, the city outside of linear historical time and of post-apocalypse, ends in another apocalypse, without offering the smallest glimmering hope of the salvation or consolation in the apocalypse of the Petersburg text.[77] It does

[76] One of the most popular legends recounts how Peter the Great's first wife, whom the tsar forcibly exiled to a convent, cursed the city: "Sankt-Petersburg will stand empty." This widespread prophesy has stood in opposition to Peter's famous pronouncement that "the city will be here" (Sindalovskii 83; Volkov 14).

[77] The virtual Petersburg always retain a glimmering of hope of resurrection and salvation, which is pivotal to the Petersburg Text. It is this ending that endows the city myth with an

not attempt to recuperate the troubled aesthetics or narratives of the city. This anti-essential ontology of the city allows Balabanov to reflect his time, as well as to create his own cinematic city.

4.2.2 *Brother*

In *Brother*, released six years after *Happy Days*, the city plays a role no different from the one in his earlier film. Yet, its city background looks slightly different from that of art-house cinema, since it aimed for popularity and commercial success, adopting the structure of the Hollywood gangster cinema and setting it in contemporary St. Petersburg.[78] Balabanov's filmography spans more than twenty years and covers a range of genres as well as art cinema; when referring to genre cinema, his visual representations of the cities indeed have their own deviations or alternatives to his art-house cityscape, since the establishment of space depends on foundational conventions carried in different narratives.

Above all, the city offers neither shelter to the hero, nor any guide to rely on. Danila comes to St. Petersburg searching for a way to make his living after demobilization from the Chechen

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anthropomorphic face and elevates its image as an organism. Toporov, in constructing this imagination, used Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* as the main text. Also, in the history of cinematic texts, even when the city is described as doomed, it is often left with hope: for example, Mamin's *Window to Paris*.

[78] *Brother* obviously adopted its narrative structure and characters from Hollywood: a disoriented individual left alone in a confused world. In this vein, some of his films were discussed in connection with genre cinema, such as gangster films, a term that belongs to a Hollywood cinema tradition rather than a Soviet one. In the Soviet era, the concept of genre was considered in some respects a value-deflating term that failed to express their dissent with the system through coded visual language and metaphors and therefore appealed to mass audience. See Seckler 28-33.

war. His elder brother Viktor, who turns out to be a hitman, immediately invites Danila into the criminal world, where a war is on-going against non-Russian gangsters. In his battle, the city offers no guidance to him: he does not have a father figure.[79] His brother, who used to take a role of a father in their childhood, betrays him. It is rather Danila who accepts the role of a protector to his brother. There is no role model for him to learn from or imitate.

The city is dominated by marketplaces, cemeteries, brothels, and shabby, dark streets with empty trams. Blurring the hierarchy between the center and the marginalized suburban areas, the city loses its glamorous visual aesthetics. Neither the pictorial beauty of the city nor the index of the past provides any ideological or historical meaning for his life. The city aesthetics does not constitute his world. The indices of the past, such as Kazan Cathedral and the Bronze Horseman, are no more than a reminder of the physical location for viewers or an aid in the cognitive mapping of Danila's space of actions, without carrying any weight either in the narratives or in the characterization. An unusual framing of the Bronze Horseman, which bears not only historical but also cultural and literary significance, indicates his distance from the city history and aesthetics.[80] The protagonist Danila, who has just arrived the city, wanders around the city's well-known sites

[79] An absence of father or symbolic father figure in perestroika films was not unusual, reflecting the collapse of symbolic power in the perestroika years. Susan Larsen points to Balabanov's pessimistic attitude towards paternity, undermining the values of the older generation such as family and patrimony, in contrast to Mikhalkov's films, who returned to the past in order to reconstruct lost cultural and national traditions ("National identity, cultural authority, and the post-Soviet blockbuster").

[80] The Bronze Horseman is a statue of Peter the Great, located in the Senate Square near the Isaac Cathedral. The monument was established by the order of Catherine the Great: the German princess and wife of Peter the Third, ascended to the throne through a coup and needed to represent herself as a legitimate heir to Peter I. The landmark receives a significance in the cultural and literary context, when the poet Aleksandr Pushkin published a narrative poem under the title "the Bronze Horseman," which is considered to be one of the most influential works on Russian literature. It soon became the emblem of the city for those who came to the city in the nineteenth century: in Ivan Goncharov's *Ordinary Story* (*Obyknovennaia istoriia* [1847]), the statue serves as a spiritual boost to Aleksandr who came from the provincial city.

and finally comes to the Bronze Horseman. This iconic monument was shot from behind and from the human eye level. The camera captures Danila' back as he looks shortly at the back of the statue. Then, he turns his head to the right, where viewers can see his apathetic facial expression, and moves on (figure 17).

Figure 17 The Bronze Horseman and Danila in *Brother*

The city is the articulation of the human animal's primal drives, the death drive dominant among them. Similar to *Happy Days*, rampant images of death reside in this cinematic space.[81] No

[81] Even in the director's only melodrama *It Doesn't Hurt* (*Mne ne bol'no* [2006]), which presents the scenery of contemporary St. Petersburg in soft, pale hues without blood scenes, cannot escape the image of "death city" in its love story of the young architect and dying woman, drawing a clear contrast to the last scene of the idyllic countryside. Above all, the imagery of death is most dominant and visually explicit in *Deadman's Bluff* (*Zhmurki* [2005]), *Cargo 200* (*Gruz 200* [2007]) and in his last film, *Me, Too* (*Ia tozhe khochu* [2012]). *Deadman's Bluff* as a mixture of

wonder the cemetery features as one of the major dwelling places in the city in *Happy Days* and *Brother*. In *Brother*, the only place that offers a meaningful link between the past and the present is, ironically, the Smolensk Lutheran Cemetery: Hoffman, who is a German by ethnicity, takes the city as his homeland, as his ancestors are lying in the cemetery.[82]

In some respects, the city is no different from the battlefield. Balabanov's world is always in a state of civil war: a sense of war sneaks into the space of everyday life. Danila makes his own way through the adventure, relying on automatic instinct. What orients his life is merely a primal survival instinct that might have been sharpened and internalized during the time of war in Chechnya. The long, detailed sequence of Danila manufacturing a firearm not only elevates him as a master craftsman and self-standing hero at war, but also emphasizes his world, surrounded and driven by the "metal id," the amoral, primal agent, compelled toward acquisition and gratification, without human progress (Condee, *Imperial Trace* 223). Danila leaves the city for Moscow, where all the power lies, according to his brother, leaving St. Petersburg as it was: Sveta with her abusive husband and Ket' with money that will be probably used for drugs. All the moving bodies, including those of the presumed urban machinery, are driven by survival instinct or mechanical inertia. Trams without any cargo or passengers run restlessly without making any stop, like a symbol of the non-human, metal atmosphere.

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black comedy and criminal film is literally an exhibition of blood, violence, death, and corpses. A story of *Cargo 200*, regarded as one of the most repugnant films in his filmography, ends up with the scene of kidnapped Angelika in bed with a pile of the corpses and flies. In *Me, Too*, a group of people takes a road trip in search of "the bell tower of happiness" in the mysterious zone created by a "radioactive event." The zone of wintry landscape, in sharp contrast to a summer landscape of St. Petersburg, is piled with corpses rejected from the bell tower.

[82] The Smolensk Lutheran Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in the city from the early eighteenth century, for non-orthodox Christians.

Balabanov's city space is defined and experienced through loners, engrossed in their own worlds of war. Danila's fundamental alienation makes it possible to remain intact under the sway of the transition to capitalism and achieve his goals: he moves on to the next stages in his survival game, to Moscow and, in the sequel *Brother 2* (*Brat 2* [2000]), to Chicago. In Balabanov's war films, his characters likewise engage in the "war to fend off vulnerabilities left from imperial collapse of the Soviet Union," which emerges as frequent hostile references to the West and Chechens (Condee, *Imperial Trace* 226).[83] St. Petersburg's boundaries and topography are erased in this place of death, in an eternal battlefield. Vulnerabilities from the Imperial collapse penetrate everywhere; the space expands to Tobolsk, Moscow, Chicago, and the fictional city of Leninsk in his later films *Brother 2*, *War* (*Voina* [2002]), and *Cargo 200*, homogenizing all of these spaces into one anomic world of an eternal battle field. In *Brother*, Hoffman indicates that the city is an evil force that saps human strength and morality, continuing the genealogy of the dark side of Petersburg mythology, including Gogol''s short stories.[84] The cinematic city becomes an abstract space of war, and of survival stage with the theatrical background of St. Petersburg, without the protagonists' connection to past, memories, and community.

[83] The film horrified audiences holding relatively liberal views for its naïve nationalism, along with racist references and amorphous moral code. Daniil Dondurei, the chief editor of *Iskusstvo Kino*, dismissed it as a "poor film" and attributed the success to Russian's schizophrenic reactions to "Russian films." Aleksei German, Balabanov's former mentor, accused him of racism and xenophobia in his interview with the film journal *Seans* in 1999 ("Seansu otvechaiut: Portret. Aleksei Balabanov"). The film was further discussed in a context of newly rising post-soviet nationalism and Other-ness (Anemone; Hashamova; Larsen "In Search of an Audience").

[84] Gogol''s short stories set in St. Petersburg engage in phantasmagorical descriptions of the dark sides of the first-half nineteenth century St. Petersburg. Especially, in "Nevskii Prospect," the nocturnal city itself turns out to be the devil's playground. Also, in "Portrait," the writer describes the gradual moral degradation of one painter, seduced by the devilish painting that offered material comfort and eventually kills his artistic talent as well as morality.

4.3 City under the Amoral Gaze

The cinematic image of St. Petersburg frequently lies in a juxtaposition of two polarized images of the modern city, continuing the two imperial mythologies: the elaborate façades along the Neva that suddenly emerged from a swamp *versus* the dirty courtyards and backstreets behind them. Balabanov's unique combinations of the two images result in visual representations of a post-apocalyptic city, particularly visible in his art-house cinema, the black-and-white film of *Happy Days* and the sepia-toned film *Of Freaks and Men*. Trams are one of the foremost aesthetic choices in Balabanov's films. While the features of trams hark back to *fin-de-siècle* period as a sign of rapid developing urbanism and industrialism, their functionality in Balabanov's films is always in question. They run often without cargo or passengers, and without stops or destinations, driven by mechanical inertia. Above all, Balabanov's tram is distinguished by the fact that it does not serve as any passenger's mobile vantage point to observe the city. In writings about urban modernity, trams frequently feature as frames that capture the moving cityscape, playing a visceral role, similar to the cinema screen, in shaping urban subjectivity. In contrast, Balabanov's films offer empty trams captured as props in the scenery, or a frame within a frame, like the remnant of the human civilization.

The façades, which stand as theatrical backdrops in abstract space without anthropological connections to the urban subjects in the film narratives, simultaneously continue a dialogue with the past in an intricate play with viewers. Their beauty is often accompanied by ethical and moral downfalls, which lead to the debasement of the past and its aesthetics. One of the most iconic scenes in *Brother* is when Danila washes his hands on the Neva River after his victory (figure 17): as the camera operator Astakhov points out, in *Brother*, though the cityscape is hidden, viewers recognize the city without noticing what has been hidden (Stepanov 370): rostral columns, bridges,

and the granite banks across the Neva River are visible in the distant background. The scene proves his calmness and cleanses him of moral responsibility: the ritualistic gesture reveals that he does not have hesitations or qualms, like a new Napoleonic, amoral superman beyond the law, as Raskol'nikov claimed to be in *Crime and Punishment*.[85] The city is nonchalant, indifferent, and diabolic; the iconic scenery witnesses a birth of the superhuman for the twentieth century.

Figure 18 Danila Washing His Hands in the Neva in *Brother*

[85] Jennifer Day interprets Danila as the twenty-first-century version of Raskol'nikov with a twist: for example, Danila's first murder, at the request of Viktor, could be framed as obligation to protect identity and livelihood. In this sense, Danila's life, including its criminal activity, could be read as an aesthetic potential of Petersburg text (617-8). But as Condee points out, Danila "undoes Raskol'nikov's act," returning to the marketplace where Dostoevskii's hero first repented his killing, in order to kill, not to repent (*Imperial Trace* 224).

In *Of Freaks and Men*, which appeared after *Brother*, the iconic Petersburg aesthetic is captured in an eerie way emphasizing desolation, the absurdity of human life, and the cruelty of the plots. The cursed city is merely left with trams, architecture, and water. The film is set in turn-of-the-century St. Petersburg before the Revolution: its daguerreotype hue sets the visual tone of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The beautiful, but totally empty cityscape, shot during the white nights, embodies the gloomy, *fin-de-siècle* mood in a monochrome, warm sepia tint.

The film captures and reinvents a moment of Russia's pornography industry on the cusp of the genre's movement from photography to cinema.[86] The anti-hero Iogan comes to St. Petersburg with a new apparatus of modernism to conquer the city; Iogan and his brigade do successful business with his pornographic pictures, eventually destroying two families: Liza's house and the doctor Stasov's house. Liza, along with the Siamese twins adopted by Stasov, falls victim to perverse desire and to the pornography business: the cruel staging of naked female bodies spanked in front of the camera. But with the arrival of the cinema, the young cameraman replaces Iogan: Putilov holds a public screening of pornographic moving images instead of selling photos in secret. He becomes a celebrity chased by enthusiastic audiences, while Iogan, after watching the film in the movie house, disappears in the icy water of the Neva, heading toward the sea.

The city space suffers from and simultaneously enjoys voyeurism. As in *Happy Days*, the urban space conveys a depopulated, gloomy mood. The discrepancy between the beautifully decorated interior of the house and desolate streets of the outside invokes a jarring affect throughout the story. The family space, once intact against the desolate outside, is gradually

[86] Marcia Landy in her analysis of this film explains the film as counter-narrative for the history of cinema. See the chapter 5 in her book *Cinema and Counter-History.*

corrupted by new capitalist invaders with new technology; it becomes the theatrical backdrop for pornography. The ominous sound of trams passing by is heard through the window, hinting at the encroachment of modern technology and capitalism. Just as Liza is captured, the beautiful façades are captured and exploited under aberrant desire by a relentless modernity that irreparably destroys human lives, families, and the city. It marks a parallel between the two transitional periods in the first and last decades of the twentieth century, both facing the invasion of Western capitalism.

After Iogan's demise, Liza leaves for the West: the train is running through snowy, wintry Russian forests; her delight, watching moving landscape from the train, reveals her momentary freedom from the city. However, the Western town that Liza arrives at betrays viewers' expectations. Its atmosphere is no different from that of St. Petersburg: desolate, empty, and imbued with voyeuristic desire. She walks along the windy streets to music from the phonograph and ends up in a showcase window, a spectacle again for aberrant desires.[87] The film's close transfers the city's claustrophobic atmosphere beyond its borders.

[87] Yet, Landy points out the inversion of camera angle in this scene: unlike the previous scene of spanking women, this scene focuses on Liza's face rather than shooting from men's voyeuristic eyes from the backside.

Figure 19 Liza Walking in the Far-away City in *Of Freaks and Men*

In these Balabanov films, city topography and aesthetics dissolve into claustrophobic emptiness. The remnants of the city become parodied or perverted versions and are de-aestheticized. In *Brother*, the city transforms into a diabolic abstract space that saps human morality and its typical cityscape is reduced to a theatrical stage that witnesses the ethical downfall of the hero; in *Of Freaks and Men*, beautiful aestheticized shots of the city façades fall victim to a perverted gaze; in *Happy Days*, all the remnants from the past fall into a hodgepodge and the last apocalyptic scene turns into a child's drawing. These representations remove the possibility of registering the pictorial scenery of apocalyptic scenes in a romantic way, completely de-aestheticizing and amoralizing the cinematic space in transition.

4.4 City of Transition in Retrospect: the 1990s from the 2000s

The socio-political and economic situation of the *likhie gody* have improved in the *nulevye gody*, or years of naught. In the *Streets of Broken Lights* series, police officers frequently gather at cafe, bar and on bright streets in spring or summer, which gradually overcomes the wintry, desolate landscape that previously dominated in the city. Balabanov's city also took various new shapes and sceneries, especially referring to genre cinema: viewers could see a different cityscape, set in the everyday life of the contemporary post-Soviet city, in his first and only melodrama *It Doesn't Hurt* (*Mne ne bol'no* [2006]). The city retains a soft, pale hue, which befits the love story between an energetic, young architect and a beautiful, dying woman, the mistress of the mafia boss: Tata's bright, luxurious apartment, the picturesque nocturnal scenery of the Neva River, seen from the young architects' apartment, as well as the lovers' boat trip along the river. The film reveals the softer side of the city without bloody scenes of violence and cruelty.

If films like *Happy Days* and *Brother* capture the contemporary mood of the first post-Soviet decade, where the protagonists as well as viewers had no clue where they were heading in history, this film, released in 2010, takes a different viewpoint to this period from the earlier one, looking at the world as an eternal battlefield. *It Doesn't Hurt* reveals the peaceful life of everyday city. It backs away from the dominant ideology of the Self/Other dichotomy in previous films, based on Danila's naive nationalism and xenophobia; rather, the protagonist and his friends focus more on the intimacy of their relationships. In *Iskusstvo Kino*, Oleg Zintsov sees this film as Balabanov's effort at portraying patriotism, formulated not through slogans or nationalist ideas, but rather on simple ideas like sincere relationships.

The film *Stoker* is set in the 1990s, in a similar period to *Brother*: it could read as an allegory of the 1990s and a self-reflexive response to *Brother*. The film completely retreats from

any postcard image of the city: it was mostly shot in the outskirts of St. Petersburg, including Kronshtadt and Losevo, where the devastated infrastructure was left without reconstruction and repair: a dreary, empty urban landscape with industrial chimneys, drab walls, bridges, the fences of old constructions, all covered in snow. The wintry landscape leaves the city faceless and unidentified. But the city and its scenery are in direct dialogue with Balabanov's previous film.

The film deals with the simple, linear plot of the revenge of a father, Major Skriabin, a veteran of the Afghanistan war, who works as a stoker to keep the underground furnace burning and taps out a short story about his ancestors. Aleksei Medvedev points out that the hitman Bison bears similarity to Danila in his clothes and his mind-blowing apathy when carrying out the boss' order to kill his girlfriend, Major Skriabin's daughter, thereby, mocking "the romanticism in *Brother*" (Medvedev).[88] Skriabin's last comment carries a bitter allegory: "It is different in war. There are 'us' and 'enemies.' But here everyone is 'us.'" The casting of the Iakut actor Mikhail Skriabin in the role of the Major not only reverses the self/other dichotomy that supported Danila's nationalism, but also blurs the naïve distinction between enemies and "brothers." The protagonist's moral value, which was erected and solidified by his experience at war, is shattered. While films like *Brother*, *War*, and *Of Freaks and Men* deal with conflicts between insiders and outsider-invaders who challenge and transform the original order of the space, regardless of which side stands for good or bad, *Stoker* does not endorse this obvious dichotomy anymore. The story admits the brutality of Russian banditry and the sacrifice of the Iakut people as an allegory for the violence imposed on all minorities in Russian history. The film reveals that the "vulnerabilities," caused by enemies during the imperial collapse of the Soviet Union, also reside in its history, while

[88] Romantic descriptions of killers already began to fade in *Deadman's Bluff*.

solidifying and allegorizing the mythology of the 1990s. In this sense, *Stoker*, released ten years after *Brother*, is a self-reflexive allusion to Balabanov's films and filmmaking.

Meanwhile, the walking scenes reveal the impressive landscape of the cinematic world. Cinematic walking scenes usually help viewers to perceive a city space in films. Through their remarkable use of soundtrack, *Stoker*'s walking scenes become an intricate game with incongruent music, almost acting as an independent interpolated sequence in the film narrative. Simultaneously, they reveal the peaceful world beyond the loners' war, which is not seen other scenes.

In *Brother 2*, a dialogue between Danila and singer Ira clearly verbalizes that the battle field is juxtaposed to another register of place where ordinary people live without sensing war: when Danila claims that Ira's music is not "real," since "we" do not listen to such music "there, at war," Ira responds that "this is the peaceful world. Here lies the other law." The films of the battle series often offer a glimpse on peaceful worlds. For example, in *Brother*, Danila drops by the apartment upstairs while on a hit. After getting permission to stay at the party for a while, the camera observes the merrymaking of the cheerful and careless youth, in contrast to his solitude. The sequence of his sudden visit to the evening party of the young musicians reveals a soft side of the city: young community defined by intimacy and companionship.

In *Stoker*, the parallel of the two worlds appears in a more nuanced way in the tracking shots of the main characters. While most of the film's events take place in interiors, these outdoor scenes create a bridge between the main stages of the narrative events and expose the space of a shabby industrial city: a wintry, empty urban landscape. The main characters' human bodies move forward like the empty trams in Balabanov's previous works, following their destined route around the city. The characters are heading toward specific destinations, without even casting a glance at

what happens near their surroundings (figure 18). Strictly following the narrow, beaten path on the frozen road covered with snow, they rarely step off it or change the pace of their walking rhythm. Their automatic and compulsive movements and the repetition of the same sceneries reveal and enhance the claustrophobic setting of their world. The camera's eyes reinforce such a sense by mostly remaining at ground level, focusing on human bodies. Its gaze never moves upward except in one occasion, when the hitman Bison looks at the edge of a high building of the small courtyard where he stands, allowing the audience a peek of a small fragment of grey sky surrounded by drab walls.

