

# The Moscow Times

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## LOOKING FORWARD

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A vision of Russia as a global titan will serve as Vladimir Putin's electoral trump card. → [Page 4](#)

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# Dyeing For the Cause

A green antiseptic used to harass the Russian opposition emerges as a symbol of protest.

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Activists struggle to preserve the avant-garde Shukhov Tower.

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18+







*"It's becoming unimportant what Navalny spoke about. The media only care that he was egged."* **Leonid Volkov**, Navalny's campaign manager

\$1

the price of Brilliant Green antiseptic dye.

March 26, 2017

Anti-corruption protest led by Alexei Navalny scheduled in Moscow.



Pro-Kremlin activists use **zelyonka** to frame the opposition as outcasts in the eyes of the broader public.

# It's Getting Easier to Be Green

By **Eva Hartog** e.hartog@imedia.ru

The battle against Russia's political opposition is being waged with a bright green liquid that comes in a tiny glass bottle

The cost of attacking a political opponent in Russia is about 60 rubles, or one dollar — That's the price of Brilliant Green or zelyonka in pharmacies across the country.

Since Soviet times, the antiseptic has been the go-to treatment for everyday cuts and chicken pox. But under Russian President Vladimir Putin, it has taken on another function — the branding of political opponents.

During a visit to Barnaul in southern Russia this week, opposition activist Alexei Navalny was doused with the dye by an unknown assailant. A month earlier, zelyonka was splashed onto former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov at a commemorative march for slain opposition politician Boris Nemtsov.

Members of the Pussy Riot punk band and human rights defenders Igor Kalyapin and Svetlana Ulitskaya are among just a few of those branded with zelyonka in recent years. The dye's use has even spilled into neighboring Ukraine where it is used for similar politically motivated attacks.

A veteran activist, Navalny has been harassed countless times. In the past year alone, he has been physically attacked by Cossacks, had a cake thrown at him outside his office in Novosibirsk, and been pelted with eggs in at least five cities on his presidential campaign trail.



Alexei Navalny has turned the most recent attack on himself into an iconic symbol of protest.

Leonid Volkov, Navalny's campaign manager, says the attacks are a premeditated strategy to divert the media's attention from the politician's vision for the country. The reports simply focus on scandal. "It becomes unimportant what Navalny spoke about," he wrote on Facebook. "What matters for clicks is that he was 'pelted with eggs.'"

For the Kremlin, Navalny is an unwelcome guest on Russia's political scene. He was recently re-convicted for fraud, which will effectively bar him from running in next year's presidential election. But he is continuing his campaign regardless: Last month his organization published a corruption investigation

into Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and the politician is planning mass rallies later this month.

Unlike in the prominent killings of Nemtsov or journalist Anna Politkovskaya, the use of zelyonka is meant to demoralize, rather than deter, says analyst Dmitry Oreshkin. In his view, the dye belongs to a psychologically focussed style of petty attacks that emerged during Putin's second term.

It is unlikely that these attacks are centrally organized, says political scientist Stanislav Belkovsky. "There are decisions the Kremlin takes directly and those it doesn't forbid others from taking," he says. "Attacks such as these are decided at a regional level."

Brilliant Green has the added advantage of stigmatizing its victims. It is notoriously difficult to wash off, guaranteeing targets will bear the mark of the "enemy" for several days at least. "It serves to humiliate the victim and discredit the person in the eyes of voters as weak and defenseless," says Oreshkin.

But by now, Oreshkin argues, its intended effect has faded. In fact, the opposition itself have started wearing green as a badge of honor. After Navalny was attacked in Barnaul, dozens of his supporters posted pictures of themselves in green online. When Kasyanov was attacked at the Nemtsov march, defiant demonstrators began chanting: "You won't pour zelyonka over us!" **TMT**



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## BREAKING BOUNDARIES

# The European Union at 60 — A Reliable Partner

By **Vygaudas Ušackas**  
EU Ambassador to the Russian Federation



This week European people come together to celebrate 60 years of our continent's greatest peacetime project: the European Union. On March 25 1957, our Founding Fathers signed the Treaty of Rome — an act that resolutely put an end to the trend of devastating wars between neighbours on our continent. Fundamentally a people's project, Europeans pledged "farewell to arms" and "never again war."

As President Juncker stated, "we are the heirs of those who first established Europe, of those men and women who in 1945 returned from the front and the concentration camps to towns and villages which had been destroyed." Putting behind them animosities among neighbours and reconciling the feeling of national identity with a commitment to the common good, Europeans vowed to work toward a vision of a peaceful, united and prosperous Europe.

And today, 60 years later, the vision remains alive and we can be proud of our achievements. Europe has turned from a continent of war to a continent of peace. This project has brought together 28 European states, more than 500 million people speaking 24 languages in one union, the European Union.

The EU today symbolizes peaceful cooperation, respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality and solidarity among European nations and peoples. It is the largest trade power and development and humanitarian aid donor. The world's largest single market and the euro is the second most important global reserve currency. It is home to the largest

union of democracies in the world. Our citizens are free to live, work and retire anywhere in Europe. It is at the cutting edge of innovation. EU membership has resulted in increased and shared prosperity.

This makes us a strong partner when we all together need to adapt and to face the new challenges of the world: effects of rapid globalization, continued armed conflict and the rise of terror, poverty and migration, a degrading environment and resource depletion.

Regrettably, the term "challenge" is also used nowadays to describe the state of EU-Russia ties. As spelled out in the EU Global Strategy, "managing the relationship with Russia represents a key strategic challenge for the European Union." For the last couple of decades, the EU and Russia had assumed a strategic partnership based on the convergence of values, economic integration and modernisation of our societies. Our agenda was positive and ambitious.

