

Gatina, Vasili Borodin, Anna Gorenko, and Irina Shostakovskaia, post-Soviet poets among the last to experience a “Soviet childhood.” Childlike formal elements are examined where they appear, but the emphasis is now on the poetic possibilities offered by the weak, naïve, uncorrupted, or unselfconscious perspective of a childlike speaker. The title notwithstanding, this book is less about Soviet children’s literature than it is about a “childlike aesthetic” that had its roots in the prerevolutionary avant-garde. Morse traces its complex line of descent in one end of the Soviet era and out the other, adding several important new chapters along the way.

LAURA GOERING
Carleton College

Comintern Aesthetics. Ed. Amelia M. Glaser and Steven E. Lee. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020. xxiv, 592 pp. Notes. Chronology. Index. Illustrations. Plates. Photographs. \$95.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.213

Comintern Aesthetics, as a volume and concept, requires more than a singular roadmap. The layered organizing principles provided by Amelia Glaser and Steven Lee in this project reveal its transdisciplinary and transnational representation. Not surprisingly, Vladimir Tatlin’s Monument to the Third International is the living visual foundation for the Communist International’s projection in time and space. Tatlin’s design, realized anew by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei in 2007 as a chandelier floating on a barge beside the Tate Liverpool, speaks to the lasting power of the Comintern’s utopian image long beyond the institution’s end in 1943. More significantly, Ai Weiwei’s “tenuous structure” is argued to be at once the realization of the “convergence of experimental art and radical politics” and a critique of progress it might represent (8). Thus settled at the nexus of politics and culture, the perspective of the edited volume—dedicated to utopian world communism—undertakes to reveal the many obscured “shared Soviet routes” that are unified in the Comintern project. These shared routes unify contributions from scholars of a wide range of disciplines (from history to contemporary art practice) and a vast geographical spread (from the United States to South America to China).

The finer-grained organization of the volume’s sixteen chapters falls into three parts: Space, Form, and History. Space opens with Harsha Ram’s account of Velimir Khlebnikov’s *Zangezi* (1920–22), which serves to lay a literary foundation for a utopian, non-European, decolonization of space in its revolutionary poetic geopolitics. As an opening chapter, Ram’s essay also reveals one of the major contributions of the volume overall, that is in the significant role played by literary forms, especially in the expansive and shifting notions of what might define world literature. It is fitting then too that the final essay in this section, Tony Day’s “Polycentric Cosmopolitans,” grapples with the definitions of world literature in temporal and geographic “beyond,” offering literary worlds in Indonesia and Vietnam that might figure as a space beyond colonial oppression.

The essays in the center of this first section are as broad in medial as in geographical scope. The juxtaposition of chapters by Katerina Clark and Snehal Shingavi present nested roots of traveling thought. Clark's "Berlin-Moscow-Shanghai" and Shingavi's "India-England-Russia" track the networks of cultural response and exchange in overlapping (rather than *strictly* vertical, lateral, or horizontal) orientations in the translation of a wide range of texts. The implications of viewing internationalism expand in Enrique Fibla-Gutiérrez and Masha Salazkina's institutional and cultural history of Soviet cinema and its reception in Spain, alongside Sarah Ann Wells's panoramic look at Brazilian modernism in literature and visual arts. While in each case the historical bounding the age of the Comintern forms the bulk of the analysis, each author expands through lines to show the ways, in the words of Wells, that the Soviet Union formed a "lodestar for strategic envisionings of the globe" (192).