Figure 20 Four Figures Walking in *Stoker*: Bison, Sasha, Masha, Skriabin (from Left Top to Left Bottom)

While in previous films, the background of the outdoor scenes serves as an aesthetic theatrical background that defines the protagonists' location or enhances the post-apocalyptic

mood of the city space, in *Stoker*, the background adds one more layer of narrative to the city space. Peripheral characters create visually contrasting effects when they appear in the background and are highlighted in these deep-focus tracking scenes. The film emphasizes their existence through overreaction in the sequences: a man with a dog trying to go off the beaten track into snow piles (figure 19); a young man outruns Bison in hurry on the frozen road; kids are playing in snow while the Major passes by in the foreground (figure 20). Their walking tempo and actions do not coincide with the music tempo. The film captures all the extra human bodies passing the main characters on street, comparing them to the automatic, compulsive movements of the characters. The sequences expose the protagonists to the other world of peacetime, where everyday lives are going on. But the characters, living in the isolated world of their own war, do not even glance at the outside world.

Figure 21 Bison and the Extra with the Dog Going Off the Beaten Track in *Stoker*

Figure 22 Skriabin and the Two Children Playing in the Background in *Stoker*

In addition, in *Stoker*, the tram appears to have a new, humane face. Above all, it functions as a means of transportation that connect Skriabin's shelter in the outskirts to his daughter and the sergeant, developing from a simple aesthetic prop into a place of human interaction. There has been no physical interaction between the main characters and the citizens until Skriabin enters the tram and a young man keeps him from falling. This small act of humanism from an anonymous random person changes the appearance of the city space in the narrative, allowing viewers a glimpse of the everyday life of a community that lives outside of war.

Meanwhile, the sentimental music scores lyricize these tracking scenes: "Russian (Russkaia)" and "Day (Den')" played by the fusion style guitarist Didiulia and his group DiDiuLia. They release light-hearted guitar sounds in pace with the characters' footsteps. The soundtrack not

only intrudes upon the plot of senseless violence and takes control of its pace, but also evokes an unsettling sentiment through the dissonance between the musical score and the cruelty of the narrative it punctuates. The walking sequences almost stand as independent sequences from the whole narrative.

These scenes serve as the only "bright moments" that convey movements of "hope" where the characters and the director, as well as the viewers, may avert their eyes from violent scenes and relax (Medvedev). Even though the word "hope" sounds too optimistic if viewers are already familiar with Balabanov's filmography, the diegetic sound of the lyrical guitar melody offers a break for viewers. Musical scores are transposed into the memory of the audience, inviting them into a game of memories through the repetitive dissonance between sound and image. It conjures up the visual landscape of an ordinary city space beyond the characters' automated choreography, by contrast to the function of the mixture of non-diegetic and diegetic soundtrack from Danila's CD player in *Brother*, which, as Condee points out, is a remarkable use of soundtrack as "an intricate game of commentary on visual landscape" ("Stoker"). The dominant soundtrack of Nautilus Pompilius's rock music creates and solidifies Danila's own world of a self, sealed away from the outside, considering his negative comments on American music to the foreigner in the club. Danila "lives under the sound-system of another world, in which he is immortal" (Beumers 85). Eventually, the CD player deflects a bullet and saves his life. A switch from diegetic to non-diegetic music allows for the interchangeability of the subject from Danila to viewers.

As a result, the setting of *Stoker*, including the frequent rough, unnatural choreography of the actors' movements, helps viewers to distance themselves from the film characters and the romanticized violence of the 1990s, the image of which the director himself helped to create. This cruel allegory also allows viewers to distance themselves from the traumatic experience in a similar

fashion to that of *Cargo 200* in reference to the late Soviet years, but playing down its tone to almost banal sentimentality.[89]

4.5 Conclusion

After Balabanov's death in 2013, then-Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev wrote on his Facebook page that the director's films constitute "a collective portrait of Russian soul at a dramatic time of our history." The nationalist critic Dmitrii Bykov claimed Balabanov as an "ingenious chronicler of unique Russian sentiment" ("V poiskakh utrachennogo ideala" 535).

Balabanov films reject any summation of self through the Petersburg aesthetics or history. The subjects' experiences and contemplations in the city that should lead to their identity formation are always vitiated. In this setting, repetitive scenes of walking characters or running empty trams are frequently autonomous from the narratives. Modern technology, which once promised a utopian dream, has lost its function and remains visually as an aesthetic prop along with sound, whether the alarm of threatening forces or sentimental soundtrack. The bodies of human figures, driven by survival instincts and mechanical inertia, are in automated motion and often assimilate

[89] Steven Norris interprets *Cargo 200* in a similar fashion: he defends the cruelty of this horror film as a way of "helping viewers separate themselves from Soviet nostalgia and Soviet-era tendencies" that had arisen in the 2000s: "the film allows audience to deal with traumatic memories of the past and therefore achieve an adulthood of sorts." It epitomizes "the absolute quintessence of Russian reality at the beginning of the 1980" (Norris 200-202): the marginalized, suburban area is a perfect setting for the socio-economically and morally declining Soviet world in the 1980s. The film metaphorically visualizes the post-apocalyptic world: the shot of Angelika in bed with the corpses and flies is "the portrait of the dead state with living worms feeding on its corpse [..] it is the after-world, world where everything perished" (Bykov, "Odin"). Kuvshinova on *Ekho Moskvy* reiterates this sentiment: it "once and for all strips you of all personal, religious, or social idealism […] the object of persistent social nostalgia-the Soviet Union-is presented here as a decomposed corpse" (203).

to the background, to the ruins of the cityscape, remnants of modernity as a form of ruins. In this sense, all moving bodies, including humans, ramble like traces of the past who have lost their way in a historic rupture, without an escape from destined path of the urban frontier. The director's deep pessimism about human progress does not allow any hope in this world. Happiness is possible only in the other world, for those who are accepted through a mysterious portal of the ruins of bell tower in his last film *Me, Too*. Balabanov neither believes in the restorative power of the past nor in the salvational possibility of humanity.

A creative image of ruins reflects Russia's "fraught and shifting attempts to define itself," tangled in a debate of the relationship between the past and present (Schönle 24). If images of ruins in artworks of post-revolutionary and WWII Russia may have been used as an aesthetic tool to minimize trauma while assuring historical continuity, Balabanov's more modern cinematic city in decay, in chaos, and in ruination, describes a historical rupture through an exaggerated portrayal of the post-apocalypse and aggrandizes the urban subjects' traumatic experiences. In these more modern renditions, the city defaults to a battlefield and a space to unravel the unique narratives of the transitional period in an indirect dialogue with the city mythologies and with a distinct, degraded use of the iconic post-card urban images. Balabanov's films contributed to the creation and solidification of the popular mythology of St. Petersburg in transition and the wild 1990s.

After the tercentennial celebration in summer of 2003, Aleksei Uchitel''s *The Stroll* (*Progulka* [2003]) was released. This new jubilee film portrayed St. Petersburg from a completely different viewpoint. It finally moved from the templates of dark landscapes and the museum city founded on its Imperial heritage. The film reveals a new post-Soviet city under sunlight, filled with youthful energies. As the title puts it, the film is a celebration of free walking and youth culture,

while making a reference to a city in disguise in Gogol''s "Nevskii prospekt."[90] The film begins with a dark car window that reflect a series of St. Petersburg façades upside down, while the two unidentified voices talk to each other inside the moving car. Then, the car slowly stops; the dark window is superimposed with the opposite side of the window where viewers see the reflection of a young woman who just got out of the car on the Anichkov Bridge in the middle of Nevskii Prospect. Through a flow of cars and pedestrians, the camera captures a girl on the opposite side of the road; then, it cuts to the girl on the near side—she has probably crossed the street between the cuts. A single twenty-minute shot of the protagonists follows. The three young people walk freely throughout the city center, climbing up the bell tower of St. Isaac's Cathedral and running in the rain. Through all the sequences, viewers can see the atmosphere of the early 2000s during the approach of the 300th anniversary of the city's birth: tourists, actors in costume, walking advertisements, soccer fans, and construction workers. In the background, steel rods and green nets covering the façades are easily found; the whole city is under repair, including historic sites and residential buildings. Construction sites and construction workers constitute a part of the vitality and conviviality of the city's atmosphere. The vivid scenes of the Petersburg streets make a clear contrast to her fiancé's space: the luxurious car with the façade reflections on the dark windows and the semi-dark bowling center. The three protagonists experience the city through completely free walking, encountering the vivid lives of people and architecture on streets. The film marks a new decade, new century, and new cinematic gaze to the city where the transition has

[90] In the short story "Nevskii Prospect," the romantic painter Piskarev follows a girl that he encountered in the Nevskii Prospect, who later turns out to be a prostitute. While the nineteenth century story talks about a deception in the nocturnal, soulless city, the film tells a contemporary version of the false-romantic encounter: the boys found out that the girl, who they flirted for a whole day, turned out to be another man's fiancé, who was looking for witnesses to prove her capability to walk for a whole day.

been completed. The next chapters will take on both the new architecture projects in the 2000s and street furniture constructions that can be seen only through the walking experience: both attempt to create a new, alternative cityscape in (at least rhetorically) historical continuity.

5.0 Making the Historic City Global: The Mariinskii Theater and the Okhta Center

This chapter engages in urban landscapes that reflect a desire to situate the city in the global geo-economy for a new post-social identity. Russia's 2000s, the decade of the naughts (*nulevye gody*), was characterized by financial security and socio-political stability, thanks to the high price of oil. Two state-driven projects—the second stage of the Mariinskii Theater (the MT-2) and the Okhta Center—reveal how the sites evolved to catch up with new economy, encouraging local solidarity and political consciousness in a struggle for an ideal city personality. The culture and identity driven by prestige cultural institutions, such as the two museums addressed in the first and second chapters, could be subjected to the criticism of "produc[ing] sanitized collective memories, [nurturing] the uncritical aesthetic sensibilities, and [absorbing] future possibilities into a no-conflictual arena that is eternally present (Harvey 67-68). However, this dissertation's observations about these museums revealed diverse and conflicting conversations about the cityscape and the local identity. The current conservative aesthetic and preservationist notion of the Petersburg identity has solidified and developed through external and internal controversies about what and how to preserve, in relation to the struggle for a transparent and democratic urban policy against neoliberalism or globalization. While the first two chapters engaged with two cultural institutions that reflect the traditional set values of the city endorsed by the cultural industry, this chapter explores the dynamic process behind the dazzling signature projects of the MT-2 and the Okhta Center.

5.1 New Brand for the Cityscape

The image of a global, cosmopolitan city has been associated with Moscow since 1918. Its hypertrophic development throughout the Soviet years rendered St. Petersburg (or then-Leningrad) the second city, far from the first. Despite its size, population, and historically and culturally rich ambience, the former imperial capital remained rarely recognized in the world economy or geopolitics.[91] Since the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the first post-Soviet mayor Anatolii Sobchak made various efforts to revive the city's heyday as the former imperial capital national and worldwide. It received federal city status in 1993, on a par with Moscow and the subnational regions. A desire to put St. Petersburg in a global context could be also found in Sobchak's efforts to host the Goodwill Games in 1994 and to form the annual International Economic Forum, still running since 1997. A plan also existed to construct a tower 130 meters high, called "Peter the Great," which remained unrealized. Yet, the economic crisis and socio-political instability of the 1990s made it difficult to pursue any ambitious projects to renovate the city at either the local or federal level. While Moscow, which exclusively enjoyed a privileged financial situation compared to other Russian cities, launched aggressive urban projects, St. Petersburg mostly remained saddled with old infrastructure and crumbling buildings as a result of the difference in state investment.

In the 2000s, as the overall political and economic situation improved and stabilized, several projects were launched to revive the city economy, with ardent support from then-new

[91] As Oleg Goluchikov and Nathaniel Trumbull noted, St. Petersburg has been absent from world-cities literature despite its potential to be one, pointing out its poor performance in the world-city ranking analyses. Goluchikov's article explains in detail about Petersburg's efforts to surface in the world geography since the 1990s and the middle of the 2000s in socio-political, economic, and architectural dimensions.

president Vladimir Putin, who had personal affection for his native city. The urban renewal plans included infrastructural projects related to the energy industries, such as an oil and gas pipeline and a new port in the Baltic Sea, as well as transportation infrastructure, like the Pulkovo Airport and the circular motorway around the city. Large foreign investments were achieved by successfully recruiting global car assembly plants, such as Nissan, General Motors, Hyundai, Toyota, etc. into Leningrad Oblast'.

Above all, there was no easier and quicker way to promote the city brand than by using the legacy readily available in the urban fabric from the pre-Soviet years. With the aid of federal money, the 300th anniversary of the city's birth in 2003 was celebrated with pompous spectacles set in renovated museums, old historic buildings, and monuments to attract domestic and international tourists. It clearly brought worldwide attention to the city, especially when President Putin invited G8 summits to the newly-renovated Konstantinovskii Palace, located in a suburban area of the city (Hellberg-Hirn 271, 359). On the surface, the tercentennial served as a good opportunity to renovate dilapidated infrastructure and enhance the city's identity as well as the national one, segueing Imperial Russia into post-Soviet Russia by promoting postcard images of imperial art and architecture. At the same time, it actually was actually intended to be a showcase to invite foreign investment: it could be understood as the first big culture-led development project in post-Soviet St. Petersburg.

Urban renewal seems necessary not only in order to renovate dilapidated infrastructure inside and outside the historic center, but also to adopt a new personality for the city. While the city developed its brand as the cultural capital or "museum-city," the fulcrum on which this identity solidified allowed a counter-position to surface, challenging the familiar and popular city image. In the ambitious urban projects of the new millennium, mega-architecture was introduced that

would potentially bring a huge change to the urban fabric. The projects included the Baltic Pearl, the Maritime Façades, the Okhta Center (currently, Lakhta Center), and entertainment complexes, such as the MT-2, the Kirov Stadium, the New Holland Island, and Port Sevkabel. Among them, the New Holland Island, the MT-2, and the Okhta Center projects directly concern architecture heritage at the historic center. While the New Holland Island projects at the historic center reflected an impressive success for locals and visitors regarding the re-allocation and use of public space, the Okhta Center and the MT-2 evolved into scandalous cases nationwide, encountering severe opposition from locals and outsiders who were attached to the historic cityscape at the center.[92]

It is a widespread practice throughout the world to bring global architecture into the cityscape to create a new spatial image. Global architecture indicates constructions with signature visual codes that travel easily throughout any city in the world. This system reflects the globalization process of architectural practice. On one hand, it could be understood as a part of cultural homogenization and McDonaldization, which leave identical buildings throughout the world that allow visitors experiences similar to their home cities, wherever they are. On the other hand, such globalization results in iconic structures specific to capital cities or regional centers that are repetitively consumed in the visual media and visited as tourist spots. This architectural

[92] New Holland Island was previously occupied by the Russian navy as a shipyard, closed to the public for three hundred years since the Imperial period (Solov'eva; Shtiglits). After the transfer of its ownership to the city in 2004, its reconstruction project was postponed until the owner of Chelsea Club Roman Abramovich stepped in, making the $400 min. investment in 2010. The 2016 opening of the park was a significant event. Unlike the other new architecture projects, including the General Staff Building or MT-2, this outdoor space is completely open to public without a security check or ticket office. The project director Dasha Zhukova, curator of the Moscow Garazh Art Center, emphasizes the project makes “a public space, where everyone could see what is happening” (Ignat'ev). Most importantly, the park contains an outdoor lawn, where strollers are allowed sit and lie down in European fashion. Free public use of spaces, contemporary artworks and greenery, which is rarity in the historic center, offer a European atmosphere, which was marked and praised by many locals and visitors. In this vein, it is one of the most successful projects of the 2000s.

practice has been widespread since the late twentieth century, led by several global firms and star architects, frequently resorting to the cult of architectural celebrities, such as Rem Koolhaas, Norman Foster, and Zaha Hadid. The international architectural competitions of mega-urban projects have been a major playground for such famous firms and architects (McNeil 1-6).

Whether such construction obtains fame via its unique design, monumental height, or both, it provides more immediate visibility and long-lasting effects in the cityscape than any other medium. Such an architectural tendency reflects a belief that architecture can play a role as a "catalyst to generate an authentic identity for people and places," as well as provide an economic boost (Klingmann 3). A glass-and-steel skyscraper, for example, which is generally perceived to be more international, contributes to a more global image of the city. If a brand-name star architect labels a building with their unique signature design, their buildings repetitively appear as postcard images in visual media and linger in people's mind, achieving a positive impression and creating a meaningful and sustainable image for a city.

The signature projects have already been the popular practices in the world. In Middle or South Asia, building skyscrapers such as the Petronas Twin Tower in Kualalumpur, Malaysia and the Burj Khalifa in Dubai was a part of national economic policies to gain acknowledgement and leverage in the global economy. The skyscrapers, often designed by foreign architects and built by foreign companies and immigrant workers, truly achieved globalism inside construction. In St. Petersburg, the waterfront project called the Baltic Pearl Complex could constitute a similar case as it is funded by a Shanghai consortium (Dixon, "Emerging Chinese Role").

The most significant case of all for the constructive use of brand architecture and a city successfully distinguishing itself in the cultural, geo-economical world is Bilbao. Bilbao found its way out from the economic recession after its steelworks shut down by recruiting the global brand

and grand architecture of a star architect: the Guggenheim Museum built by Frank Gehry. The Guggenheim project in Bilbao provided a critical benchmark in the use of architecture to brand a place and revitalize community in cities that lagged behind the rest of the world in socio-economic and cultural development. In official and unofficial speech about the MT-2, the Kirov Stadium, and the New Holland Island, the example of Bilbao frequently appeared, demonstrating the original hope in these projects. At least in the beginning, the emphasis of such a project lay in bringing a new style of architecture into the historic center, already filled with eclectic-style buildings since the eighteenth century, which would in turn bring fresh air to architecture development and a sense of global connection to the city.

5.2 The International Competitions & Global Architecture

Just like the Hermitage and Dostoevsky museum, the Mariinskii Theater was an immediately available resource to promote the city brand. Its world-class ballet and opera troupe could accelerate the inherent potential of the city to boost the local economy. In this sense, when Gergiev received approval for the construction of the MT-2 from President Putin in 2001 and launched an architecture competition, city officials and cultural figures considered it an opportunity to promote a new post-Soviet St. Petersburg: a new architecture that harnessed to the reputation of the classic art.[93] Following the model of the Bilbao effect, based on the reputation of

[93] The Mariinskii Theater, along with the Hermitage, belongs to the Federal, not municipal government. The director needed to have a direct conversation with Putin to receive a guarantee about funding from the Federal Government. Already in 1997, Gergiev appealed to Yeltsin about the necessity of the second building. Yet the following economic crisis in 1998 required that he wait until Putin took over the office and the economic situation got better.

the Guggenheim and an emblematic building by the star architect Gehry, a new building would create an image that appealed to an external audience, including investors and tourists. Gergiev reportedly did not hide his ambition to become like the "person in Bilbao who succeeded in changing public opinion and brought billions of dollars to the city" at an official meeting after the project designed by Los Angeles architect Eric Owen Moss was discussed along with another project done by Petersburg architect Oleg Romanov.

The original tender in 2001 was held by the State Committee of the Russian Federation for Construction and Housing (informally referred to as Gosstroi) in Moscow to select a general contractor. Among the four bids, the Russian Finance Board and the development group Samitaur Smith from Los Angeles were accepted, each of whom appointed their own architects to produce a design: Gosstroi hired Russian architect Oleg Romanov, while Smith paired with Moss. The projects did not meet universal public approval: Aleksandr Sokurov, the director of *The Russian Ark*, assessed the two projects as "one with too little energy, the other too much." Between them, Moss's design, which features the amorphous melting and freezing forms of two iceberg structures made of glass and blue granite, had the greater leverage in the early 2000s Russia (figure 21). Its supporters viewed the future construction as a trigger to break from then current architectural practices and to develop illuminated architecture ("Mariinka-II: Kniga otzyvov 'Rosbalta'"). Grigorii Revzin, one of Russia's most prominent architectural critics and someone who closely followed the decision and construction process of the MT-2, expected this unique construction in the historic city to be a new Guggenheim in St. Petersburg (Revzin, "Dnevnik"). Gergiev knew he was taking a risk by hosting deconstructivist architecture on the Theater Square, surrounded by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings and beside the landmark theater built in the

neoclassical style in 1860. Yet, the preference for Moss's design reflected the cultural ambition of cultural elites, including Gergiev, to make the second theater a new post-Soviet landmark.

