

the Soviet contention that the masses played a role in the Soviet Union's development and thus the growth of communism. Shay further notes that these large ensembles reflected the Soviet preference for grandiose artistic displays, which, for the Soviets, evidenced modernity and success.

Regarding the Cultural Cold War, Shay states that the dance company proved so successful during its initial tour of the US in 1958 that the State Department and the CIA attempted to counter with a "choreographic 'answer'" (83). Shay contends that the US response most readily appeared in the form of the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA), which selected various dance, musical, and theatrical performances for foreign tours.

In the last three chapters, Shay examines Moiseyev's efforts to create his dance company. Contrary to the official narrative and Moiseyev's repeated statements that "chance" (123) was instrumental to his dance company's success, Shay demonstrates successfully that Moiseyev actively utilized opportunities to showcase his talents. Furthermore, Shay notes that Moiseyev used Stalin's support and patronage to increase the dance company's prestige, and that Moiseyev's own determination proved key to the dance company's continuance. For example, during the war years Moiseyev worked diligently to maintain the dance company, and in 1943 even founded a specific dance school that began and continues to train future members of the dance company. Following the war, the dance company undertook numerous international tours according to Shay, including the 1958 tour of the US, where the dance company's ethno-identity dances aimed to showcase the Soviet Union's multiculturalism as opposed to the United States' racism. Shay concludes that the Moiseyev Dance Company served as a source of inspiration for various dance companies across the globe and ends with an excellent discussion of several of Moiseyev's most famous works, including *Gopak* and *Leto*.

Shay has presented an interesting account of the Moiseyev Dance Company. His recounting of his own experiences dancing with this company provide first-hand accounts of Moiseyev's influence on dance. Moiseyev's continued importance is revealed further through Shay's interviews with the dance company's current director, Elena Shcherbakova, who discusses the company's contemporary status within Russia. Moreover, Shay observed that the dance company's decision to retain its non-Russian ethnic dances demonstrates that in post-Soviet Russia, dance continues to have political messages.

This book could perhaps have been strengthened by a more chronological narrative, rather than a thematic approach, and by the use of additional archival materials, including more critics' reviews of the 1958 US tour. Nevertheless, Shay's work is an important contribution to dance and political history and appeals to students and scholars interested in dance and Soviet and post-Soviet politics.

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The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival.

By Maria Taroutina. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018. xv, 288 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. \$89.95, hard bound.

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Chronologically and conceptually, the icon occupies first place in the survey of Russian art history. However, approaches to what has traditionally constituted in

historical reckonings as Russia's great contribution to the western canon of art—the radical avant-garde of the early twentieth century—has been decidedly secular. Maria Taroutina's richly-illustrated and rigorously-researched volume, *The Icon and the Square: Russian Modernism and the Russo-Byzantine Revival*, offers a new approach for art and cultural historians to interrogate the construct of these "origin" points. From the book's cover, featuring water-colored blues of Mikhail Vrubel's *Lamentation II* (1887), we are invited to reconsider the avant-garde in the retrograde and the traditional in the radical, as Taroutina argues for a renegotiation of our understanding of Russian modernism through the pictorial values of her living history of Russo-Byzantine revivalism.

In an approach that argues for continuity in pictorial influence, Taroutina's vivid and thorough history of medieval revivalism in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Russia does not focus on the radical breaks of war and revolution. Her first two chapters, which situate many of the experimental impulses of modernism in the late nineteenth century, weave together the interfacing of art criticism, restoration efforts, and artists' works. She considers not only the work of major period theorists (Nikolai Tarabukin, Pavel Florensky, Nikolai Punin), but also the emergence of the field of Byzantine archeology and scholarship alongside changes in museology and display practices. What emerges is an illuminating picture of the dynamic cultural spaces in fin-de-siècle Russia, from the open studios and storage spaces of the Moscow Historical Museum to the press sensation that followed the restoration of Andrei Rublev's *Trinity* icon. Neither the museum, academy, nor icon itself serve as an ossifying force; rather, they each act as a "dynamic catalyst for contemporary artistic production" (68).