Part Two is organized around a broad notion of "Form" that demonstrates the ways in which the Comintern's potent force breaks down restrictive binaries, working against "Realism-versus-Modernism" and "Art-versus-Propaganda." Nariman Skakov's look at national form in the shape of Andrei Platonov's "Orient" reveals a failure from the standpoint of Stalinist ideology, but a success when viewed in the impulse of the Comintern: in international transcendence. Xiaobing Tang's approach to Chinese street theater lays bare the development of subject formation in public art during the War of Resistance against Japan. Amelia Glaser's essay looks at "Comintern-aligned" Yiddish writers during the Spanish Civil War as a period of seminal, if overlooked, formative development leading to the great tragedy of the Holocaust. Essays by Christina Kiaer and Jonathan Flatley take on the empowering picture of the Comintern's anti-racism, reaching from the Soviet Union (in Hughes's Black Lenin and the adaptation of Vladimir Maiakovskii's *Blek end uait*) to deconstruct American racisms. Throughout Part Two, "Form" is inextricably tied to subject formation, be it through experimentation, alignment, or resistance; it is revealed as the important and central role that marginalized peoples, often in marginalized spaces, played in breaking down more than formal binaries.

The third section deploys a temporal theme to unify its five essays: history. As Lee notes in his introduction, this chapter serves also as a "eulogy" for the Comintern, concerned as much with the end of the institution as with its afterlife at a time when popular enthusiasm for communism had waned. Katie Trumpener's essay contends with the legacy of media and media practices in the successive shapes of internationalist cosmopolitanism in the GDR, from radio to literature. As Kate Baldwin shows in her look at a picture of black feminist transnationalism in newsprint, this picture of Comintern legacy is also one of complex (re)alignment; post-war international feminism can offer neither a clear heroic center nor a picture of utopian collectivity. For Evgeny Dobrenko, in his assessment of Socialist Realism in eastern Europe in and after 1956, and for Vladimir Paperny and Marina Khrustaleva in their revisitation of Paperny's model of *Culture Two*, the central issue is that of the abrupt end of communist superstructures, from the legacies of the avant-garde to Socialist Realism, the death of Stalin to the collapse of the USSR. The final chapter of the third section, titled in the familiar call, "Workers of the World Unite," brings the implications

and impulses of the Comintern into the present day. Bo Zheng's presentation of contemporary Chinese theater leaves the reader with a pressing, actionable question in the face of global capitalism: "Can socially engaged art bring about significant social change without being situated in a sustained, intense, and widespread cultural-social movement?" (524).

This impressive volume leaves us with any number of roadmaps to understand the history and implications of that question in the twentieth century, while at once also presenting a model global community of scholars that actively shapes the face of humanities in the twenty-first. This volume will certainly appeal to as diverse a group of scholars and readers as is represented on its pages: historians of Russia and the Soviet Union, world literature, art and media. The paratextual elements of the volume only further add to the collection's value, including Dominick Lawton's chronology of the Third International's institutional history (1914–47), which clearly demarcates and aligns moments of political and cultural significance. The volume is also well illustrated to reinforce the material and visual manifestations of the Comintern across early Soviet archival documents, architectural designs, agitational Spanish posters, and contemporary art installations.

The lasting picture is not of the Comintern as monolith (as Katerina Clark notes in her chapter), nor does it, as Lee argues from the outset, have a true center. At least in scholarly practices, the spiraled, tilted foundation of Tatlin's Monument has realized a powerful step that signals progress, but reminds us that it too is founded on unrealized progressive failures. That, however, is not a place of despair even in marking an end, but rather, of that "sustained effort to think, feel, organize, and create on an international scale against historical catastrophe" (534).

KATHERINE HILL REISCHL
Stanford University

Pussy Riot: Speaking Punk to Power. By Eliot Borenstein. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. xii, 135 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$61.00, hard bound; \$17.95, paper; \$16.15, eBook.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2022.214

In this short book, Eliot Borenstein tackles the history and significance of Pussy Riot, the punk group whose rebellious acts and videos from the 2010s were meant to shock Russians out of their political complacency and went on to make headlines around the world. In the preface, Borenstein states the premises that unapologetically run through the ensuing chapters: "that art is political, that dissent is patriotic, that church and state should be separate, and that authoritarian rule is worth opposing" (x).

The book begins with a solid introduction describing Pussy Riot's most well-known act (the "Punk Prayer" performed in Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior), the trial of three of the group's members (Mariia Alyokhina, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, and Yekaterina Samutsevich, usually referred to as Masha, Nadya and Katya respectively), and the ways in which this challenge to Vladimir Putin's authority was received in Russia. Two chapters offering a