Figure 23 The Mariinskii Theater II by Eric Owen Moss (2002)

In addition, a more ambitious plan lay ahead for bigger urban renewal with a project to unify the Mariinskii Theater and the New Holland Island, which used to be a closed-off territory under military control until 1993 (Kotov; Revzin, "Na Mariinskii," "Ne sostoiavshiisia vyzov," 2002). In alignment with the new theater building, Moss suggested a third stage in glass ruins on New Holland. This project attempted to create a connected zone of culture and leisure ensemble at the city center like the Covent Garden in London and Lincoln Center in New York. According to Oleg Kharchenko, then one of the city's main architects, the plan was almost approved by the federal government (Likhachev 8). It would obviously not only attract tourists, but also rejuvenate the surrounding districts, similar to Bilbao (Revzin, "Nesostoiavshiisia").

Yet, despite support from Gosstroi, the American architect's deconstructivist design could not overcome staunch opposition from the locals. Unsurprisingly, the radical design caused an uproar not just among the general public, but also among local architects and municipal policy makers. Moss's own nickname for the amorphous figures of the radical design, "bags with garbage," ironically became used as a derogatory term in the press (Sobolev; Malinin). Most of the criticism was directed at the plan's dissonance with the city ensemble and tradition, along with the fact that the architect had no understanding of Petersburg culture and climate (Malinin). Simen Mikhailovskii, Vice Rector at St. Petersburg's Fine Arts Academy, considered this design as lacking a connection to a city defined by its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century architecture. Kharchenko refused Moss's design as flawed for the climate in St. Petersburg, where slush and dust would cover the glass surface of the buildings. Nikita Iavein, Russian architect and representative of the Committee for State Monitoring, Use, and Protection of Historical Monuments (KGIOP), reduced its design to show business. Gergiev and political figures from the federal government who were in favor of the project in the beginning, such as Minister of Culture Shvydkoi, gradually withdrew their opinions during scandalous debates. In consequence, the committee turned it into an architectural competition: a new international competition was announced in January 2003 by the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Utilities.

According to Shvydkoi, the competition would determine the dialogue "between new architecture and the city's architectural and cultural context" in the future St. Petersburg: "[...the] outcome [of the competition] will have a major effect both on the attitude of St. Petersburg residents and more widely and "the debate on construction of a new building will lead to contemplation on art and its place in public life" (Likhacheva 2). In this vein, the importance of this competition was on par with the 300th anniversary, as then Deputy Minister of Culture

Vladimir Malyshev pointed out in a press conference (Nesterov). The committee for the MT-2 invited six Russian and six foreign architects, including Moss, Hans Hollein (Austria), Erick van Egeraat (Netherlands), Arata Isozaki (Japan), Mario Botta (Switzerland), and Dominique Perrault (France). Such a major competition with international architects participating had not been held for a long time in Russian history. The first international competition in Russian history took place in the 1930s for the Palace of Soviets in Moscow, a project that was never realized.[94] Unlike the one held in the Soviet period, however, the general assumption was that international participants' odds were better than Russian ones, even though Gergiev assured the chance of winning to Russian architects, whose talent was no less than that of international participants.[95]

The brand name of the star architects and democratic sensibility of the competition were regarded as a panacea for the other issues concerning such a new construction at the historic center, brought up by the locals. The first international competition in the post-Soviet Russia took place in order to cultivate local approval for a global-style building, following the Western model of democratic process. An iconic building by a famous architect would itself provide a perfect excuse for the demolition of old buildings and periodic-stylistic cacophony of the surrounding ensemble and act as a persuasive symbol to the locals (Shvydkoi).

The participants were given four months to create their projects and the eleven projects were presented to the public in June 2003 at the St. Petersburg Arts Academy for two and a half

[94] The 1931 competition for the Palace of the Soviets invited star architects of that period, such as Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius. Yet the project by the Soviet architect Boris Iofan, which proposed the building of the reactionary, neoclassical style, beat the other projects, which mostly represented avant-garde, modern style by international architects. Neoclassism is considered to be dominating style of the Stalinist period in the 1930s.

[95] In the interview, the architect Sergei Kiselov, who mainly worked in Moscow, knew that either foreign architect or Petersburg architect would win this competition. Regardless, he agreed to participate in it (Shervud; Tarkhanov).

weeks before the juries made their decision.[96] The winner turned out to be Perrault, well-known for the glass-and-steel National Library of France. His project defeated ultra-modern structures and more conservative Russian ones. According to Revzin, who attended the juries' meeting, ten out of thirteen juries voted in favor of Perrault's design and two for Hollein's. The missing vote was Gergiev, since he left during Moss's presentation ("Mariinskii-tupik 2"). But in his interview with the *Financial Times* at the close of the White Night Festival, he expressed his satisfaction with the result. French architect Perrault's design, named "the Gold Cocoon," featured a black marble building covered with glimmering golden surface which would serve as a golden mask. Through the multi-faceted glass shell, the upper stories would look like a terrace open to the pedestrian view. Also, the new opera house would be linked with the old one through an extendable bridge over the Kriukov Canal (figure 23).

[96] The two Russian architects, Andrei Bokov and Oleg Romanov, submitted one project as a team.

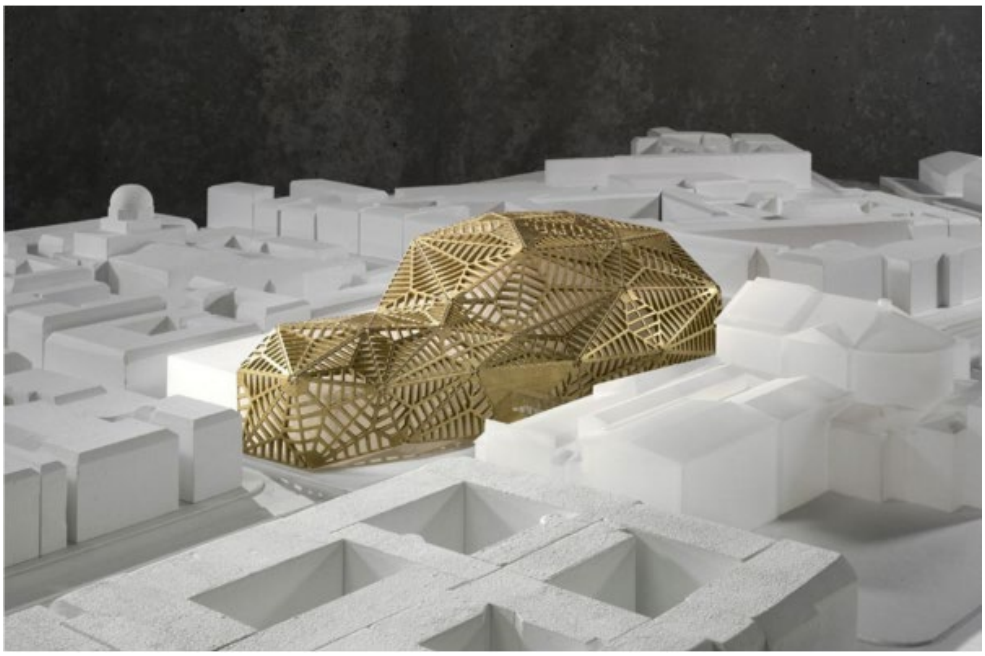

Figure 24 The Mariinskii Theater II by Dominique Perrault (2003)

In illustrations of his project, Perrault carefully insisted that his modern construction would perfectly plug into the historic ensemble at the Theater square. The unobtrusive modern building inside a gold canopy seemed a good negotiation after the uproar over Moss's original design.[97] Local professionals accepted his design with cautious welcome or skeptical silence. First, it was selected in a more publicized way. The juries included not only influential figures like Gergiev and Piotrovskii, but also international professionals such as Bill Lacy, executive director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, Joseph Clark, the technology director at the Metropolitan Opera House at New York, and Colin Amery, the director of the World Monuments Fund in Britain. Compared to the other experimental projects, the design of the French architect resonated more with Petersburg ensembles of golden domes and spires. From the beginning, as Amery expressed in an

[97] Moss slightly changed details of the original design for the competition.

interview, concerns appeared about the cost and sustainability of the gold canopy. But the decision was made in the early 2000s, when confidence was high about the future economy of Russia, including St. Petersburg. In this vein, the first international competition in the post-Soviet Russia was successful in reducing fiery responses from the locals. At the same time, it obviously boosted general interest and provoked further enthusiastic responses to architecture and cityscape among the public, revealing the ideal image of cityscape that those who are attached to the city imagine.[98]

The cityscape was comprised of the ensembles of buildings from the eighteenth and nineteenth century and its low skyline has been the city's identity and pride. New buildings inside and nearby the historic center, which gradually began to appear with the privatization of property from the 1990s, were not without controversies. Local antipathy towards the new constructions that replaced old buildings was widespread. The general perception was that glass and steel constructions, which could be found in any developing city, went against "our" typical Petersburg landscape. Hatred toward this type, called glass-ism (*stakanizm*) could be seen in sarcastic articles and blog posts online (Sidorov).[99] The building of Regent Hall on Vladimirskii Prospect, for example, was criticized for destroying the architectural ensemble with its poor aesthetics and its dissonance with the neighboring Del'vig House and the Vladimirskaia Church on the opposite side, mainly built in the eighteenth century. Such buildings' overpowering visual intrusion among the baroque and neoclassical buildings was considered a threat to the historic cityscape and local identity by capitalist invasion.

[98] The newspaper agency Rosbalt published collective interviews of professionals and ordinary citizens about opinions on the eleven designs, who visited the exhibition of the MT-2 designs. See "Mariinka-II: Kniga otzyvov 'Rosbalta.'"

[99] The term appeared in Ivan Sikorov's article: it is a derivative word with the suffix -ism attached to the word *stakan*, which means a drinking glass.

Strong opposition to Moss's original design of the MT-2 originated as a continuation of this anxiety. Architecture design, which aspires to be global and unique, often does not take the local context into account. Even though Moss emphasized the city's historical reference to "window to Europe," and topographical connection to water and ice, its visual intrusion harmed the city's own urban pride of ensembles. The MT-2 winner, a glass construction covered with golden domes and spires, seemed to be a good compromise, embracing the local ambience; its canopy resonated with the iconic Imperial buildings in the historic center, like the Admiralty Spire and St. Isaac's Cathedral.[100]

Yet, the controversy over constructing the new MT-2 never faded out, even after the government canceled the contract with Perrault in 2007 on account of technological mistakes and the violation of several city building codes. One of the main issues in these discussions lay in the style of the architecture, which developed into a general discussion of whether a certain style of architecture should be allowed at the historic center. In an extreme case, Aleksandr Margolis, the head of the VOOPlik,[101] regarded anything new at the center as vandalism or barbarism (Leonova). On the other hand, many indeed shared opinions that the city needed further development in

[100] Revzin explained the decision-making process: "This is the road of anxiety that touches upon the magnificent historical fabric of St. Petersburg and to the decision to tear it down and throw it aside. Or, if you descend from heaven to earth, the path from confrontation with the Petersburg architectural bureaucracy to a compromise with it. In general, half a million for such is not that many" (341).

[101] The All-Russian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments (VOOPlik) was formed in 1965 with the permission of the government. It constitutes one of the conservative civic organizations that tried to preserve and restore the heritage including churches and monasteries in the late Soviet years. It was one of the unique instances in the Soviet years where conservative aesthetics or philosophy served as a basis for civic movement.

On the other hand, the Living City is another one of the preservationist civic groups, founded in 2006 as a reaction to Gazprom's Okhta Center. It consists of amateur-volunteers among the general public who cherish the historic city, rather than professional architects or historians. One of the activities they put effort into is not only weekly meetings and small demonstration in front of endangered historic buildings, but also online activity.

architecture and urban planning. Aleksei LePorc, art critic, who then taught at the European University in St. Petersburg, said that conservatism about architecture prevented anything new from penetrating the city domain, which which Harvey might characterize as the result of the "nurturing of uncritical aesthetic experiences" (168). [102]

The discussion in the public sphere, as well as on private blogs deeply related to the local identity and urban development, continued and evolved in a more active and organized way with the more controversial project, the Okhta Center.[103] The first international competition in post-Soviet Russia became the norm for such urban projects in St. Petersburg as the New Holland, the Okhta Center and the Kirov Stadium. For each, an array of foreign star architects is invited to participate in the projects: the Kirov Stadium was won by Kisho Kurosawa; the New Holland project was won by Norman and Foster; and most controversial one, the Okhta Center, then called Gazprom City, was won by the RMJM (Revzin, "Mezhdu").[104]

In its function and controversies, Gazprom City is distinguished from the MT-2 case: above all, the MT-2 represents the potent ambition for culture-led development in the city that could harness the simultaneous expression of the traditional and the contemporary, while the Okhta Center clearly works in a capitalist landscape for entrepreneurial purposes. But both constructions reflect the ambition and desire to create a new city personality through aesthetically and socio-economically global, non-traditional construction in St. Petersburg. Thus, they encountered severe

[102] The European University is a private institution, established after the collapse of the Soviet Union, well-known for its liberal stance. See Satana.

[103] Most of opinions and polls that the author used in this paper is based on articles and following comments in local and national newspaper (*Nevastroika*, *Fantanka*, *Kommersant, Novaya Gazeta*), architecture forums, the civic preservationist organization website, such as Living City, bashen.net, and social networking service, like *LiveJournal*.

[104] Revzin explains several reasons behind the preference for foreign architects in the huge projects, regardless of their international fame: they would easily comply with requests of clients, due to their lack of knowledge about the Russian situation and its architecture.

opposition from those who regarded the local cityscape as threatened by global architecture and capitalist invasion: threats could come from the demolition of historic buildings or from a construction's unharmonious visual intrusion into the architectural ensemble, due to its materials, design, and height (figure 23).

Figure 25 Okhta Center (Gazprom-Citi) by RMJM (2006)

In 2006, an international competition took place for the office tower of Gazprom Neft', a new subsidiary of Russia's largest gas company Gazprom, the majority of which is owned by the federal government. With financial support from the municipal government, a skyscraper was supposed to rise in the former industrial zone of the Okhta District, located across the Neva River opposite the Smol'ny Complex. Seen from the historic center, a new modern-style construction would evidently loom over the eighteenth-century turquoise Smol'ny Cathedral. The Okhta Center

was a truly ambitious plan that would transform the aesthetic dimension of the cityscape, as well as its socio-economic geography.

The competition was under severe attack from almost all sectors of society, including local professionals. First of all, the St. Petersburg Union of Architects vetoed the competition and published an open letter on the issue. UNESCO expressed worries about the skyscraper's influence on the preservation of the historic landscape. During the competitions, star architects Kisho Kurokawa, Norman Foster, and Rafael Vinoly left the jury, allegedly in conflict with the city administration.

All the design at the final stage were high towers, accepting the client's request. Indeed, the visual intrusion over the iconic low skyline, regarded as the city's "genetic code" since Peter the Great, was unavoidable.[105] When the exhibition opened to the public, some expressed positive opinions about some designs on the final entry, but it could not change the majority opinions (Rezunkov). Compared to responses to MT-2, similar, but more aggressive criticism emerged against the skyscraper. The Petersburg writer Daniil Granin said in his interview, "all the projects [...] lack something inherent to St. Petersburg [...] Such a building could be constructed any place in the world" (Ivanov and Gordeev).[106] This requirement of an ambience that is "something inherent" seems to be the dominant perspective in the architectural representation. This locality, which could be defined as the ambience of the whole ensemble rather than one specific style, could

[105] The distinguished philologist, medievalist, and linguist Dmitrii Likhachev described the low skyline as the city's "genetic code, founded by Peter the Great" in his interview about the unrealized project of the 130-meter tower, built as the business center in 1994. He saw it as capitalism's degradation of the Isaac Cathedral, focus of spiritual life in the city, and moreover then the tallest building in the historic center (Dolgopiatova and Soboleva)

[106] According to 87-year-old famous writer and honorable Petersburger Daniil Granin, all the projects are interesting, but none of them has anything inherently Petersburg. Such buildings could be built in any city in the world. The architects could not find or reflect anything Petersburg in the projects, they lack the uniqueness of St. Petersburg.

hamper any new construction, particularly glass-façade buildings, and forestall the development of the architecture and urban planning.

Yet, these consequences could not be attributed to conservative aesthetics or provincialism. The controversies over the project spanned a much wider spectrum of issues concerning the economic and geographical dimensions and socio-political issues underlying in the city and the state. The criticism was aimed at the height and location of the tower, as well as the design in the style of global architecture. When the RMJM design won the competition, this decision made behind closed doors threw more fuel on the controversies. The British company, less known compared to the other participants, envisioned a tower 396 meters high. Its flame-shaped building and height would make Gazprom's symbolic importance in the cityscape and city economy immediately visible. For many, the design not only looked less unique and creative than expected for an icon of a twenty-first-century city, but also looked like a repetition of an outdated modern legacy that seeks authority in straightforward symbolism and height. The soaring skyscraper over the low skyline likewise embodied the authoritarian attitude of the largest, state-controlled gas company and the city government during the project. As expected, the decision-making process was not open to the public. Even though residents could vote for their favorite design online and offline at the exhibition, voting was only one factor in the decision.

The competitions were launched in the hope that grandiose architecture would be a powerful token in the battle for urban development, skillfully used as an urban booster. In the Gazprom case, however, the names of star architects were instrumental to the long-lasting resistance to the tall building, which ultimately ended in the project's failure. Ilka and Andreas Ruby described the competition as a "farce," which "conjures up a shining image of beauty" to polish up the corporate's reputation and its project, similar to the competition of the Palace of the

Soviet, where foreign architects merely played supporting roles for the Soviet ideology. figures but are placed above a table.

5.3 Revival of the Imperial Capital against the Imperial Museum-City

To validate the new aesthetics of the official mega-project, the new urban projects were wrapped in language that fought "the museum-city" discourses. The epithet was half-praise and half-criticism, hinting simultaneously at the preservation and neglect of old buildings in the Soviet years that passed without major urban development. The anxiety associated with the widespread image of a museum-city stuck in the imperial period was commonly shared by not only political elites and businessmen, but also radical cultural figures like the activist group *Chto delat'* in the early 2000s, when the whole city was in preparation for the 300th anniversary of the city's birth. The huge amount of money put into reconstruction and remodeling of the old palaces and museums brought some concerns among the cultural elites, while the infrastructure of non-historic sites and residential areas was falling apart.

Governor Valentina Matvienko and city officials repetitively insisted in their speeches that the city should not be reduced to an open-door museum: it is a living organism. Matvienko's defense of a skyscraper concerned both economic and architectural development: the city could be developed only through "brave and groundbreaking architecture like the Gazprom-City" (Polianskii; Likhanova). After her visit to the exhibition of the Gazprom-City project at the Academy of Art, she expressed the opinion that the city needed to find a new way to develop city

architecture; in this sense, contemporary architecture is unavoidable (Shvetsov).[107] The socio-economic effect of new architecture was the leading argument: the Okhta Center served as a functional building to host the headquarters of Gazprom Neft', which was originally located in Omsk and Chukotka. It was also part of Matvienko's world-city project of inviting large firms to relocate their headquarters, with the promise of subsidies to attract major taxpayers. As a result, the city collected about US $0.5 billion in tax solely from Gazprom Neft' in 2006 after its reregistration to the city (Golubchikov 635-7). Moreover, the brand of the Gazprom and the skyscraper would create a new image for the city, attract more investment to the neglected former industrial region and its neighborhood, and in general improve the investment climate of the city.

In online conversations among commentators, participants compare the city to a diverse range of other world-cities: St. Petersburg should not follow the Venice model that completely reduces the city to a tourist spot; nor it should not follow the Paris model, where Mitterrand's grand project deformed and disfigured the cityscape. Whichever European city the post-Soviet Petersburg should be modeled on, the Gazprom Neft′ mega-project was part of an ambition to put the city back onto the world map, particularly onto the European one, in an attempt to leave behind its Soviet history as a periphery cut away from Europe. This view goes with what Matvienko presented in the governor's annual address to the municipal legislative assembly on 29 March 2006: "we will return it [St. Petersburg] to its legitimate place in Russia, Europe and the world. We walked away -forever, believe me- from forgetfulness, neglect, and provincialism, into which the city was artificially driven for decades."

[107] Matvienko claimed that "we cannot construct 'ships' and '*khrushchevka*' any more. We need to find a new way to develop the city architecture." *Khrushchevka* is a nickname for a low-cost type of apartment buildings, built in concrete or bricks, which developed during the time of Nikita Khrushchev in the 1960s. Such buildings are widespread throughout the former territory of the Soviet Union, including St. Petersburg, outside the historic center.

Urban development projects in St. Petersburg revived its former socio-economic dimension under the Russian Empire, but, ironically, at the expense of imperial landscape. In this vein, developers' rhetoric was frequently brought up from the city history, even harking back to the mythology of Peter the Great. The invitation of foreign architects was claimed to be a part of the long tradition, which also justified the demolition of old buildings and construction of non-traditional architecture: "the initial Petersburg tradition has revived after a century's break from the past, the cultural objects are constructed and reconstructed through the projects of leading foreign architects."[108]

In June 2006, during his speech at the Honorary Citizen Award Ceremony in St. Petersburg, President Putin used the expression "the unprecedented is coming (*Nebyvaloe byvaet*)," taking the example of the MT-2, which had been attacked for a design that was technologically implausible and unsuitable to the city climate. This phrase was derived from the inscription, "*nebyvaemoe byvaet*," on a medal that was coined to commemorate the unprecedented victory of the Russian navy over the Swedish army and seizure of the Nyenschantz Fortress in 1703, which became the foundation of St. Petersburg. The phrase also invokes Peter's myth, in which a city is created from the swamp against the forces of nature.