This history takes into account both the training of a viewing public and of the artists themselves, the latter of whom are treated in most detail in chapters three, four, and five. As Taroutina shows in these chapters devoted to Mikhail Vrubel', Vasili Kandinskii, Kazimir Malevich, and Vladimir Tatlin, pictorial lessons in Byzantine and medieval Russian art are formative for the philosophy, material, and style of these radically different artists. Vrubel' and Kandinskii are each offered as sites of recuperation from their often provincial or marginalized position in modernist (Greenbergian) art histories. Vrubel' forms a foundation through which Taroutina demonstrates the salience of a late nineteenth century "revivalist impulse" that shaped the "formal and conceptual possibilities of the twentieth" (135). Her analysis of Kandinsky through the lens of Byzantine revival offers an alternative modernism with affinity in the spiritual theistic turn of his literary contemporaries. If there is a site of recuperation in her fifth chapter devoted to Malevich and Tatlin, it is in her exploration of *O.10: The Last Futurist Exhibition*. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the exhibition forms the "limit case study of the Russo-Byzantine revival" with the icon "literally and figuratively deployed in the service of a conceptual refiguration of the modernist idiom" (180–81). Though the *Black Square* might offer that zero point (for Taroutina as well as Malevich), Taroutina's attention to Tatlin's overlooked *Corner Counter-Reliefs* enriches the picture. She expands the single photograph offered too often to capture this complex moment in the history of Russian modernism. Moreover, her broader arguments regarding the artists' individual histories illustrate the formative role that medieval art training had on Malevich, and especially, on Tatlin. Moving beyond the confines of the room of the *Last Futurist Exhibition*, the proto-Cubist is read through the frames of neo-Byzantine revival. Taroutina convincingly argues that we must understand the pictorial methods of the Byzantine tradition and their relevance for the nascent, and eventually, mature twentieth-century avant-garde.

Taroutina's keen formal insights are achieved through the deft handling of composition and form that make for effective readings of the direct citation or subtle

codings of Russo-Byzantine forms—made all the more present through high-quality reproductions. Taroutina’s prose is elegant and clear, making this scholarly volume accessible to all specialists in Russian art and culture. While one of the book’s major interventions is in redefining the features of Russian modernism, Taroutina’s conclusion makes an expansive turn, both temporally and spatially. In Pussy Riot’s performance in the doubly-revived Cathedral of Christ the Savior, her work poignantly offers a “prehistory for the current debates on the triangulating forces of contemporary Russian art, politics, and religion” (222). It also seeks, however, to provide a model by which other national traditions could be interrogated—through the forms of revivalism, religion, regionalism, and nationalism. Whether this model can extend to such a global reach remains to be seen, but this erudite and effective volume has laid an excellent foundation.

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An Ecology of the Russian Avant-Garde Picturebook. By Sara Pankenier Weld. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2018. xiv, 236 pp. Bibliography. Index. Plates. \$143.00, hard bound.
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The Soviet avant-garde picturebook, published for a brief period in the 1920s and early 1930s, comprised until recently a nearly forgotten body of texts. Sara Weld’s *An Ecology of the Russian Avant-Garde Picturebook* considers the development and swift demise of this most fascinating genre of mixed illustration and text for children within an ecological framework. As Weld explains in her masterful “Introduction” to the book, an ecological model addresses the “mistakenly simplistic assumption” that children’s literature served as a “refuge from increasing Soviet censorship and control over literature and the arts” for important writers and artists, while also bringing attention to these books which have “escaped notice in the past” (17).

This “Introduction” emphasizes the importance of these texts, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of Weld’s approach. She argues, “that straightforward historical or teleological models fail to describe the complex dynamics that arose from the fraught interactions of word and image, politics and art, and creativity and censorship evident in the Russian avant-garde picturebook, or Russian literature and art more generally” (5). Weld focuses on the *evolution* of this genre, which, “began as the exploitation of a new ecological niche or habitat characterized by certain resources and limitations that arose due to a unique constellation of circumstances in the early Soviet period” (12). First, the avant-garde picturebook thrives in its environment and evolves in the 1920s as “it exploited the new niche of mass-produced literature for Soviet children” (12). As censoring forces increase their attentions in the 1930s, “a process of antagonistic coevolution” begins, so that “censorship drove rapid and divergent literary evolution” (13). This antagonistic coevolution leads first to adaptation and, eventually, to the extinction of the genre.

Weld tracks the evolution of this very specific and transient species in four distinct parts. Part I, “Ex nihilo nihil fit: The evolution of the Russian avant-garde picturebook,” considers its beginnings and growth in texts illustrated by Alexandre Benois, Vladimir Lebedev, and El Lissitzky. “Unnatural Selection: Censorship and Ideology,” or Part II, examines the effects of increased censorship and ideological control on the evolution of the avant-garde picturebook in the 1920s. Most significantly, we see evolution in the face of these countervailing pressures in the development