While building the foundation in the Okhta region, where the Nyenschantz Fortress was located, Gazprom appropriated this expression without hesitation as the Okhta Center's motto. The promotional booklet, titled "*Nebyvaloe byvaet*," compared the construction to Peter's project,

[108] This is taken from the same speech by Matvienko on 29 March 2006, cited in the chapter. Hereby, the governor pointed out the MT-2 and the New Holland Project, which Norman Foster had won in the competition, since it was before the Gazprom competition. True, the major buildings that comprise the current cityscape were mostly built by foreign architects in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, such as Francesco Rastrelli, Carlo Rossi and Giacomo Quarenghi.

calling it traditional Petersburg construction in the sense that it created something unprecedented and future-oriented (Gazprom-Neft'). This naive slogan could be seen on the fence panels that secured the Okhta construction site, which repetitively appeared in the media; it emphasized the historic connection of the future-oriented construction against the preservationists' movement for the traditional cityscape and low skyline, and an attempt to affirm the weak place-based identity of Gazprom Neft', which was previously located in the other regions and belong to the Gazprom of Moscow. Through this historical reference, the Okhta Center acts as a symbol of a new era.

The governor even criticized the height regulation and citizens' obsession with the skyline, which became the biggest obstruction for the new project. Even though the governor and Gazprom emphasized the legitimacy of the project, since Okhta district is located outside the technical boundary of the historic center, opponents accused it of having a fatal impact on the panorama of the historic center and a catalytic effect of a contagious spread of soaring towers near the center. In Matvienko's view, for the cause of implementing socio-economic changes, inhabitants' aesthetically pleasing experiences were a second priority. In this vein, the regulation was attacked as a sign of degradation and stagnation, reducing buildings less than 24 meters in height to mere "boxes" (Shmyglevskaia). The governor was even ready to sacrifice St. Petersburg's status as a UNESCO world heritage site for new construction, which all sectors of society attacked.[109] Shortly after the announcement of the RMJM as the winner, the Kremlin, which is practically in control

[109] Already in 2006 UNESCO expressed concern over the skyscraper project and the World Monuments Fund listed the low skyline of St. Petersburg in 100 most endangered sites in 2007, which the municipal government and the corporate ignored, repeating in the press that it would not happen.

of the state-owned Gazprom, strategically distanced itself from the controversies of this project in the beginning, but Putin was known to give tacit approval to the plan.[110]

In this identity conflict, the aesthetic experience became a socio-political identity that enhanced community solidarity against rapid urban development, driven by capitalism and globalism, as Iurchak has argued.[111] The solidarity developed into an organized protest under the slogan of "this is our city," borrowed from Lefebvre's term, as a way to respond to neoliberal urban politics (Likhanova). The projects seem to be a phenomenon of the struggles between anti-globalization and pro-globalization forces in the socio-economic development and urban planning. The aspiration for a world-city and economic boost at the expense of everyday aesthetics, endorsed by political elites, collided with the preservationist notion to protect the public imagination of city.

In this discourse, the Okhta Center comes to carry a self-referential symbolic role, rather than being appraised for its actual use, which comprises no more than offices and an observation deck. In the case that this symbolic meaning falls short, the skyscraper becomes no more than the corporate ego, backed by the government. As journalist Anna Tolstova notes, "if Europe considers the construction "barbaric (*dikar'*)," then the ideology behind the construction has come to a dead end" (Tolstova). In this case, the Okhta Center's monumental architecture ends up merely enhancing the institutional status and social prestige of the owners. The motto borrowed from Peter's mythology is no more than the trivialization of history. While aesthetic experiences that

[110] Putin distanced himself from the controversies in the press conference by three sentences: he expressed anxiety that the skyscraper is remarkably near the historic center. Petersburg needs "some momentum," "fresh air," "active business center." "I do not want to interfere the decision of the municipal government." Yet, the interview of the RMJM in 2010 shows his distance could have been non-public, tacit approval. See Tolstova's article and "Soavtor proekta 'Okhta-Tsentra': Stroitel'stvo neboskreba podderzhivaet Putin," from *Grani.Ru*.

[111] Yurchak argues that aesthetics have become a resource of political movements in relation to the history of Petersburg's architecture. See his article, "Aesthetic Politics in St. Petersburg: Skyline at the Heart of Political Opposition."

could bring changes to the everyday life of inhabitants are second priority, the controversial height and location would bring attractive benefits for the owner and those who would be able to afford to pay for its view on the historic center.

In this sense, for Petersburgers, Gazprom was an invader that could destroy the local identity. Many posters and flyers made reference to the history in the march In defense of St. Petersburg, identifying Gazprom with the historical enemies: one borrowed the image and phrases of the Siege of Leningrad in the WWII and the other makes an explicit link to Soviet mobilization posters from the Civil War and WWII, equating Gazprom to the White Army during the Civil War and the Nazi invaders in WWII and encouraging people to attend protest.[112] Peter's ghost also hovered over this side, as well as Gazprom's side. One poster urged protests, showing the Bronze Horseman fighting against a windmill, referring to Don Quixote, with the slogan "Help Peter" (Minakov). A group of young activists held a picket near the Bronze Horseman that described Gazprom as Godzilla and urged a central figure to kill it. In the illustration, the statue of Peter not only makes a parallel image between Godzilla and the serpent, trampled by the horse, but also represents the preservationists' intimate link to the city's history and identity (Dixon, "Gazprom versus the skyline" 46).

Furthermore, the non-democratic process of the project left the thinly-disguised slogan with a certain truth. In this vein, the Okhta Center motto's historical comparison with Peter's feat, ironically pertained to this tradition. The mythology of the great human being who built the magnificent city on swamp and transformed Russia into a Europeanized, modernized empire always went hand in hand with criticism of his despotism and following sacrifice of human beings

[112] Images of Posters and flyers, and photos of the demonstrations can still be found on the website, www.bashne.net, which is specifically made to forestall the skyscraper at the Okhta.

for the construction. In this vein, the imperial capital of St. Petersburg was urban planning at the will of a despot, with images of grandeur palaces and squares polarized against the shabby, unplanned residential areas for the commons.[113]

The historical metaphor, which tries to rest on Peter's greatness, rather points out the other side of his ambivalent character. It reveals the dictatorial, nontransparent decision making and bureaucratic practice of contemporary urban planning, as well as the autocratic/imperial desire of the corporate power to dominate the city skyline regardless of people's opposition. The construction relied on the unequivocal corporate money and power, intimately allied to the central politics. The public hearings about the Okhta Center, held twice in January and June 2008, were a "farce" with a veneer of democratic procedure, according to local activist Aleksandr Karpov: the administration invited paid supporters to act against opponents, offered inaccurate information, completely ignored critical issues, and used the police force to interfere (Strel'nikova; Vishnevskii). Boris Nikolashchenko, head of the Architecture and Planning Office, pointed out that the government's complete disregard of public opinions of the present days could not be found even in the 1970s, when a plan to demolish the buildings of the Apraksin Dvor, a market established from the eighteenth century, was withdrawn in acceptance of the people's opinion (Likhanova). In comparison, activists brought up the Stalinist project of the Palace of the Soviets, which had dominated the background of the Soviet utopia during the Stalinist period. In the

[113] The chapter "Petersburg: The Modernism of Underdevelopment" in Marshall Berman's book *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, describes the contradictory aspects of modern urban life in St. Petersburg, covering the city's history and culture. Also, classic literature, such as Pushkin's *Bronze Horseman*, Gogol's *Petersburg Tales* and Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment*, reflects the ambiguous characteristics of Peter the Great and dark side of the nineteenth-century modern city.

comparison, the underlying Stalinist ideology simply changed to neoliberal capitalism under the slogan of development and globalism.

5.4 Ideal Cityscape: Contested Site and Spatial Hierarchy

Preservationists started protests against the new construction of the MT-2 for similar and different reasons. While the Okhta Center was a functional building owned by a private corporation, the importance of the MT-2 project lay in the redevelopment of the neighboring districts along with the construction of a new building with aid from the federal government, Moscow. Therefore, the opposing opinions against the MT-2 project reflect more complicated issues and reveal the whole range of the ideal historic center that the locals imagined, dependent on generations, socio-economic status, and political stance.

When Gergiev asserted the necessity of a second theater, his intention was well-meant. The main building, built in 1860, did not contain enough space for its employees. Performances of contemporary productions require a bigger stage for technical equipment and systems. The necessity of the second stage and rebranding of the Mariinskii Theater through a new global construction would undoubtedly enhance the city image of the classic art and improve the local potentiality of the physical place and its neighborhood. Overall, it would recreate a “brandscape” of culture inside the historic center.

Yet, the location of the MT-2 construction site became problematic, since it was not an empty site. Gergiev lobbied for many years to host the second building near the main one and as a result received a whole quarter across the Kriukov Canal. Certainly, he had in mind two monumental opera houses standing side by side; one in the nineteenth century Imperial style and

the other in postmodern style. But the quarter included not only residential buildings and a school, but also the Palace of Culture of the First Five Year Plan in 1956 and a fragment of a historic building from the Litovskii Market built in 1789 by Giacomo Quarenghi, the façade of which was enlisted for preservation in 2001 in KGIOP.

The possible demolition of the buildings summoned a whole range of reactions. There was almost no dispute among the locals that the eighteenth-century Litovskii Market building should be preserved.[114] The genuinely contested site was the Palace of Culture.[115] Constructed in the eclectic style favored during the Stalinist period, the building was hardly considered to be a masterpiece of St. Petersburg. Also, the omnipresence of Stalinist buildings throughout the former territory of the Soviet Union reduced its historical importance. But the logic behind preservationists' claims was based on visual integrity or the harmonious ensemble of architecture at the historic center; the aesthetic value of each building can mean less than a whole ensemble of buildings to which it belongs in determining its value for preservation. For preservationists, a new building seemed much more problematic than the eclectic-style Soviet building had been for the nineteenth-century city.

[114] Meanwhile, in 2005 the developers destroyed the whole building without any notice, leaving only the historic façade alone. Then, the firm shortly received permission from the KGIOP to remove the façade, as well, for the reason that it was now crumbling beyond repair. This process has been very commonly practiced by developers in St. Petersburg since the 2000s. The general public unanimously criticized developers, corrupt or easy-going city officials, and bureaucratism for the loss of the Litovskii Market façade. Eventually, the façade was restored and attached to the modern building completed in 2013, which shocked the public with its disharmony and cheesiness.

[115] The Palace of Culture was initially constructed in constructivist style by the architect N. A. Miturich and V. P. Makashov in 1930. Yet, following the changes of the political and aesthetic atmosphere in the 1930s, the attitude toward constructivist building became negative, particularly in its dissonance with the surrounding urban structures (Krichevskii; qtd. Daianov). Therefore, the building was reconstructed in the neo-Imperial style in 1957. Read Mikishat'ev for more in detail about the Palace of Culture of the First Five Year Plan on Dekabrist street in St. Petersburg.

On the other hand, some online comments did not hide their antipathy toward MT-2 because of the political resonance of its birth and displacement of the Palace of Culture. The demolition of a totalitarian relic might have been less problematic in the early 1990s, when the Soviet legacy were identified with outdated remnants. But in the 2000s, awareness of the historic value of Soviet heritage gradually grew and Soviet buildings began to be accepted as historic monuments, despite the ongoing controversy about their artistic value. Above all, Gergiev's interview clearly reveals the logic behind his own stance: he did not see either aesthetic or historic value in the building and added that it "belongs to Leningrad, not St. Petersburg" (Odintsova). This explanation clarifies popular ideas about how the city should be defined in relation to history. That is, regardless of one's attitude toward Soviet history, the city and its center should be solely identified with the imperial history.

Yet, regardless of the controversies among the public including preservationist about whether to secure the Stalinist architecture, the buildings were destined to fall. From the beginning, the MT-2 project was initiated based on the demolition of all the buildings. In the competition book, Kharchenko wrote that destruction could be justified "if it was to be replaced with something truly exceptional, which was yet another argument in support of the competition" (Likhacheva 15). They hoped a unique building by a star architect could assuage their opponents. Among the entries in the 2003 competition, the only project that grafted the past to the present was from the Russian team, Andrei Bokov and Oleg Romanov. They suggested reusing the Palace of Culture, indicating respect and sympathy for the Soviet-era building: their design of MT-2 incorporated the façade of the Stalinist building. Even though the competition's concept was advertised as a dialogue between the past and the present, their project did not win and this idea of preservation was not accepted

by the city officials. The project leaders intended to construct a whole new building that would represent a new post-Soviet St. Petersburg.

A few interviews done by correspondents in person that appeared in articles and journals reveal a different approach to this site.[116] As Nathaniel Trumbull depicted in detail in his article, those in-person interviews invited Petersburg residents from generations who had witnessed the development of the city over a longer term and who possibly had more personal sentiment attached to the Palace of Culture. The Palace functioned as a special community locus during the Leningrad period. It was an open and accessible cultural facility that contained a library, a movie theater and several rooms for dancing, billiards, bowling, gym, etc., so that ordinary citizens could spend time with each other.

One interviewee, an old woman, recounted her memory of the Palace of Culture: it was the place where the Soviet comedian Arkadii Raikin performed, as well as his son. Since her childhood, she had frequently visited the place until it closed. But her last visit to the Mariinskii was in the late 1990s, due to rising ticket prices. Her bitter feelings about urban renewal are well represented in her statement that "we lost a resting place, and instead get one more hall for new Russians (*novye russkie*) and foreigners" (Ivanov 2005). Nora's concept of *lieu de mémoire* works as a useful term: the site of memory disappears as the sense of history develops in modern society. In resolving St. Petersburg's identity into a set of pre-Soviet, high-cultural artifacts, memory is reduced to personal sentiment toward the bygone era and the site of memory is replaced by an emblematic monument that would be shared and used by exclusive people. In addition, the interviewee's uncomfortable feeling toward a group of tourists dropping by the Mariinskii Theater

[116] This part is indebted to Trumbull's article, who wrote in detail about relationship between *lieux de mémoire* and the Palace of Culture.

clearly shows the dark side of this culture-led development. An easily accessible facility where ordinary people can enjoy playing billiards, dancing, gymnastics, etc., is replaced by a prestigious facility for high culture. The cost of tickets at the Mariinskii has soared since the 1990s and the old woman, who was probably living on her pension, could hardly afford such expensive tickets (Polianskii). Instead, the opera house is being filled with international tourists; the revenue they bring to the local economy hardly trickles down to people like her.

Yet, this memory was a rare issue in online discussions, which are usually conducted by the comparably young generation. One comment wondered why people would care about the elimination of a "billiard room," which has no cultural importance. Those who had a deep attachment to the Palace of Culture as a *lieu de mémoire* or who treated the building as a familiar construction in everyday life or a remnant of the totalitarian regime in the Soviet years knew that public space was being replaced by cultural space for privileged classes: tickets for the new stage would not be readily affordable to those who frequently visit the former community building. But other Petersburg residents perceived its importance at the national level, not in the local level, similar to the case of the Hermitage. High, elite culture, originating from the imperial heritage that represents great Russian and Petersburg culture and attract more international tourists, was worth sacrificing public space for.

While controversies persist, the easy solution that could resolve the keen issues came up in journalists' articles, private blogs, and anonymous comments online, one that was similar to that used in the future case of Gazprom. Some proposed that the MT-2 be constructed outside the historic center. There, Perrault's postmodern building would not harm the visual integrity of the historic ensembles in the Theater square and require the demolition of the historic monuments. Moreover, a new branch of the Mariinskii Theater would contribute better to the local and regional

economy in the suburban area, which lacked cultural institutions, including an opera theater. It is also directly related to the question whether an additional theater was necessary in the historic center, which is already filled with three traditional opera theaters including the Mariinskii, and dozens of small concert halls and drama theaters.

But Gergiev insisted on the current location. Indeed, it is much more convenient and effective for the director to manage the whole theater complex if the two buildings sit side by side. He wanted them to be connected through a bridge so that sets could be transferred easily. Tourists who stay in the city for only a couple of days would rarely visit the site in the outskirts to watch operas.

In addition, the location was a matter of symbolic, as well as practical value for the director, as the new architecture aimed at forming not only technical, but also "conceptual and artistic whole" (Likhachev 19). Additionally, the claim that an outskirt branch is not the Mariinskii anymore was rooted in the geographical hierarchy of culture that Petersburgers long had in mind (Polianskii). The outskirts of St. Petersburg, where ugly, crumbling buildings from the late Soviet period are gradually replaced with box-style modern buildings for dwelling and business, are not appropriate for housing high culture. Only the center is identified with high culture, classic music, and the imperial heritage. New buildings should constitute a post-Soviet landmark in form, but align with St. Petersburg and national identity in content. The historic center must sustain its privileged position. One commentator expressed his or her doubt that anyone would go to see operas in the city's outskirts. The conservative hierarchy of space in the city was not negotiable either for influential figures or the general public. No matter what new architecture, which would put heavier pressure on the historic center by bringing more people and increasing traffic, reinforces the uneven effects in the urban topography.

Gergiev's stubborn insistence on the location of MT-2 reveals that the public-benefit ethos is not his main concern, although he received public subsidies in the form of federal funds and municipal land at the core of the city. The historic center is already crowded with visitors, cultural institutions, and businesses, small or big, which means the new MT-2 would hardly change the economic or social landscape of the city. It strengthens the already present symbolic, cultural, and political value of the center. Indeed, he was not obliged to put justice in the urban development in his priority before his work running the Mariinskii as its chief director. But the problem lay in the fact that policy makers, other cultural figures and the general public had only a vague and abstract idea about how to utilize culture for further urban development.

When the Bilbao effect was reportedly introduced as the major model for the MT-2 project, new construction was expected to trigger changes that draw upon the explicit potential of the place. The Bilbao effect is a consequence of amalgamating three ingredients, according to Klingmann: "an emblematic icon, a global trademark and a signature architect" (240). The well-established brand of the Mariinskii Theater would merge with the global construction of a star architect and transform its image into one that fits into the twenty-first century and represents the city. Yet, it is not an easy task to develop or transform an urban identity solely through emblematic buildings. Its success largely lies in organic communication with the locals. In Bilbao, the culture-led project expected Frank Gehry's postmodern building for the Guggenheim Museum not only to attract visitors to Bilbao, but also to encourage the proliferation of small businesses. That is why such buildings have been successful as urban renewal projects for abandoned post-industrial sites. Bilbao was the only successful case among the culture-led development that later followed its model, a new construction of any cultural institution (Plaza).

Both Matvienko and Gergiev had no interest in creating a building for the community. The potential architecture would function as a high-technology opera theater and as a symbol: a unique postmodern architectural structure by Perrault inside the historic center. Yet, its capacity to instigate changes in the urban renewal and economic growth was under question. MT-2 failed to make a connection with the locals. The new architecture would bestow a new dimension of cultural identity on the place, but hardly change the experience of the city for inhabitants and visitors. It failed to offer a dimension of social belonging, a failure which was already expected from the beginning of the project. The opera theater inevitably offered limitations for engagement for the locals due to lower accessibility, at least compared to a museum.[117] The original plan by Moss to connect Theater Square and Holland Island, which would inevitably bring urban development of the neighboring district, died on the drawing board.

These projects illuminated people's opinions about the nature of St. Petersburg in post-Soviet Russia and what was imagined to be embedded in the urban fabric of the historic center. The city was identified with the high, elite culture of the historic center, based on the materiality and visibility of the harmonious ensemble of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, often to the exclusion of Leningrad-era architecture. People are actors who shape their urban landscape, which in turn shapes their conceptions of the city. Their identity is developed and surrounded by the urban landscape. This cycle explains Petersburgers' attitudes toward certain aesthetics, specific spaces and high art, whether they function in the urban development positively or negatively. For some, these attitudes remain in personal memory or sentiment, with very small impact on the city's development. Other actors, particularly the city and federal authorities, along with influential

[117] Much higher ticket prices and restricted opening times only during performances inevitably restrict its engagement of the public.

cultural figures, had ambitions to stimulate the economy and transform the outdated city identity by enhancing the visual quality the city or just changing the visual components. But for both parties, this struggle for visual integration perpetuates the existing cultural and spatial hierarchy: what they are shaped from, what they are familiar with, what they identify themselves as.

5.5 Afterword

In the two mega-projects discussed, what the city officials and owners desired was a "shocking" effect. In the form of either a skyscraper that soars up in the skyline or postmodern architecture with a star architect's name attached, a unique, extravaganza construction that was visible in everyday life and easily transmittable as a background in visual media would immediately change the city image. Architecture that struck the world with "awe" against the background of the traditional landscape would bring attention to the city, along with investors and tourists. In this vein, the mythology of Peter the Great mentioned in Putin's speech essentially worked as a better analogy than the Bilbao case. The projects relied on influential people and neoliberal institutions, rather than on narratives that would support this new post-Soviet image and persuade the locals. Without being responsive to the public concerns, the projects' leaders wanted the constructions to be a marketable commodity and to create the core of a new city brand. They overlooked the fact that a new personality is created through effective narratives, based on long-term communication with the locals, as well as with visitors.

On the drawing board, the architecture of emblematic effects could have served as a successful brand for the corporate stakeholders, the theater, and the city itself, merged with the narratives of a new post-Soviet personality. Yet, when the Canadian firm Diamond Schmitt

revealed the new MT-2 in 2013, it caused a whole range of negative reactions from cold cynicism to desperate uproar for its box-like, austere design. The building, made of glass and steel, could be found anywhere in the world and thus, as a global design, earned notorious nicknames, such as "department store," debility, (*marazminka*), "big box without any architecture" (Shervud; Revzin, "Univermag 'Mariinskii'," "Novaia stsena"). Piotrovskii, who served as a jury in the 2003 competition, called the building a "urban-planning mistake" on the TV channel Sankt-Peterburg. A few Petersburgers even began an online campaign to tear down the new construction. [118]

After the breach of the contract with Perrault and a few years of impasse in construction, Gergiev's main concern was neither becoming the man of Bilbao nor having an iconic theater to be a new St. Petersburg symbol. The director simply invited an experienced firm that could construct a functional building within restricted time and limited budget in 2009.[119] The new MT-2 turned out to be a good, functional building with good acoustics, ample space, and a beautiful hall that has a view of the Theater Square through glass walls. Gergiev and then-minister of culture Vladimir Medinskii expressed satisfaction about the building. But the building was far from the emblematic symbol of the twenty-first century St. Petersburg, which was promised in the beginning of the 2000s. The press lamented the 22 billion dollars and ten years wasted on this building.

In the study of architecture competitions, both built and unbuilt have equal value within the production of culture, quality and knowledge (Chupin 21). The unbuilt constructions of Moss's

[118] The new MT-2 of a simple, austere design raised people's uproar. According to the polls conducted in *LiveJournal* and regional *TV100*, majority of residents hated the building. People's outcry could be heard on the online site of the preservationist organization, *Living City*. Also, some architects, supporters of classic tradition, suggest the reconstruction of the building to fit into the urban context (Soshnikov).

[119] Gilmor's article "Red Tape" illustrates how the firm was introduced to Gergiev and advised on Russian politics.

and Perrault's designs, as well as the other designs of MT-2, symbolized the confidence and hope of the early 2000s when everything seemed possible: a gigantic building on a foundation of creamy soil and a post-Soviet landmark, as well a democratic hope for civic organization. In this sense, the change to the theater design bore witness to the Russian economic situation of the 2000s: the new decade had begun with rosy expectations, but ended up in global economic crisis. The austere form of the Canadian design turned out to reflect the Russian situation after 2008.

Meanwhile, the Okhta Center project reflects the driving force of neoliberalism and signals the deterioration of democracy in the late 2000s. Encountering severe hostility and stalwart resistance from the locals, the municipal government withdrew from funding for the Okhta Center in 2008. Two years later, in 2010, it finally relocated to the Lakhta area, farther from the historic center than Okhta, largely due to unexpected interference from then-president Dmitrii Medvedev, who carefully confronted and changed the tacit agreement given by then-prime minister Putin.[120] The Okhta Center has reached the height of 462 meters (1,516 ft.), making the city home to the tallest building in Europe. The skyscraper is expected to spur economic and urban development, serving as an icon of post-Soviet St. Petersburg, whether in a positive sense or negative (Nikandrov; Model').

It is common for a global firm's architecture designs to be produced at the expense of the local context, which inevitably brings staunch opposition from the locals. Klingmann points out that urban identity becomes an "issue of object versus context" in an urban renewal project: in many contemporary cases, the "architecture brand" obtains leverage over the "comprehensive urban brand" (282). In the official words of those who value new, unique architecture more, this

[120] See "Okhta-tsentr' ne budut stroit' v tsentre Peterburga"; "Kreml': Medvedev povliial na reshenie «Gazproma» perenesti «Okhta-Tsentr»."

issue surfaced as a conflict between pro-global and anti-global forces during an identity crisis of the global age. Preservationists expressed their anxiety about the loss of the traditional landscape, including historical monuments, the low skyline, and the *lieux de mémoire* that have sustained their pride and identity. The competitions were used as tools to persuade the locals and justify sacrifice of the traditional aesthetics. But the decision processes and supporting ideology failed to embrace a local character or make emotional contact with people, and rather enhanced emotional attachment to the previous cityscape and community solidarity among the locals. Yet, their significance lies in the fact that they offered a chance to develop public discourses about city identity in relation to architecture and comprehensive urban brand, and instigated social activities among the general public, which had a weak basis in a post-Soviet society (Larson; Yurchak). Therefore, the preservationist aesthetics dominant among the locals is not simply reduced to conservatism or provincialism. It is not simply long-held tradition, but solidified through a dynamic process of internal and external communications and fight against neoliberalism, non-transparent policy making, and bureaucracy.

6.0 Inscribing History and Memory: Manuscripts Made of Stone, Metal, and Plywood

This chapter delves into public art in public spaces, mostly focusing on monuments, sculptures, and commemorative plaques and how they create new cityscapes that visitors and residents experience while walking the city and interacting with the urban sphere. Malcom Miles categorizes monuments as a kind of public art, presenting two definitions of public art, dependent on whether we understand spaces, using Lefebvre's terms, as "representations of space" or as "representational space." If public art is understood as located in the "conceptual space of city planning, termed as 'representations of space,'" it stands as "autonomous artwork" of privileged aesthetics or ideology, accessible in the public realm like an extension of the gallery space. If we understand public space to be "representational space," as the space of users, public art is a "form of street life, a means to articulate the implicit values of a city when its users occupy the place of determining what the city is" (Miles 59).[121] In this chapter, I will use the term public art in a broad sense, embracing both traditional monuments and urban interventions, based on both definitions of Miles.

While canals, bridges, streets, and architectural façades define the first visual impressions of St. Petersburg, visitors cannot help noticing monuments, decorative sculptures and plaques attached to walls. Since the 1990s, monuments, city sculptures, and plaques sprouted up to commemorate the new era and to create a new urban atmosphere. The newly appeared objects in

[121] Contemporary theories tend to emphasize diversity, contradictory voices, and democracy that lies behind the definition of public, preferring the latter. In the radical case, Rosalyn Deutsch, in her article about Martha Rosler's New York exhibition "If You Lived Here..." emphasize the publicness of art as active and critical interventions in the process of urbanization, rejecting pseudo-public art that embellishes the urban space, but simultaneously conceals the inequitable outcomes of capitalism and urbanization.

the public space are dedicated to a variety of memories, figures, and events; some of the objects simply carry decorative functions with a variety of aesthetic styles. It was possible due to the explosion of memories during the period of glasnost', where anti-Soviet or a-Soviet subjects, such as victims of the political repressions, were brought to the foreground. It is called the "Bronze Age" in Mikhail Zolotonosov's eponymous book or "monumentomania" by Hellberg-Hirn (225-35). This syndrome could not be explained by a specific ideology or embraced under one singular artistic movement. For example, the styles of new sculptures range from modern to post-modern kitsch to sots-realistic style; the number of sculptures and plaques dedicated to historic figures mushroomed, regardless of their ethnicity, nationality, or ideology.

The explosion of urban objects accounts for a re-definition of urban space in government planning and a new way of memorializing in the urban sphere, as well as for the random participation of numerous urban users, including institutions, corporates, and individuals, in establishing them and lack of the strict regulations and enforcement. This section observes several monuments, sculptures, and commemorative plaques, which serve as intersections between the past and the present, memories and history, traditional aesthetics and unconventional performance.

Scholarly publications have extensively treated post-Soviet monumentomania in frameworks of nostalgia, nationalism, regional politics, etc. In many state-sponsored projects, the aesthetics and procedures are not much different from traditional monuments that commemorate victors and celebrate their power and authorities. The most notorious example is Zurab Tsereteli's Peter the Great at the Moscow river, erected in 1997[122]; its gigantic size, the subject of great

[122] Peter, commissioned by then-mayor Luzhkov to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Russian Navy, evoked huge controversies among the citizens, due to its poor aesthetics, gigantic size, and inappropriate contextuality of Peter in Moscow, who moved the Imperial capital from backward Moscow to westernized, modern St. Petersburg (Forest and Johnson; Jensen; Peppershtein).

historical figure of Peter, the nontransparent decision process in its placement, and its marked political and cultural anachronism were all a product of the Moscow mayor and his court artist showing off their political leverage through urban planning in the 1990s. Peter was followed in the next two decades by monuments to random historical names, a process that reached its peak with the installation of the two most recent ones, Vladimir the Great near the Kremlin in 2016 and Aleksandr III in the city of Yalta in the Crimean Peninsula in 2017.[123] Although Vladimir's location was determined by a democratic voting process online, neither monument's appearance was widely publicized since monuments in the traditional aesthetics and semantics are nonetheless surprising in the political atmosphere of Russian democracy in decline.[124] Following conventional aesthetics, gigantic Vladimir and the emperor on their high pedestals explicitly produce the conventional effect of a political statement of power, claiming the symbolic legacy of Vladimir for the Kremlin and justifying the annexation of the Crimea.

Such traditional monuments, cast in durable materials like bronze and stone, originally aim to show the eternity of a memory and its immediate visibility and legibility in the public space. However, many of them, although they withstand a ravage of time, ironically lose their visibility and socio-political significance as the cultural matrix fades out. Like monuments to Queen

[123] The erection of the colossal Vladimir in Moscow by Salavat Scherbakov was followed by controversies about its aesthetics, massiveness and inappropriate location (Slobodchikova): the prince of Kievan Rus', regarded as a founding father of Slavic Orthodox Christianity, has no link to Moscow, which did not even exist in that period. But it was a more concrete political move from the Kremlin to claim the history after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and during escalating conflict with Ukraine. The monument to Aleksandr III by the Russian sculptor Andrei Kovalchuk was installed in 2017 on the site of the Livadia Palace at Yalta, where the Emperor passed away in 1894 (Melikian). In the openings of the both monuments, the president Putin attended himself.

[124] Its location, originally intended to be at Sparrow Hills so that it could be seen any part of Moscow, was decided to be Borovitskaia Square after months of disputes, accepting the result of the online poll in 2015, where Muscovites could vote for where the statue should be (Semenova; "Golosovanie o meste"; Morton "Moscow's Controversial Vladimir," "Vladimir the Great").

Victoria, who "no longer commands worlds but merely stands in the way of traffic," many monuments are reduced to an embellishment of the urban sphere, incorporated into the familiar background of everyday lives (Tuan 164). In this sense, monuments engage in a process of both remembering and forgetting. Monuments are reduced to a frozen, ossified form of memory and fall into amnesia. Ironically, the absence of a statue and its empty pedestal rather create vital discussion and prevent forgetting in the case of Dzerzhinskii.[125] Some monuments and city sculptures, included in major tourist routes, receive constant spotlight and maintain vitality. Performances or rituals like laying flowers often animate these urban objects, indicating that they are not completely forgotten.

Anti-monuments or counter-monuments challenge and subvert the conventions of traditional monuments. These conventions include subjects, forms, sites, visitor experiences, and meanings, which indicate a wide spectrum of anti-monuments. They mainly developed in efforts to create an appropriate model for memorials to victims, especially those in the Holocaust, in criticism of fascistic monuments: the most well-known examples include Esther Shalevgerz's *Hamburg Monument against Fascism* and Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*.[126] The two

[125] Feliks Dzerzhinskii, nicknamed "Iron Feliks," was a Bolshevik revolutionary figure and the founder of the Soviet secret police. His monument, erected in 1958 and located in front of the former KGB, currently FSB building at Lubianka, has long been considered a symbol of totalitarianism and Soviet terrors: following the failed coup of the communist party in August 1991, liberal protesters attempted to tear it down. Eventually, the municipal government, riding the populist wave, officially removed it from its pedestal and put it in the Muzeon Art Park in Moscow, along with other Soviet monuments. However, the empty flowerbed remains and whose monument should be placed there has also remained an eagerly debated issue: efforts to restore the statue to the site were officially made several times by those who cherished the figure. For more description on the phenomenon and iconoclasm of monuments, see Yampolsky's "In the Shadow of Monuments" and Laura Mulvey's *Disgraced Monuments*.

[126] See Young's "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today" and Griswold's "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography."

memorials, above all, draw different viewing experiences from visitors: Hamburg's twelve-meter high pillar, where visitors were invited to make memorial graffiti, was lowered into the ground, ultimately vanishing. By completing self-destruction, it challenged the idea of monumentality and called into question of everlasting memories. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a "v" shaped scar in the earth with a black marble wall, leads visitors to walk along the black marble wall, where the names of the fallen veterans are chronologically inscribed and where they can see their own reflections. This combination poses questions on contested memories about the tragic war and violence.

This chapter will bring up different types of anti-monumental urban objects: decorative sculptures for the beautification of the urban atmosphere and memorials to victims of the political repressions during the Soviet years, and urban interventions in a dialogue with the official texts. Their appearance reflected socio-political changes and create a new image of the city.

6.1 Anti-monuments and Haptic Walking

As St. Petersburg is the former Imperial capital and the cradle of the three Revolutions, traditional monuments and statues dedicated to Emperors, generals, and revolutionary figures can be found at every corner of the historic center. Although some suffered from vandalism and dislocation during the two transitional periods at the beginning and end of the Soviet years, the monuments of the different periods peacefully coexist in the urban space. In contrast to the boisterous celebrations surrounding the destruction of Dzerzhinskii's Monument in Moscow, St. Petersburg had peaceful transitions. With the return of Peter in the name of the city, the bust of Lenin in Moscow Train Station was silently replaced with the bust of Peter the Great as a symbolic

gesture of a new era, while another Lenin remained in place at the Finland Station.[127] There was a debate on the return of Aleksandr III to the Vosstaniia Square from the museum of the Marble Palace, a plan which was not realized.[128] These changes simply reflect ideological turnabouts. The replaced Peter and the displaced Lenin in the station differ little in terms of aesthetics, semantics and the visitor's experience. Both are on an untouchable pedestal and decorate the hall of the train station as a symbol of the city: the decision was solely made by the municipal authorities.

The appearance of anti-monuments in the urban sphere corresponds to the cultural and socio-political atmosphere of the 90s of the dream of a free Petersburg. According to Boym, the idea of a "free Petersburg," harking back to the mentality of the Leningrad unofficial culture, which "cherished an estranged existence within the Soviet system," became a desirable identity for a new Petersburg in the transitional period (158). Then-mayor Sobchak's short-lived dream for a democracy platform and the status of a free-trade zone that would connect the city to the other Baltic regions embodied this idea. Until his defeat by Iakovlev in 1997, Sobchak's urban planning was dominated by "anti-Imperial and anti-national" consciousness, a "normal European mentality" (Boym 158). Anti-monumental objects to "celebrate ordinary Petersburg antiheroes" harmoniously fits into his new image of the city: for example, Chizhik-pyzhik and Mikhail Shemiakin's Peter and Sphinxes (162).

Chizhik-pyzhik, a miniature of a siskin by Rezon Gabraidze, was commissioned by the municipal government and unveiled in 1994 during the international satire and humor festival

[127] For more information in detail, read the eight chapter and epilogue from Kirschenbaum's book *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941-1995*; Zolotonosov's introduction in *Bronzovyi vek*; Boym's chapter on Moscow and St. Petersburg in *Future of Nostalgia*.

[128] It is unlikely that the monument will be moved to the original site Vosstaniia Square in front of the Moscow Train Station, since that place is now home to the Obelisk to the Hero City of Leningrad.

Zolotoi Ostap.[129] Located under the First Engineer bridge near the site of the former Imperial Legal army, it illustrates the urban folk song "where have you been?/ On Fontanka, drinking vodka,/ Took one shot, took another/ Had a headache." Due to its folkloric character, miniature size, and the location between the popular touristic sites, it has become the most beloved sculpture in the historic center.

After Iakovlev took office, this type of decorative sculpture multiplied in the framework of urban reconstruction, mainly the preparation for the city's 300th anniversary in 2003. For the success of the celebration, reconstruction of the cityscape was inevitable: the urban projects included restoration of the main historic sites and improvement of the open space, such as parks, streets, and squares. Following the European urban trend, several historic streets were transformed into pedestrian-only roads or acquired pedestrian pathways in the middle while narrowing the car lanes: various sculptures and decorative urban furniture embellished these streets and offered places for pedestrians to linger and relax. The siskin miniature was followed by cats on Malaia Sadovaia, a hare near the Peter and Paul Fortress, and sculptures of urban types like the photographer, street cleaner, lamplighter, police officer, and so on (figure 25).

[129] Chizhik-pyzhik implies the Academy students who dressed up in green and yellow uniforms, which look like siskins. The Academy was closed after the 1917 evolution, but anecdotes about its students have remained in the urban folksong to these days: "chizhik-pyzhik, where have you been? On Fontanka, drinking vodka."

Figure 26 Sculpture of Street Cleaner with Snow Shovel at Ostrovskii Square

Labelled kitsch or categorized as decorative sculptures in the Petersburg encyclopedia, these sculptures are distinguished from the traditional monument by their subjects, forms, and meanings. They carry narratives from urban legends and the local history of non-heroes. The statues of urban types depict urban workers from the nineteenth-century streets. As an example of how these sculptures are carriers of local history, the photographer portrays Karl Bulla, a famous photographer of the turn of the twentieth century, located close to the building where he had his studio. The statue of Ostap Bender and the plaque to Kovalev's nose are the most Petersburg-type monuments, dedicated to fictional anti-heroes.

The statues of animals are the most beloved ones: not only Chizhik-pyzhik, but also the cats Elisei and Vasilisa on Malaia Sadovaia and the Hare next to Ioannovskii Bridge near the Peter and Paul Fortress enjoy huge popularity. While the hare statue atop a wooden pole tells the city legend of a hare that jumped into Peter I's boot to escape from rising waters during a flood, the cats purvey the story of the tragic Leningrad Siege, symbolizing cats brought from Iaroslav to save the city facing the rampant mice problems. These statues have become materialized fixtures of urban folk narratives, diversifying the urban texture, otherwise dominated by great names, and creating storytelling spots that attract visitors.

Above all, they are all cherished due to their accessibility, in contrast to the created "sacral zone" of monuments on pedestals (Yampolsky 94): they stand at pedestrian level. According to Urry, touristic "gazing comprises seeing *and* touching," and tourists often having a "desire to touch, stroke, walk or climb upon and even collect the animals, plants, ruins, buildings and art objects that they lay their eyes upon" (Urry and Larsen 214). For example, on Malaia Sadovaia, Good Dog Gavriusha, and the photographer Bulla were beloved photograph spots.[130] The urban objects placed at pedestrian level without fences and high pedestals allow audiences to have free and intimate interactions: visitors put their palm on Gavriusha's head or touch the nose of the photographer to make wishes. Another artwork, a fountain with a granite ball floating on the water, is a particularly beloved place for children.

[130] Gavriusha was the most favorite among the city sculptures, precisely located inside the courtyard of the house no. 2 on Malaia Sadovaia. Soon, the wall of the corner was filled with graffiti making wishes and turned into a night-time hangout spots for hooligans. In consequence, the courtyard was closed and Gavriusha, relocated to Pravdy Street, another pedestrian-only road, but far from the touristic center, is currently forgotten (Zolotonosov, "Kak Gavriusha perestal byt'").

On the other hand, the two Cats on the buildings' cornice are unfortunately not accessible to visitors' hands; indeed, they are hardly noticeable if visitors are not informed in advance. Yet, the sculptures, located at distance from pedestrian zone, like the Cats on the cornices, Chizhik-pyzhik and the Hare above the water turn into another type of playground. People throw coins, targeting at specific parts of the statue and hoping that aiming would bring lucks. It is said if a coin hits the bird's beak of Chizhik-pyzhik or if a coin lands on the paws of the Cats or the Hare's wooden pole, it will bring a good luck (figure 26). In this vein, the statues and artworks attract the public and create open space where people linger and interact with the urban objects. Therefore, it is impossible to miss the miniature figures, as an endless line of visitors lingers around the sculptures to toss coins.

Figure 27 People Throwing Coins to the Cat on Malaia Sadovaia

The sculptures of a new post-Soviet decade have offered new modes of interaction, as people touch them or take photographs side by side, generating a new way to experience the cityscape and therefore, creating a new sort of tourist route. “Haptic tourism,” or “wishes guidebooks,” which challenge the traditional aesthetics of observing monuments and artworks in public space, imbue the city with new vitality and local attachment. Many tour guides set the trend, encouraging tourists to personally interact with the sculptures, rather than passively photograph them or simply listen to guides. “Making wishes” is currently one of the best-known kind of

Russian local tours: it is not difficult find writings on these statues of "wonder workers" online, both in English and Russian. English publications can be found in *The Culture Trip*, one of the most popular online travel publications for the younger generation, and in *Russian Beyond*, the Russian government's cultural news agency. [131] Unofficial guidebooks online and in the bookstores on the Nevskii Prospect introduce the well-known monuments and sculptures throughout the whole city and introduce ways to make wishes (Kulesha). The anti-monumental sculptures developed into new urban experience and create vivid, lively zone around the sculptures. Wide pedestrian streets with cafes and restaurants have become successful public spaces in the city, where diverse publics intermingle and enjoy themselves among the urban projects, especially in the case of Malaia Sadovaia, which promoted as an iconic example from the "most European city" in Russia (Zhelnina, "Malaia Sadovaia ulitsa"). [132] The anti-monumental sculptures and statues not only serve to beautify the streets and fill out the absent narratives of the urban sphere, but also produce an effect of safety and conviviality.

[131] Numerous online travel publications, travel websites, and personal blogs offer information of the statues for the making-wish tours in St. Petersburg, both in English and Russian: Among the English publications, *the Culture Trip*, British online travel publication, which, according to *Forbes*, currently enjoys a huge popularity among the young generation, looking for inexpensive and authentic experiences, introduces the "quirky superstitions" as an authentic, local experience (Glioza). In *Russia Beyond*, owned by the Russian government state news agency, it is understood as attractions that came from everyday superstitious rituals combined with the marketing strategies (Kubatian). Also, in the city guide sections at bookstores, I could easily find the books on the wishes guide tourism

[132] The currently operating pedestrian-only roads include Malaia Koniushennaia Street, Malaia Sadovaia Street, Dvor Kapela, Bol'shaia Moskovskaia, Pravda Street and Andreevskii Bul′vard at Vasilievskii Island. Among them, Malaia Sadovaia enjoy huge popularity, mostly because of its location that intersects between the Nevskii Prospect and Italianskaia street, where touristic sites are nearby. The other pedestrian roads could be also found with decorative monuments and artworks, sometimes more modern and unique than the ones at Malaia Sadovaia. But theses streets do not enjoy popularity like Malaia Sadovaia, where strollers linger and spend significant time in this site.

Another monument, a popular subject in scholarly publications, is Shemiakin's Peter, often compared with Tsereteli's Peter in Moscow despite the six-year span between them in order to articulate the contrasting urban planning and cultural geography of the two cities in the 90s. The monument to Peter the Great by the immigrant artist Shemiakin, was brought to the city and installed at the Peter and Paul Fortress in 1991.[133] While the animalistic miniatures above are engaged in kitsch style, serving as urban props for guides to explain urban legends, mythology, or historical events, Shemiakin's sculpture takes a dialogic approach to Falconet's Bronze Horseman and to Peter's long-held mythology. This new artwork of the transitional period reinvented the city tradition in aesthetics and semiotics, challenging the cultural perception of the Imperial authorities in the urban sphere. The Bronze Horseman and Pushkin's well-known literary image most powerfully contributed to Peter's evolving mythology and create a cultural semiotics of a sharp contrast between the great individual and a layman.[134]

Shemiakin's Peter shocked audiences with its bald head and strikingly disproportional body. The artist recreated the Emperor's head according to his death mask, made in 1719 by the sculptor Carlo Bartolomeo Rastrelli, which had been used as a model for other busts and

[133] Mikhail Shemiakin, a member of the Leningrad non-conformist art community, has actively engaged in the cultural scene of St. Petersburg since the collapse of the Soviet Union: despite the controversies over his challenging sculptures in the beginning of his career in the post-Soviet St. Petersburg, he soon became one of the favorite artists of the government, both federal and municipal. He received governmental commissions of numerous urban sculptures that could be found in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and collaborated with the Mariinskii theater, working on a new production for Tchaikovskii's ballet *Nutcracker* in 2002. He has received a huge Petersburg apartment and studio directly from the president Putin, where he does not use it as permanent work space due to inconvenience (Chernykh).

[134] For more detailed interpretations, see Schenker's *The Bronze Horseman: Falconet's Monument to Peter the Great* and Androsov's "O Statue Petra Velikogo raboty Fal'kone" for interpretation on Falconet's monument; see Evdokimova's *Alexander Pushkin's Historical Imagination* for Pushkin's "the Bronze Horseman"; see for the evolution of literary images of Pushkin and "the Bronze Horseman" Sandler and Platt.

monuments. Yet, unlike these antecedents, his head appeared without mustache, hair or hat, completely faithful to the death mask. It looks too small for the elongated body, which produces an eerie, uncanny effect for the audience. Dressed up in a generic eighteenth-century outfit, this Peter lost the "references to Peter's military, stately, or reformatory accomplishment" (Evdokimova, "Sculpted History" 228). Above all, in contrast to the majestic equestrian posture of the Bronze Horseman, this grotesque Peter solidly sits in his modest chair without any motion. Without a high pedestal, which Shemiakin critically rejected, it turned out to be accessible to any audience.

Like the Photographer, Shemiakin's Peter became one of the most popular and beloved spots for photography. It is located at an easily accessible historic site, Peter and Paul Fortress, which is crowded not only with tourists, but also with teachers and parents with their children. Thousands of photos could be found online of tourists sitting on the lap of Peter (figure 26). This experience is only possible because of its unusual seated position, compared to the equestrian or standing position of the other monuments. Also, his skeleton-like fingers have shiny marks because thousands of people have rubbed them for various typical wishes for money, luck, and fiancé. In conclusion, the anti-monumental Peter subverts and rejects the traditional depiction of the Imperial authority. The statue was supposed to be placed in Peter's Summer Garden, which Mayor Sobchak strongly supported, but the committee specially organized for the case was against the idea for a variety of reasons, mainly discord in the visual concept. Eventually, Peter found its permanent position inside the Peter the Paul Fortress outdoor museum (Chernykh).

Figure 28 Shemiakin's Monument to Peter the Great

In this geographical and cultural context, Virolainen connects Shemiakin's Peter to the "desacralization of power," referring to the Russian folk drama *Tsar Maksimilian*, which features the tsar sitting in a peasant's hut and observing executions and burials throughout the whole play (284). The post-Soviet Peter has become a "participant in the carnival and a member of the

audience," like Maksimilian in a carnival play, blurring the boundary between audience and the monument (Boym 164). Similar to Bakhtin's zone of "familiar contact" during carnival, where hierarchies are subverted, this anti-monument creates a zone of desacralization, where the imperial authority is eliminated, in the sacred fortress.[135] In consequence, a contrast between the Imperial authority and common man is erased. In comparison with Tsereteli's Peter, it reveals a "striking contrast between the urban myth and types of nostalgia" between the two capital cities. Tsereteli's colossal monument reflected Moscow's or Luzhkov's ambition to "tak[e] over the Imperial myth" of Peter the Great, in contrast to Shemiakin's anti-monumental sculpture for Sobchak's "free Petersburg" (Ibid. 165).[136]

6.2 On the Brink of Cemetery or Theme-park

The publicness of public art is inseparable from violence (Mitchel 884). Monuments and artworks in the public space always bears a risk of vandalism. "Left unprotected – or too easily accessible," public art is art "that will eventually be damaged or destroyed" (Apgar 118). Monuments, erected for eternity and immortality, frequently suffer from iconoclasm, dependent on socio-political turnabouts best exemplified by the demolition of the Dzerzhinskii monument in

[135] Virolainen also notes that the mythological story of the urban play about the Tsar Maksimilian has been realized since Shemiakin's Peter inadvertently settled in front of the cathedral in the Fortress, where the Romanovs had been buried for the three hundred years: the story has been completed by the official reburial of the last Romanov family (286).

[136] In this sense, the artist was considered St. Petersburg's counterpart to Moscow's favorite artist Tsereteli in the 90s and the early 2000s. His career makes a clear contrast to Tsereteli's, who almost disappeared from the scene after the mayor Luzhkov was dismissed by then President Medvedev in 2010. Immediately after the dismissal, destruction of Tsereteli's Peter was discussed even though it still remains at the Moscow river bank as of 2019.

1991 as a symbol of state violence. In case of Chizhik-pyzhik, the sculpture's small size meant it could be stolen several times. Many sculptures in crowded places have shiny surfaces on the protruding parts of their bodies. Some consider the widespread urban ritual, superstition, and "wish tourism" no different from vandalism. Above all, this reaction came from the Fortress museum staff regarding Shemiakin's Peter.

A discussion of the notion of the "public" in Russia may be useful here. As the term public is expressed in transliteration from English rather than in a Russian equivalent, the term "public" still has a foreign valence. As Zhelnina points out in her articles, the government document for the urban planning have long used the term "open space." The 2005 municipal decree on "Petersburg's Cultural Heritage Preservation Strategy" contained two contradictory approaches to the "open space" of the historic center: "open space" as a "communicative part of the urban environment" like a "living room" vs. "open-air museum." These could hardly be combined in practice.[137]

Zhelnina takes an example of the online discussion about the little garden in front of the Kazan Cathedral on Nevskii Prospect, which clearly shows people's opinion on the use of "public space." The garden, improved for the 300th anniversary with a lawn, fountain, benches, and flowerbeds, was closed to public and surrounded by fences after the celebration. After citizens' complaints, the fences were briefly removed in 2007, only to reappear in 2009. The discussion on the closure of the garden engaged the two different perceptions of public space. For those who supported the fences, public space should be kept in order like post-card images, without uncivilized people drinking beers on the lawn. Opponents pointed out that relaxing in public spaces

[137] See in "Pravitel'stvo Sankt-Peterburga. Postanovlenie No. 1681 ot 1 noiabria 2005 goda. O Peterburgskoi strategii sokhraneniia kul'turnogo naslediia" at docs.cntd.ru/document/8421327 (qtd. Zhelnina, "Hanging out" 242-243).

is a common practice in European cities, referring to the image of St. Petersburg as the most European city in Russia.

Europeanness, from which St. Petersburg derives its distinctiveness among Russian cities, frequently appears as the main ideology to follow in the general plans of the city. Yet, there was a sense that the Europeanization in the urban practice was superficial: Arkadii Ippolitov metaphorically indicated this in his article "Europa on Bullshit (Evropa na bullshite)." Public space in St. Petersburg was understood as an "aesthetic, visual concept, rather than a functional one oriented toward providing an interactive and comfortable environment" (Zhelnina, "Hanging Out" 243). [138] In this sense, as Chuikina pointed out, Malaia Sadovaia was considered the most successful European place in Petersburg: where people linger and have free interactions with the urban objects.

On the other hand, unlike the urban sculptures, the desacralized approach to Shemiakin's Peter was not tolerated. All the photos that could be found with people on Peter's lap are old ones taken before 2014: ugly green fences and then decorative iron fences were installed in 2014, obviously to prevent visitors from climbing up the sculpture. A museum staff member expressed her worries that visitors see it simply as a "park artifact," rather than a monument (Vasil'ev; "Den'gi turistov"). Twenty-five years after the controversial installment appeared, praised in scholarly publications as a symbol of a free and democratic Petersburg, fences enclosed it. Its anti-monumental quality faded as it truly became a museum exhibit and monument dedicated to Peter the Great as categorized under the monument to historic figure in the encyclopedia. In contrast, in

[138] In her article, she further explains how the 2011 protest activities caused by the December parliament election and March Presidential election embody the emerging "Europeanized" point of view on the urban public space, which was not realized in the 2000s urban planning. Everyday appropriation of public space is to be the right of the citizens, understood as the "right to the city" in mass media.

the Living City blog on LiveJournal, one comment expressed his regret that the "first sculpture that allowed European approach" disappeared (Giper). Another user a the comment pointing out its similarity to a "cemetery" (Krugovorot 58). Just like many old graves in the old Petersburg cemetery, where the zone of the Other space is divided by fences, Shemiakin's monument acquired a sacred zone. It brings back a recurring question of the historic center, whether it should look like a clean and post-card-like outdoor museum or like a free space where people can carefreely enjoy themselves, as in the debates on the Kazan Cathedral lawn. The different understanding on public space and its Europeanization poses a similar question to public sculpture.

In terms of its territorial location, Shemiakin's Peter is indeed different from the other sculptures of haptic tourism: Shemiakin's monument is located inside a museum, as a museum property and exhibit, while the other sculptures of haptic tourism are located in heavily commercialized, touristic outdoor spaces. These sculptures intended to embellish streets, attract visitors, and let them enjoy lingering on the sites. In this sense, Malaia Sadovaia was called the most successful European street. However, not only sculptures lie behind the success, but also fancy cafes and restaurants, along with outdoor seating in summer, all of which are intimately involved in the "appropriation and privatization" of properties in the transitional period. Crossing the city center, the Nevskii Prospect is the epicenter of this tendency, filled with expensive eateries and tawdry souvenir shops, which are not unusual in other global cities.[139]

[139] It could be also compared to the renewal of the South Street Seaport at Lower Manhattan in New York: after the decline of the waterfront, the site was developed into a pedestrian walk and festival-mood market with a historic flavor by the developer Rouse Company in 1976. While the museum, architectural arrangements and carefully controlled signs offer the historic atmosphere of the waterfront heydays, Boyer points out its "city tableaux" turn into "gentrified, historicized, commodified, and privatized places," which is a stage set for capitalism and consumerism. See Boyer "Cities for Sale."

In addition, wishes tourism or haptic tourism is introduced as local and authentic, which is not false since it is popular practice among the locals. However, it is also an old and global phenomenon: the superstition may hark back to the ancient idolatry or the cult of holy relics in the medieval Christianity. Also, these practices are currently developed as a touristic marketing strategy worldwide, mostly famously the throwing of a coin from the right hand over the left shoulder at Rome's Trevi Fountain or rubbing the butts of the Crazy Girls Bronze Sculptures at the Las Vegas Planet Hollywood. Moreover, if the memories meant to be enshrined in bronze are not immediately legible, their role is no more than random aesthetic objects in any park, losing both monumentalist and anti-monumentalist messages. For example, the Cats were originally placed to memorialize the cats of the Leningrad Siege, but visitors could miss the information since there is no connection between their story and the topographical location, unless they are told in advance.[140]

The city sculptures enjoy popularity as a part of local attachment and as resources for an "Other," unofficial tourist route, in reaction to the museumified gaze at the city and against the dominant portrayal of heroes in the traditional authoritarian practice. But they simultaneously encounter problems associated with commercialization and globalization. It poses a question for the cultural development of the historic center as a tourist site in the global age: will the city center become an outdoor museum or a theme-park.[141] How much Petersburg-distinctive atmosphere can

[140] In the TripAdvisor page for the Cats, there are several Russian comments that they did not know about the narratives behind them.

[141] I took this word from Michael Sorkin's *Variations on Theme-Park*. The collected essays in Sorkin's book, including Boyer's, deal with a new (quasi-)public space of American cities in the TV age, highly commercialized, gentrified and regulated, which offer simulated urban reality and sanitized experience. I do not mean to make a parallel of the historic center to a mere signifier like a trip to "Norway" in Disneyland or universal placelessness of artificial reality. However, given people's attitudes toward the cityscape in full leisure mode and their constant mobility at the historic center, as well as the stockpiling of signifiers for urban history and lore like sculptures and

persist in the globalized and Europeanized city that is aspired to? A new cityscape, governed by new post-Soviet impulses to embellish streets, to move beyond the outdoor museum, to express "free Petersburg" and to attract tourists, takes a risk of being commercialized and homogenized, just like other global cities.

6.3 Anti-monumental Commemoration and Mourning

After Gorbachev introduced glasnost′, the late 80s and early 90s were characterized by an explosion of memories and debunking state-sponsored crimes: testimonies, memoires, archival materials, scholarly publications, and documentary films flourished, swept under the rug for half a century. The rewriting of history took place through acknowledging the dark past and rehabilitating its censored parts: not only lists of victims and survivors became available to the public, but also sites of mass murders. Human rights organizations, such as Memorial and Sakharov Center, aimed to establish the record of the repressed and encouraged public remembering through efforts to erect commemorative monuments in the public sphere. In this context, two monuments dedicated to the victims of the totalitarian regime appeared in St. Petersburg in 1995 and in 2002. Shemiakin's two Sphinxes are highly praised as a part of the Petersburg aesthetics and culture, while the Solovetskii Stone is a part of the nation-wide project, initiated by Memorial, where rituals are practices that are shared across cities in the former Soviet Union.

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plaques, the word theme-park sets a clear contrast to the museum with its strict behavior codes, even as both spaces are under strict surveillance (there are more police officers during summer, when tourism is in full swing).

Shemiakin created two sphinx figures that resonate with the authentic Egyptian sphinxes from Thebes brought to the city during the reign of Nikolai I (figure 27). However, half of their faces are bare skull. Marble blocks in the shape of a prison wall with a window stand between the two Sphinxes. This ensemble was installed on the Robespierre embankment in 1995, opposite the main prison Kresty across the Neva River. The scholars point out its semiotic connection to city mythologies: Boym reads it as "double-faced temptress of memory, an embodiment of seductive beauty and decay, of immortality and death" and "monument and a ruin at once," commanding to "remember the Petersburgian and Leningradian past without unreflected nostalgia" (144); Hellberg-Hirn sees it as a new "genius loci of the Soviet period" that symbolize liminality and ambivalence" (90-96).

Figure 29 Shemiakin's Sphinx of Monuments to the Victims of the Political Repression

Yet, this monument, which beautifully resonates with the Petersburg urban aesthetics and the city narratives, was not warmly received by survivors and members of Memorial. They were excluded from the beginning stage of its planning to the opening ceremony. They blamed the artist of appropriating/taking the inscriptions that Memorial had engraved on the cornerstone (K. Smith). Also, the ambiguous features of the "monstrosity," which is often used for describing "incomprehensible sufferings," in state-sponsored memorials, could hardly produce a therapeutic effect for survivors (Etkind 189). Artwork under the mayor's patronage had its limits in expressing the voices of the victims to whom it was dedicated. In his analysis of German memorials, the German scholar Salomon Korn pointed out that all monuments perish "without rituality": what remains at best is an aesthetically appealing memorial in which the commemorating event is kept "neutral to the senses (*Gefühlsneutral*)" (qtd. Östman 113). With their unique features, Shemiakin's Sphinxes attract attention from visitors and receive reviews online, such as in Tripadvisor. Also, the location on the river bank makes them as a lovely lingering spot: the memorial turns into a site for strolling and gathering. Yet, the memorial suffers from frequent vandalism by those who deem the memorial inconvenient according to their ideological interpretation of the past: once, it occurred on Hitler's birthday, when Russian Neo-Nazis and ultra-right-wing nationalists have celebrations (Vol'stkaia; "Povrezhden pamiatnik"). As many publications suggest, there is no consensus for remembering the past in Russia. As long as the controversies persist, the memorial will not be forgotten, but the victims will also not be properly remembered and mourned.

In contrast, the Petersburg Solovetskii Stone was erected in 2002 at Troitskaia Square, twelve years after the first Stone was erected on Lubianskaia Square (or Lubianka) in Moscow and

the project was launched in Leningrad. The Solovetskii Stone consists of a simple granite stone from Solovetskii Island, where the first political concentration camp in the USSR was located. The original project was supposed to create proper monuments; the stone was placed as a temporary one to mark the place across the notorious headquarters of the KGB, but ended up being permanent. The Petersburg project took a similar path: after rejecting the several projects of the traditional styles, Memorial set a boulder in 2002. The simple inscriptions on the low pedestal supplement the clear understanding of the monument.[142] To prevent the monument from being forgotten, every year the organization holds an annual ceremony of the "return of the names" on October 30 as the Day of Remembrance at the Solovetskii Stones in Russia. Additional performances expand the meaning of the site to include and mourn victims of all political repressions. For example, in 2015, the pedestal of Solovetskii Stone in St. Petersburg was covered with flowers and candles to commemorate Boris Nemtsov, opposition leader against the Putin government, who was mysteriously killed on a bridge near the Kremlin (figure 29).

[142] On the granite base, it is written that "to Prisoners of Gulag," "To Freedom Fighters," "To Victims of Communist Terror" and a citation from the poet Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem* "I wish to call them by names."

Figure 30 Solovetskii Stone in St. Petersburg and Commemoration of Nemtsov in February 2015

6.3.1 Whom to Memorialize on the Wall

Walls have always been a milieu for socio-political and artistic practices since ancient times. They have been readily accessible surfaces in towns and cities. They do not only create boundaries between inside and outside, but also constitute a flat-surface medium for inscriptions, signs and drawings. Inscriptions mark up the city, from official municipal signs to graffiti. Among a variety of inscriptions, the memorial plaques, dedicated to historic figures or events, play particularly interesting roles. They create a specific sensorium on the city for the community

through the materialized form of memory and history, suitable to the classic environments of the historic center.

According to Buckler, a sense of loss, generated by repeated destructions and reconstructions in the city, created a strong impulse to retain an image of Old Petersburg through writings and cultural excursions since the nineteenth century. A struggle to grasp images of the vanishing past, could be seen in not only physical and online archives, but also in the physical fabric of the city.[143] The memorial plaques are "the commemorative practices that offset the losses of time, telling stories that such plaques literally inscribe upon the cityscape" (Buckler 53). The memorial plaques on the historic buildings are site-specific memories: the plaques tell stories of vanishing memories and make them materialized and embedded on the wall, letting the mute building speak. In this sense, the plaques function as *lieux de memoire*, site of memories: *lieux de memoire* appears in nostalgia-tinged efforts to grasp memories as memories crystallize and come to historicize "the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historicity age" (Nora 12). Plaques offer a perfect sign that anchor in concrete materials and sites in a rapid-changing society and identity crisis.

Memorial plaques first appeared in the 1800s, but they became widely popular in the Soviet years.[144] They are easily spotted at the historic center with historic buildings: sometimes, one whole façades is filled with plaques from different periods of time. The old plaques contain the

[143] For example, ciywalls.ru is one of the most popular sites, where vast information on the history of every street, site, and building could be found, uploaded by professional and amateur local historians.

[144] The first plaques documented the flood in the marble plaques in the second half of the eighteenth century: some of them are located in the Peter and Paul Fortress in 1752, 1777, and 1788. For the history and evolution of the memorial plaques, see Poretskina and Plyshevskaia, and Besedina and Burkova. Also, the online encyclopedia provides a list of information on the authorized plaques, arranged in alphabetical order: www.encspb.ru/object/2805516545?dv=2853872336&lc=ru.

least information possible to define the space located behind the wall, such as “in this house, January 29, 1837, Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin died” or “Petr Il'ich Chaikovskii was born in 25 April 1840 in Votkinsk in Viatskii Governorate and died in this house 25 October 1893” (figure 30). Such a simple inscription requires cultural background, shared by the community, for readers to fill in the omitted information of who Pushkin or Chaikovskii is.

Figure 31 Commemorative Plaque to Petr I. Chaikovskii

Affixed to the façades of the buildings, plaques are evidence of the lingering presence of the past. Visitors receive the building differently when plaques reveal the history in them—

otherwise, the newly-painted walls of eclectic buildings are mute. In form and content, the plaques are similar to cemetery plaques. Cemetery plaques commemorate the vanity of human beings, by referencing the bodies under gravestones: bodies that have already turned into soil and gravestones covered with vegetation that proves the flow of time. By contrast, though, the plaques affixed on the buildings affirm the long empirical existence of the site and the buildings: the plaques reinforce the material authenticity of the city fabric. Inscriptions and walls together replace the non-existent bodies that once occupied the place, which enhances an intimate bond between abstract historic figures and contemporary human beings. In this sense, they not only increase the informational density of the physical space, but also augment shared sentiments and high pride among the community. In this vein, like façades and the skyline, they contribute to creation of a specific sensible world signaling the presence of urban history.

While old plaques report simple information, relatively new plaques are inscribed with the verbal and pictorial descriptions: The plaques constructed in the post-Soviet decades are dedicated to diverse figures in various fields throughout Russo-Soviet history, as well as figures who are not typically included in the shared cultural background. Therefore, they differ in their contents and length; the text supplements the non-existent cultural background for viewers: the sentences have become longer and the information has become denser in order to introduce the widely-unknown figure. They frequently use epithets, such as “great” or “brilliant” in their texts and more details to portray to whom they are dedicated to. At the same time, many of these plaques are liberated from conventional rectangular frames and include bas-reliefs of portraits, profiles, and decorative details that can help viewers to grasp to whom the plaque is dedicated (figure 31). Sometimes they seem to compete with one another in regard to their aesthetic qualities, rather than the historical importance of what they depict. In this vein, instead of serving as informative signs of history or

commemorative sites for community bonds, the plaques dedicated to figures outside of shared consciousness, function as aesthetic objects; their commemorative functions are limited to the small group of people who knew the figures in their lifetimes.

Figure 32 Commemorative Plaques with Decorative Details (Right: Plaque, Dedicated to Painter Samokhvalov; Left: Plaque Dedicated to the Ballerina Ulanova)

Currently, the plaques can be found on every corner of the façades in the center. Since urban plaques include too many diverse historic figures, the historic center looks similar to a

cemetery. Cemeteries are special space where the private and public intersect; the past and the present intersect; *kairos* and *chronos* intersect; where any individual deceased peacefully owns his or her eternal dwelling space and plaque with whatever epitaphs inscribed.[145] Yet, public space is always contested, since it invites diverse narratives to unfold, but has limited capacity to represent them all. The overflow of plaques, to which I could apply Zolotonosov's term Bronze Age, brings out these controversies. Only authorized names are allowed to be fixed on the wall. Signs in public space were originally the expression of authority. Inscriptions, monuments, commercial signs, as well as road signs that mark the urban territory, carry authorial indications. Plaques are not exceptions to this: the installation of memorial plaques takes place under the strict regulations of the municipal government. A law enacted in 2005 restricts not only the list of appropriate historic figures to dedicate plaques to, but also the sites themselves.[146] They are allowed only on those historic buildings that maintain their visual and physical features from the historical period. In this sense, they explicitly demonstrate how the city authorities define and display city history.

However, not only legal control but also the common sentiments of the community keep the walls safe from inscriptions deemed unsuitable to their sentiments and aesthetics. First of all, historical significance is always an issue, as the historical judgement on the turbulent years of the civil war years has not reached consensus. The most recent examples include the plaque for Admiral Kolchak, who served in the White Army during the Civil War, and Karl Mannergeim,

[145] However, the rapid urban development and political turnabouts can disturb a peaceful co-existence of the dead without selectiveness. Lidiia Ginzburg, in her memoire *Thought Writing Circle* (*Mysl' pishavshaia krug*), from the late 1930s, wrote her visit to the old cemetery, which turned into the museum-necropolis. She witnessed that "the small square was cleared up, liberated from superfluous ones" and "only monuments, preserved in a good condition, survived" as the result of "hierarchal, bureaucratic, cultural-educational" rearrangements (557-558).

[146] See "Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Sankt-Peterburga ot 17.01.2005 No. 2 "O Memorial'nykh Doskakh v Sankt-Peterburge" at gov.spb.ru/law?d&nd=891859636&prevDoc=537992145.

who served in the Russian Imperial Army and then, became the first president of Finland. Kolchak's plaque, initiated by the historical center Beloe Delo, was attacked by activists of Russian Socialist Movement: aggressive opponents splashed it with red paint and tried to remove it. Also, they installed a playful alternative plaque, which wrote that "in this house lived A. B. Kolchak, military criminal and hangman." Although Kolchak's plaque obtained legal permission, the court eventually ordered the city to dismantle the plaque, acknowledging him as a perpetrator of the political repression (Vol'tskaia, "V Peterburge poiavilas'," "V Sankt-Peterburge osporili").

If Kolchak's case was a battle between the two contradictory interpretations of history, based on their ideological stances in interpreting the turbulent years of Russian history, the memorial to Mannergeim frustrated diverse groups of people regardless of ideological stances, as Mannergeim was at least partially responsible for the Leningrad Siege during WWII, when he fought alongside Nazi Germany. Then-Minister of Culture Medinskii attended its opening ceremony, justifying the plaque as a memorial to a WWI hero and an official "attempt to cope with the tragic split in society," which was unconvincing to many citizens.[147] Yet, after the plaque became a frequent victim of vandalism, it was eventually dismantled and moved to the museum (Makarov and Chepovskaia).

On the other hand, some residents simply do not appreciate the aesthetic effects of plaques on the wall. Some plaques are regarded as a kind of visual intrusion, marring the urban atmosphere with their poor aesthetics or their illegal status, as in the case of a plaque dedicated to the chair of the general directorate for the Construction of the Western Regions Glukhovskii, which appeared in 2006 (Zolotonosov, "Pochemu v Peterburge"): the plaque contains his bas-relief, talking to the phone in a typical Soviet officer's pose. Not only was it ugly, and not only was his status as a

[147] Allegedly, it was a friendly gesture to Finland, initiated by someone of the top officials.

chairman of a local organization that nobody acknowledges, significant only to a few people, but his plaque was installed in violation of the law.

While the ever-expanding list of historically eclectic plaques evokes worries about historical walls appropriated by individuals or institutions and the city center transforming into a cemetery, two contemporary projects challenge these commemorative practices: Last Address, which is an (inter)national project throughout Russian and post-Soviet cities and "Here Simply Lived a Person" by the Gandhi street artist group in St. Petersburg. These projects are anti-monumental in terms of their subjects, forms, and meanings: they are involved in dialogic relations to the traditional monuments and plaques I have discussed above, posing questions on writing memories and history in bronze and stone on the urban sphere.

6.3.2 Individualized Memorials: Last Address

The first national monument dedicated to victims of the Soviet repression was approved in 2014 and erected in Moscow in 2017, a quarter century after the establishment of the Solovetskii Stone by Memorial. Wall of Grief is the first monument, authorized by the presidential decree, and is partially funded by the Moscow government. In his 2013 book *Warped Mourning*, Etkind points out the overflow of soft memories about victims, like literature and films set on Russian territory, compared to a dearth of hard memories, such as museums and monuments, as a "lack of social consensus" (178-179, 183): the hard memory inevitably require space, always political and economic in capitalist society, as Lefebvre puts it. The memorial was a great achievement, placing a mark on the city of Moscow after civic organizations had campaigned to establish an official monument since 1987, as articulated in the interview with Elena Zhemkova from Memorial

(MacFarquhar; Voloshina).[148] President Putin attended the opening ceremony. Yet, some critics and dissidents accused the government of hypocrisy in this official move as a disguise to reduce political repression to something that occurred merely in the past.[149] Given the current socio-political atmosphere, where Stalin and his legacy are viewed in a positive light and Stalin is regarded as an effective "manager" of his time, the memorial, at its best, could be seen as an attempt to control both sides of the debate over Stalin's legacy, rather than a product of public consensus over conflicted issues of mourning in public (Voloshina).

Contrary to overly-politicized monuments, the project of Last Address was a centrifugal activity, more focusing on the individuality of victims. It was modelled on a project by the German artist Gunter Demnig called *Stolpersteine* or "Stumbling Stones," which are concrete cubes bearing brass plates, in order to commemorate the victims of National Socialism, especially the Holocaust: the cubes have been installed since 2000 across major European cities.[150] The project is volunteer-driven and crowd-funded, and literally marks the last places where victims of the political repression lived by their own volition.

[148] The Memorial provides the information on the attempts for the monument since 1987. See project.memo.ru/. During the three post-Soviet decades, Memorial has undergone an uncomfortable relationship with the authorities and right-wing nationalists for not only continuously exposing the dark past and making it public, but also fighting for the human rights of ethnically non-Russian migrants, such as Roma, and activists against the Putin government. In 2008, the police raided its St. Petersburg office and confiscated the whole entire archive. Also, in 2014 the Memorial organization branches in the big cities were labelled as "foreign agents" according to the Justice Ministry, which is very likely to be understood as spy by the public.

[149] Aleksandr Podrabinek released the petition on his Facebook page against the state attempt to whitewash the present, where well-known dissidents, such as Pavel Litvinov, Vladimir Bukovskii, and Mustafa Dzhemilev, have signed. See Podrabinek's facebook page, www.facebook.com/alexander.podrabinek/posts/1441353112649712.

[150] There are many scholarly publications that discuss *Stolpersteine* within the fields of memory, philosophy, cultural and urban studies. For publication in English, see, for example, Östman, Harjas, and Gould and Silverman.

While the German project placed markers on the street, the frequent construction in big Russian cities led to moving the new commemorative signs to the walls. 10 * 17 cm tin plaques (3.9 * 6.7 inch), designed by the Russian architect Aleksandr Brodskii (figure 32), contain simple biographical information: a plaque begins with “here lived,” and then follows his or her name, profession, the date of birth, arrest, death, and rehabilitation. Each individual deserves one plaque. Except for their sizes, they are not largely different from the traditional ones in terms of subjects, sites, visitor experiences, and meanings. They are installed mostly on request of victims’ relatives on the building where they lived before their arrests.

Figure 33 Tin Plaques, Dedicated to the Victims of the Political Repression by Last Address Project

The Last Address bears significance in the sense that individual names appeared on the physical fabric of the city. They do not depersonalize victims like the faceless figures in the Wall of Grief. They are no longer an anonymous collective represented by a large memorial or museum display. Their names, stored in databases or remembered in private spaces, come out into physical space and are embodied into materiality. Also, the memorial indicates the private place where victims originally belonged to, rather than the prison or concentration camp, where memorials have been commonly erected.[151]

The project creates memory in between the hard and soft, a memorial in between the public and private. It can avoid the legal issues imposed on memorial plaques due to the small size of its plaques; they are considered informational signs, allowed only by agreement with the owners of buildings or their residents. It is an attempt to negotiate the past from the present, not only fighting against widespread indifference to and amnesia of the dark past in contemporary society, but also bringing mourning practices to everyday space and broader audience, although its fragile situation between illegal and legal status could operate as a threat to the project, dependent on the political situation.[152]

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[151] It was the central idea that Demnig explained in his interview with Uta Franke: the Stolpersteine project "operate centrifugally" to the victims' places of everyday lives and allows victims to "get its name back" (Demnig 9, 13).

[152] Compared to the other memorials in the city and *Stolpersteine*, however, they have more chances to suffer from intentional vandalism. First of all, it is much easier to detach a plaque from the wall, rather than to pluck a concrete cube from the pavement. When I personally visited the first five sites of the project in 2015, I could already find the empty wall in one site, which showed only a trace that the plaque had been there. The local consensus is always fragile one. The staff at St. Petersburg Memorial told me in the interview in June 2015 that while receiving signatures from residents for the installation, she was asked to answer the question on what she thinks about Stalin. Also, in the other site I visited, one man, obviously drunk, physically threatened me, seeing me, a foreigner, making photographs of them. I ended up escaping from the spot and taking a photo of the plaques from distance.

In addition, in 2018, the city authorities in St. Petersburg have ruled that Last Address plaques are illegal. Aleksandr Mokhnatkin, the former assistant of the state duma member Vitalii

They are affixed to the walls in between semi-private and semi-public spaces, such as courtyards or under the arches. The material evidence of the past not only shows the omnipresence of victims in physical space, but also put an ethical burden on residents and society. Since the plaques need to be approved by the owners or all of the residents of the building, dwellers cannot miss their existence. The individual names and memories that viewers would not learn in history are inscribed in the urban sphere as *lieux de mémoire*. The Last Address creates an alternative memory map and rewrites the local history on the city fabric. The first memorial plaques in St. Petersburg were ceremonially installed in March 2015 inside the open courtyard of the Sheremetev Palace where Anna Akhmatova Literary and Memorial Museum is located: two of them were dedicated to Nikolai Punin, Soviet art historian and Akhmatova's common-law husband and his daughter's husband Genrikh Kaminskii (Shkurenok; Ermoshina). The staff at Memorial told me with excitement that she noticed the guide was already explaining the plaque as a part of the museum exhibit immediately on the installation's completion.

Even though the project is a (inter)national phenomenon initiated in Moscow, the small tin plaques engage in dialogue with St. Petersburg's traditional plaques, dedicated to authority figures, as well as with the monuments, dedicated to victims of the repression. They affect the mental mapping of local history by attesting to the simple fact that not only well-known great figures but also ordinary people, including victims, inhabited the same space. They present alternative history,

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Milonov made a complaint about the plaques. In response, the City Committee for Development and Architecture acknowledged absence of "legal ground" and possible violation could exist (Feofanov). The chairman of the Open Russia civic movement, Andrei Pivovarov, attached the official response-letter in his Facebook account, severely accusing him of being an "absolutely worthless person" and "snoop," while Milonov stated that the informer does not work with him anymore and endorsed his support for the project. It seemingly ended up as a scandal, but its fragile situation between the illegal and legal status could always come back as a threat.

separate from books and documents. Their intrusion in everyday space disrupts the special, historical sensorium of St. Petersburg and change people's sentiments toward their local history.

6.4 Claim to Wall: Gandhi

Another plaque project concerns the activist group Gandhi in St. Petersburg, who engage in street art. Characterized by spontaneity and ephemerality in public space, street art has become a common, well-known topic in urban studies and contemporary art. Independent of official validation or legalization, street art has become appreciated as a genre of art and, at the same time, an activity that challenges urban policies and capitalism. Street art or urban art, including graffiti and cultural jamming, such as addition of slogans to billboards and advertising to subvert the intended message, draw attention to the power and meanings inscribed into the urban environment. Artists attempt to de-naturalize the taken-for-granted landscapes that we each use on a daily basis, asking us to be aware of the power relations that work through this mundane space (Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place*; Deutsche, *Evictions*). They involve in a form of a game in which the spectator invited to interact in a new way with identity of the place and its history, and memory.

Yet, already in the 1990s, street art became vividly visible and re-appreciated by the media, governments and the market. Banksy, the most high-profile street artist, enjoys huge popularity among art critics and public for his dark humor and socio-political commentaries: his artworks, including paintings, murals, and installations, are displayed in museums and sold at the Sotheby auction, regardless of the artist's permission. In Russia, the opening of the Street Art Museum in St. Petersburg in 2015 also evidences such a trend in reappraising street art. The museum, covering

a huge old industrial site with a former boiler house and huge walls, invites the best-known street artists in the world to work for the exhibitions: street art has been reduced to mural art.

Even so, the protest movement in Russia has created performance art that has received wide media coverage and scholarly attention in the Western world, especially performances by Voina, Pussy Riot, and Petr Pavlenskii, as "art interventions had replaced the public political sphere" (L. Johnson 159).[153] The radical art movement especially reached its peak in the late 2000s and early 2010s, which was followed by large protests in the Russian cities after the third presidential election in 2012, widely perceived as corrupt. Voina painted a giant phallus on the surface of the Liteinyi drawbridge, which leads to the headquarter of the FSB building in St. Petersburg, and received the Innovation Prize by the National Center for Contemporary Arts in Moscow in 2011. Pussy Riot's rock performance of "Punk Prayer" inside the Christ the Savior Cathedral was one of the wildest scandals to occur on the eve of Putin's third-term election in February 2011. Their performances were site-specific, but "these practices could be related to street art only indirectly, because their action used public space merely as a medium for their statements, and not as full environment for creating their works" (Ponosov "Rebirth of Russian Street Art").

In contrast, Gandhi has been engaged in micro-urban interventions, taking a position of non-violent resistance with art in the street: the group was named after Mahatma Gandhi.[154]

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[153] See for the radical art movement in the 2000s and early 2010s Lena Johnson and Dziewanska. Discussions about Pussy Riots could be more expansively found in various scholarly fields of music, art, politics, religion and etc: see for example Joachim Willem's "Why 'Punk'? Religion, Anarchism and Feminism in Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer," Nicholas Denysenko's "An Appeal to Mary: An Analysis of Pussy Riot's Punk Performance in Moscow," or Catherine Schuler's "Reinventing the Show Trial: Putin and Pussy Riot," and etc.

[154] I put it in the past tense, since their name has changed to *Gadina*, which indicates "viper, jerk, riffraff," in the aggravated socio-political atmosphere in the late 2010s.

Beginning with simple images of animals, the group later produced a series of migrant women in their national costumes and a series of "women in the streets," which talk about "self-perception in relation to men," making a socially-oriented message about racism and misogyny (Partizan, "Novye neskuchnye"). Street art pieces, such as "Not a Shame," "I Will Be Soon Wiped Out, What About You?" and "Women in Work" expose the fragile situation of women, fighting against sexism, misogyny and racism (figure 32, 33, 34). They collaborated with the project *Nochlezhka*, an organization to give aid to the homeless, and attached hundred plaques made of cardboard. It meant to reveal the harsh reality of poverty in the second biggest city in Russia, but also intended to raise money for the homeless, which ended in success.[155]

Figure 34 "Not a Shame" by Gandhi

[155] They used specifically cardboard for the plaques since it is one of the most significant materials for the survival of the homeless.

Figure 35 “I Will Be Soon Wiped Out, What About You?” by Gandhi

Figure 36 “Woman in Work” by Gandhi

The project “Here Simply Lived a Person” took place in May 2014 as a collaboration with Anna Nazarova, from the Dlinavolny group: it involved in the installation of the temporary plaques as an urban intervention. The plaques, made of plywood, were installed overnight throughout the historic center. Each plaque contained information about simple people or anti-heroes, who could easily be found in anyone’s neighborhood, and whose problems and situations were not uncommon to many passers-by in the city. They ranged from simple anecdotes to social commentaries on local and national problems. Each plaque reads:

> In this house in 2004, Ivan Semenov came to visit Olga Chikineva and accidentally broke a sink in the bathroom. (Muchnoi pereulok 3)
>
> In this house in 2009, the Korzhikov and Zakharzhevskii couples rented an apartment. Then, they quarreled over the missing yogurt in the refrigerator and left. (Pushkinskaia 7) (figure 35)
>
> In this house in 2009 lived Ksenia Dimina. She often woke up late to work, because she loved to read online forums at night. In 2013, she moved to Grazhdanka, closer to the office. (Prospect Bakunin 15-17)
>
> In this house from 2000 to 2003 the son of FSB officer, Andrei Vasil'evich Chebakov, came to visit his girlfriend, discussing the possibility of moving to Moscow and photos of Kirsten Dunst. But at the end of 2003, the girlfriend got married and stop inviting friends. (Lomonosov 20) (figure 37)
>
> In this house in 12 September 2007 happened the conception of Gul'nara Akhmetovna Shakenova, who, however, never lived [here], because she left for Kazakhstan while in the mother’s womb. (Apraksin pereulok 9)
>
> In this house from 1999 to 2004 Vladislav Andreevich Sergienko, PR director of the firm “Ellada,” rented the apartment, staying in the house only at nights, and all the time was dedicated to work. In the beginning of 2004, he met a girl Natal'ia and moved in with her. (7-aia Krasnoarmeiskaia 19)

In this house in 2006 from June to December lived a musician from the group "White Bim," Valera Subbotin and Tania Buzina, who could not get along with the owner because of noise and smoking, and moved to the Narvskoi region. (Rubinshtein 21)

In this house from 1974 to 2009 lived Aleksandra Stepanovna Beleinik, accountant and gardener, but having retired, moved to her son in Tolyatti to babysit the grandchildren. (Pisareva 5)

In this house from 2008 to 2010 lived and worked copywriter Valentina Sergeevna Koshkina, but, after making a decision to end loneliness, she found a husband online and moved to Toronto. (9-aia Sovetskaia 22)

In this house lived Ivan Borodin since 2003. In 2010, he inherited an apartment in Moscow and went to live in India, Thailand and China. (Bol'shoi Kazachii pereulok 11)

In this house from 2001 to 2005 Natal'ia and Aleksandr Suvorovs rented a room. But, after giving a birth to a daughter Mariia, they had to look for a separate apartment, which does not exist in the center (Gorokhovaia 50) (figure 38)

At the second entrance of this house in March 2007, Vasilii Ivanovich Kabakov confessed his love, but was rejected and drank cognac all night, spending all the remaining money until payday. (Kolomenskaia 9)

Figure 37 Fake Plaque of "Here Simply Lived a Person" at Pushkinskaia 7 by Gandhi

Figure 38 Fake Plaque of "Here Simply Lived a Person" at Lomonosov 20 by Gandhi

Figure 39 Fake Plaque of "Here Simply Lived a Person" at Gorokhovaia 50 by Gandhi

The plaques parody the contents and forms of the classic plaques, reappropriating their rhetoric of "Here Lived." In continuation of their artworks on minorities, these works expose ordinary people with petty or too-common problems in the urban sphere, revealing that people are living in the center, not only the dead with great names: contemporary anti-heroes are inscribed on the walls and as a form of the text. Also, their biography has not been completed in the text: the inscriptions on the plaque does not mean these anti-heroes' temporalities are completed. The city as a whole is often compared to a text that could be read through, particularly the novel as a "genre-in-the-making," in contrast to the epic, whose form is already completed (Bakhtin 50): each of these plaques are novels with open temporality while the traditional ones are epic.

In this sense, while commemorative plaques indicate the absence of bodies that remain as materialized memories, captured and inscribed on the tectonic wall, these plaques engage with the stories of the fleeting bodies and fleeting memories, just like the fate of the plywood plaques, which themselves ended up evanescent. The artist presumed the ephemerality of the plaques. As most street art does, the project had a short life-expectancy on the public sphere. These plywood ones are arguably a more vulnerable form of street art compared to graffiti or paintings, which require repainting. One of them about the musician, located on Rubinshtein Street, which is the busiest street, filled with fancy restaurants and bars, disappeared and found nowhere immediately in the morning after the installation at night. In contrast, the other one about the son of the FSB officer inside the courtyard at Lomonosov Street was the last to disappear, surviving until 2015. As is often the case with street art, traces of the plaques remain online.

Above all, as articulated in the commentaries on the project, viewers could not tell whether these anecdotes were real or fake. They talk about common problems, but are impossible to verify

based only on the texts. How much faith then could viewers put in inscribed texts of the authorized plaques, which have become collective memories in materialized, durable form in public space? Indeed, it does not only concern the plaques, but also monuments, memorials, museums and all other forms of history and memories in public space. In this vein, the plywood plaques put to question the texts of the other plaques, widespread on the city. Gandhi's project stripped off the "classic halo of sacredness" in the practice of writing and commemorating memory and history on the wall (Gandhi "V etom dome"). By prompting alternative narratives to those of the hegemonic operation of power and social control in the city space, the alternative plaque projects bring out critical awareness of how hegemony operates in the city space by publicizing a certain history and retaining certain aesthetics, as Cresswell mentioned streets are a battle between "as a site and sign of domination and order" and "as a site and sign of unrest, rebellion and disorder" ("Night Discourse" 262).

6.5 Conclusion

Various narratives unfold in the urban sphere. In post-Soviet society, these narratives have become more diversified, from simply decorating and beautifying the cityscape, to acknowledging and memorializing the dark past that was censored from sanitized history and is now falling into amnesia, to destabilizing the official, traditional text and creating new meanings in public space. In a broader sense, I named anti-monuments, selective public arts that subvert traditional arts in form, subject, meaning, and visitors' experience and thus engage in dialogue with long-standing city symbols and aesthetics since Imperial Petersburg. Indeed, anti-monuments take a risk in being in the public space, which is heavily commercialized, globalized, and, in a certain sense,

homogenized. Also, it brought out epistemological conflicts inherent in public space and ideological feuds that were not yet properly resolved due to the socio-political situation in the post-Soviet Russia. Yet, from Sobchak to the local artists, these efforts over the course of more than twenty-years contributed to re-writing histories and memories that were neglected, avoided, or censored, and to encouraging the space for plurality and following contestation, inherent in democratic public space.

7.0 Afterword

In the dissertation, I have explored how the city narrative has diversified and developed in interrelation with elements of the physical sphere, such as distinctive skylines and historic buildings, reflecting the desires of diverse group of people. Throughout, I ask how these developments contributed to re-adopting and re-creating urban narratives for a new post-Soviet identity.

Each chapter has examined different discourses and claims on the city's identity desired by different groups of people. While the first two chapters unravel the most popular and dominant images of the classic, historic city, the other three represent the antithetical, alternative, and participatory images that reveal diverse facets of the city. While the first, second, and third chapters address a museumified, tightly-trimmed, and theatrical landscape of spectacles, the fourth and fifth take up images of contested, spontaneous, or self-evolving landscapes, whatever the original intentions and desire for the cityscape that lay behind the projects and plans.

The first two chapters engage with the most well-known tourist routes and iconic historic sites: the Hermitage Museum, mainly the Winter Palace, and the Dostoevskii Route. They respectively indicate the bases of the two Petersburg mythologies, conflicts of which created and determined Petersburg narratives and its unique identity: the myth of man-made city from swamp *versus* its inevitable apocalypse, based on the bright and dark side of the modern city. The buildings that comprise these sites have served as landmarks for a long time, symbolizing the great figures, great events, and great culture of Imperial Russia, the pride of Petersburg/Leningrad citizens. With development and management, these two narratives came to parallel local sentiments against the highly centralized and rapidly developing Moscow and to represent the cosmopolitan/European

culture and the city's intelligentsia, respectively. Established by scholars and experts, and officially endorsed by the Soviet government, they foster a perception of community that ordinary citizens embraced as "ours" and evolve into a "spatial representation of collective identity" (Lefebvre, *Production of Space* 221). The historical buildings and their neighboring ensembles allow visitors to experience a historical dialogue between the past and the present and between the materialized landscape and urban narratives. They foster a sense of community through ritualistic walking and shared textual experiences, mainly Sokurov's *Russian Ark* and Dostoevskii's literary works.

While the first two chapters show how historic buildings contribute to perceptions of community and historic continuity in the urban sphere, chapter three takes a different look at the cityscape in film: Balabanov recreated the cityscape of historical buildings as ruins of a chaotic city in the transitional period of the 1990s. Mainly focusing on Balabanov's films, I observed how the cityscapes have been represented; many of these films are seen as faithful representations of the 1990s and sustain the mythology of the era. Ruins have become an aesthetic way to express this period, while cityscapes represent subjective perceptions of the city, its community, and its identity, which ended up as a total failure. Urban subjects in the film experience historical rupture through isolation and trauma.

The last two chapters talk about post-Soviet efforts to establish new cityscapes that could challenge the conventional aesthetics of the city and perceptions of the public space, but at the same time risked homogenizing and commercializing the urban sphere within global capitalism. While the fourth chapter engages with two gigantic projects of architecture, aesthetically radical, but functionally conservative, authoritarian, and capitalistic, the fifth chapter delves into the projects to create new cityscapes that visitors, as well as residents, experience while walking the city and making interactions with the urban sphere.

The two gigantic projects of the 2000s that chapter four engaged with put the city's historical buildings and skyline in danger as they attempted to create a new global identity. Both developers and preservationists sited their legitimacy in the historical continuity of city narratives or city aesthetics. While some developers met preservationist claims with irony or scoffing, progressive politics allied with them against these authoritarian projects. The convergence of conservative aesthetics and progressive politics in the movement helped to formulate civic movements and a new civic identity among participants.

The last chapter talks about efforts to write alternative narratives onto the urban sphere by means including public art like monuments, sculptures, commemorative plaques, and urban interventions. I embrace these objects under the term "anti-monuments," which challenge the traditional conventions of monuments in terms of form, subject, meaning, and viewers' experience. Shemiakin's monuments to Peter the Great and political victims, city sculptures under the theme of animals and city workers of the nineteenth century, and the street art "Here Simply Lived a Person" all indicate new aesthetics, new spectacles, new memories and history. They are inscribed as materialized forms in the cityscapes and fill out the gaps of the official historical narratives in the urban sphere.

Even though following chronological order resulted in concluding on the concept of contested sites in the last two chapters, I do not mean to ultimately valorize a concept of resistance or claim of "right to a city" as the grassroot movement. Rather, while the city's built heritage and topographical location produced mythologies and determined its local identity, in the post-Soviet period, all of these appear to invite diverse, sometimes even contradictory narratives, urban art forms, and performances.

Appendix A Chronology of St. Petersburg Landscapes[156]

Table 1 Chronology of St. Petersburg Landscapes

Year	General History Moscow Landscapes	Petersburg/Leningrad Landscapes				
		Chapter 1. Hermitage	Chapter 2. Memorialization of Dostoevskii	Chapter 3. Cinema	Chapter 4. Architecture Projects	Chapter 5. Monuments and Plaques
1703	The victory of the Russian navy over the Swedish army Peter the Great moved the capital to St. Petersburg					
1752						The first plaque appeared to document the flood in marble.
1762	Catherine II took the throne.					
1764		Catherine II purchased the whole galleries of paintings from Berlin.				
1782						The equestrian statue of Peter the Great or the Bronze Horseman was erected in the Senate Square.
1803	The Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815)					
1812	The Battle of Borodino and					

[156] In this graph, I have only included events that were mentioned in the dissertation

	Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow					
1825	The coronation of Nikolai I and the Decembrist Uprising					
1833			Pushkin wrote a poem *Bronze Horseman*.			
1835				Gogol''s "Nevskii Prospect" appeared in the collected work *Arabesque*.		
1839		De Custine visited Russia.				
1842				Gogol''s "Overcoat" appeared in the collected works in three volumes.		
1844		Nikolai I's decree on building height.				
1852		Opening of the public museum in the New Hermitage.				
1853	The Crimean War (1853-1856)					
1865		Grigorovich's guidebook to the Hermitage exhibition was published.				
1866			Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* was published.			
1881			Dostoevskii died and Anna Grigorievna invited Taube to photograph the cabinet.			
1898			The World of Art Group was founded.			
1905	The 1905 Revolution and Bloody Sunday					

1909			The first plaque was installed to the wall of the Dostoevskii's last house.			
1913		The last ball took place in the Winter Palace.				
1914	WWI (1914-1918) St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd.					
1917	February and October Revolutions. Civil War (1917-1922)					
1918		The last Imperial family were shot to death in Ekaterinburg.	The Moscow Dostoevskii Monument was erected on Tsvetnoi Bulvar'.			
1920		Evreinov's performance of seizure of the Winter Palace for the three-year anniversary of October Revolution. The Museum created the Oriental Department.				
1922			Antsiferov's book *The Soul of Petersburg* is published.			
1923			Antsiferov's book *Dostoevskii's Petersburg* is published.			
1924	Death of Lenin			The state began to host the celebration of the Pushkin's jubilee.		

	Petrograd was renamed Leningrad.					
1925			The Pushkin Memorial Museum was opened.			
1926				FEKS's film *Overcoat* premiered.		
1927			The Pushkin Memorial Museum become a state museum.			
1927		Pudovkin's film *The End of St. Petersburg* premiered. Eisenstein's film *October* premiered.				
1928	The first *Five-Year Plan* (1928–32), implemented by Stalin.					
1930		The Museum created the Department of the Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia.			The Palace of Culture in Leningrad was constructed in constructivist style by Miturich and Makashov.	
1932			Fedorov's *House of the Dead*			
1933	The contest for the Palace of the Soviets (1931–1933) was won by Iofan					
1934	In the Writer's Congress, Socialist Realism was adopted as a sole method for Soviet art		The separate publication of Dostoevskii's *The Possessed* is not permitted.			
1936			The Moscow Dostoevskii Monument was			

			relocated to the museum.			
1937	Great Jubilee of Pushkin					
1941	WWII (1939-1945)	The Museum created the Russian Department. Leningrad Siege: evacuation of the displays.				
1942		Karmen's film *Leningrad Battle* was released.				
1944		The Leningrad Siege was lifted.				
1945		The title of the Hero City was awarded by Stalin.				
1953	Stalin dies. Khrushchev succeeded Stalin.					
1956	"Secret Speech" of Khrushchev took place.		The 75th anniversary of Dostoevskii' death. the official publications began to vindicate the author. The new plaque was installed in the author's last house.			
1957					The Palace of Culture in Leningrad was reconstructed in the neo-Imperial style.	
1958	The Dzerzhinskii Monument in front of the KGB building was erected.					

1961			The Assumption Church at Sennaia Square was demolished as a part of the anti-religious campaign.			
1964	Brezhenev replaced Khrushchev.					
1965					The All-Russian Society for the Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments (VOOPlik) was formed.	
1968			The official decision for the Petersburg Dostoevskii Memorial Museum was made.			
1971			The 150th anniversary of Dostoevskii's birth. The opening of the Petersburg Dostoevskii Memorial Museum. Toporov wrote an article about Petersburg Text.			
1976				Mikhalkov's *A Slave of Love* was released.		
1981			The Dostoevskii Museum became an official meeting place for Club-81.			
1984			Toporov's article on Petersburg Text was published.			

1984				Iufit's *Werewolves Orderlies* was released.		
1985	Gorbachev came to power.	Rembrandt's painting *Danaë* was seriously vandalized.		Iufit's *Woodcutter* was released.		
1987				Iufit's film *Spring* was released.		
1988				Iufit's *Suicide Monsters* was released.	Historic Center of St. Petersburg is inscribed on the UNESCO list.	
1989			Kholina's statue won the Dostoevskii monument competition.	Sakharov's film *The Staircase* premiered.		
1990	The Moscow Solovetskii Stone was erected.	Piotrovskii was appointed Director of the Hermitage.		Balabanov's film *Happy Days* premiered.		
1991	In Aug., the coup of the communist party failed. Liberal protesters attempted to tear down the Dzerzhinskii Monument and the municipal government officially removed it. In Dec., the Soviet Union collapsed.	The return of the old names St. Petersburg following the result of the June referendum.		Svetozarov's film *Arithmetic of Murder* premiered.	Sobchak was elected the first mayor of St. Petersburg. Leningrad was renamed St. Petersburg, following the result of the June referendum. Shemiakin's monument to Peter the Great was installed at the Peter and Paul Fortress.	
1993				Mamin's film *Window to Paris* was released.	St. Petersburg received federal city status.	
1994			The exhibition in the Dostoevskii Museum to select a location for			Chizhik-pyzhik was unveiled.

			a Dostoevskii Monument			
1995				Dykhovichnyi's film *Music for December* was aired.		Shemiakin's Sphinx of Monuments to the Victims of the Political Repression was erected on the Neva. The Plaque to the nose of Mayor Kovalev was installed in Voznesenskii Prospect.
1997	The 850th Anniversary of the city's birth. Zurab Tsereteli's Peter the Great was erected by the Moscow river. The Dostoevskii Monument was erected at Leninka.	The painting *Danaë* returned after restoration.	In May, the Dostoevskii Monument was erected at Vladimir Square. In Dec., the Gogol' Monument was erected on Malaia Koniushennaia.	Balabanov's film *Brother* was released.	The city began to host the annual International Economic Forum. Iakovlev was elected the city governor. Gergiev appealed to Yeltsin about the necessity of the second building of the Marinskii Theater	In Sep., Malaia Koniushennaia was re-opened as a pedestrian zone.
1998		Mikhalkov's film *Barber of Siberia* was released.		The political assassination of Galina Starovoitova. Balabanov's film *Of Freaks and Men*. The premiere of TV series *Streets of Broken Light*.		The last Imperial family was reburied in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul. The monument to the city policeman was installed.
1999	Yeltsin resigned and Putin became an acting president.			Moskvitin's episode *Looking for High-Risk Work* in *Streets of*		Malaia Sadovaia was re-opened as a pedestrian zone.

	The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour was reconstructed.			*Broken Lights* was aired		The plaque, dedicated to the Rasklol'nikov House was installed.
2000	In Mar., Putin was elected the president.	Gleb Panfilov's film *The Romanovs: An Imperial Family* was released.		In April, TV series *Petersburg Bandits* were premiered. In May, Balabanov's film *Brother 2* was released.	Monument to the St. Petersburg Photographer was installed on Malaia Sadovaia.	In Jan., Cat Elisei was installed and Cat Vasilisa in Apr.
2001					A fragment of a historic building from the Litovskii Market was enlisted for preservation. The original tender for the MT-2 was held. Moss' design was elected.	
2002		Sokurov's film *Russian Ark* premiered at the Canne.		Balabanov's film *War* was released.		The Petersburg Solovetskii Stone was erected at Troitskaia Square.
2003		Celebration of the Tercentenary anniversary of the city's birth took place. In May, *Russian Ark* premiered at the Hermitage in Russia. Van der Horst's *Hermitage-niks* was released.		Uchitel''s film *The Stroll* was released.	The new competition for the MT-2 took place. In June, the eleven projects were presented to the public. Perrault's design won the competition for the MT-2. Matvienko was elected the governor.	

					The Hare was installed next to Ioannovskii Bridge.	
2005	According to a new law, governors were appointed by the recommendation of the president and approved by regional legislative assemblies.			Balabanov's film *Deadman's Bluff* was released.	The facade of the Litovskii Market building was demolished without any notice. The Kirov Stadium was decided to be demolished and a new Zenit stadium was won by Kurosawa. In Dec., Matvienko was reappointed as governor.	
2006				Balabanov's film *It Doesn't Hurt* was released.	In Feb., Foster won the competition for New Holland development projects. The competition for the Gazprom-Neft' office tower in Okhta District took place and was won by RMJM. The preservationist civic group, Living City was founded. In June, Putin's speech in St. Petersburg used the expression "the unprecedented is coming".	

					In Dec., UNESCO World Heritage expressed concern over the Gazprom project. The illegal plaque dedicated to Glukhovskii appeared.	
2007				Balabanov's film *Cargo 200* was released.	The government canceled the contract with Perrault. Gazprom City was renamed Okhta Center. the World Monuments Fund listed the low skyline of St. Petersburg in 100 most endangered sites.	
2008	Medvedev was elected the president and Putin was appointed the prime minister.	Exhibition of Timur Novikov took place in the Hermitage.			The public hearings about the Okhta Center were held twice in January and June.	
2009					Gergiev invited Diamond Shmitt Architects for a new MT-2.	
2010				Balabanov's film *Stalker* was released.	Reconstruction of New Holland Island began by Abramovich. The Okhta Center finally relocated to the Lakhta area and was renamed Lakhta Center.	In June, Voina painted a giant phallus on the surface of the Liteinyi drawbridge.

2011	Pussy Riot's rock performance of "Punk Prayer" inside the Christ the Savior Cathedral, Moscow.				Poltavchenko succeeded Matvienko.	
2012	In Feb., Putin was elected to the presidency of the third-term.			Balabanov's film *Me, too* was released.	Selikhova's *Twilight of a New Era* was aired and criticized by Matvienko.	
2013				Balabanov died in May was released.	The MT-2 by Diamond Shmitt Architects was revealed	
2014	Governors began to be elected by vote again. The first national monument dedicated to victims of the Soviet repression was approved by the presidential decree. In Dec., the first plaques of the Last Address Project were installed.	Manifesta was held in the Hermitage Museum.	The reconstruction of the Assumption Church at Sennaia began.			The iron fences were installed, surrounding Shemiakin's Peter. Gandhi's street art project "Here Simply Lived a Person" took place.
2015	Nemtsov was killed.	Sokurov's film *Francofonia* was released.				In Mar., the first plaques of the Last Address Project in St. Petersburg were installed.
2016	The monument to Vladimir the Great was erected near the Kremlin.				New Holland Island was opened to the public.	
2017	The first national monument to political victims, Wall of Grief				The new Zenit stadium by Kurosawa was opened.	

	was unveiled in Moscow.					
2018	In Mar., Putin was reelected the president. Russia hosted the 2018 World Cup The Project Great Names of Russia was initiated.				Beglov became a new governor. The Lakhta Center reached the height of 462 meters (1,516 ft.).	
2019			The Pulkovo Airport decided to keep its original name regarding the Great Names of Russia Proejct.			

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