However, our partnership faced a breakpoint in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilization in Eastern Ukraine. From that point forward and today, it is clear that Russia and the EU have some deep differences: they relate to the European security order, principles of pluralism and human rights, the need for an open market economy and a rules-based trading system.

At the same time, Russia and the EU remain strategically important to each other. The EU remains the largest trading partner for Russia, while Russia is the EU's fourth largest.

We also have a number of shared concerns, such as the threat of terrorism, climate change and the situation in the Middle East. The success of the joint efforts to reach a nuclear deal with Iran demonstrates that we can cooperate in the international arena.

The EU also continues to undertake substantial and significant steps that provide a direct impetus to strengthening people to people contacts. From cooperation across our common border through student exchanges to support for civil society — those are the efforts that form the real glue between our peoples.

As we look to the next sixty years, we Europeans must realize that we have the future of our union in our own hands. We must strive to remain united because in unity lies our strength. Our 60 years of experience since the signing of the Rome Treaty shows that a united EU is capable of strengthening and extending the wellbeing of our people. And a united EU will be a strong and reliable partner to countries around the world, including Russia.

Nevertheless, we must recognize that it is difficult to foresee rapprochement in our differences in the near future. The EU must therefore strive to engage Russia where possible and speak out when our views clash as we are too important to one another. But we must also underline that any engagement is firmly based on the grounds of the international rules-based system and its principles and values. **TMT**

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## 4 Looking Forward

March 23 – 29, 2017



*"Crimea has become a symbol of our recovered sovereign might."*  
— **Andrei Kolesnikov**, Carnegie Moscow Center

# 84%

of Russians believe they are protected by the army.

# Feb. 23, 2017

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu declares Russian victory in Syria.



Recent polls show that Russians are growing uncomfortable with war. Human losses in Ukraine and Syria are increasingly seen as unnecessary.



# Make Russia Great Again

By **Mikhail Fishman** and **Matthew Kupfer** [newsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:newsreporter@imedia.ru) | Illustration by **Bojemoi**

## Restoring Moscow's power on the international stage will be one of the key pillars of Putin's presidential campaign

In 2016, Donald Trump rode a wave of popular discontent to the White House on the promise that he would “make America great again.” As Russia’s presidential election, scheduled for March 2018 draws nearer, President Vladimir Putin may try a similar tactic — by contending that he has already restored Russia’s greatness.

Since annexing Ukraine’s Crimean peninsula in 2014, Russia has increasingly asserted its role on the global stage.

The Kremlin has ignited a separatist movement in eastern Ukraine and supported the unrecognized “people’s republics” that emerged there. In 2015, Russia entered the longstanding Syrian civil war in support of embattled Syrian President Bashar Assad. Trump’s electoral victory and the demise of the Western consensus against Russia’s violation of international law has also been a major coup for the Kremlin.

These events have all catapulted Putin to the position of a powerful broker in the international arena and fulfilled the country’s longstanding desire for international influence. They signify that, “Russia is once again a global player on par with the United States — much like the USSR was thirty years ago,” says Alexei Levinson, a sociologist at the Levada Center.

Russia’s quest for global influence won’t end in the near future. Observers suggest that the upcoming presidential election will be utterly predictable, lacking real competition. As a result, Putin will likely spend 2017 demonstrating Russia’s global greatness to spur enthusiasm and drive Russians to the polls.

This does not mean that Russia will rush to war, says political analyst Vladimir Frolov. But it does mean the Kremlin must project an image of strength abroad. “The idea is to show influence,” he says. Putin will need to “make headlines, assert Russia’s global presence and demonstrate that it is returning its spheres of influence.”

### New Adventures

Earlier this month, it emerged that Russia had deployed a 22-member special forces unit to a base in western Egypt, near the Libyan border. Russia’s goal is likely to support Khalifa Haftar, a renegade Libyan National Army general who currently controls most of the country’s east and poses a serious challenge to the UN-backed government in Tripoli.

the Kremlin’s support for Haftar is not new — the general made two high-profile visits to Moscow in 2016, and signed a series of undisclosed agreements with the Russian military in

January. But it is significant because it undermines UN efforts to stabilize the north African country.

The deployment shows that Russia is thinking “not just about its continued presence in Syria, but in the Greater Middle East,” says Alexei Malashenko, a regional analyst at the Dialogue of Civilizations foundation.

And it isn’t limited to the Middle East. Recently, Russia has also increased its role in Afghanistan. In February, the Kremlin organized an Afghanistan peace conference in Moscow that brought together representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, and Iran. Notably absent were the United States and other NATO coalition members.

Russia has also advocated for including the Taliban in any solution to the conflict in Afghanistan, presenting the Islamist militants as a bulwark against the Islamic State (IS). In February, Gen. John Nicholson, commander of U.S. military operations in the country, alleged that Russia had increased covert and overt support for the Taliban to undermine the U.S. and NATO in Afghanistan.

Russia has sincere concerns about conflict spillover from Afghanistan into Central Asia, says Malashenko. But it is also using the IS and Taliban presence in Afghanistan to assert the role of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a Russia-led military alliance of post-Soviet states in the region.

Europe could also serve as another staging ground for restored Russian influence. As political uncertainty grows in the EU, Russia is reasserting its influence in the Balkans.

Earlier this month, when EU foreign affairs representative Federica Mogherini spoke in the Serbian parliament, a group of pro-Russia parliamentarians met her with chants of “Serbia! Russia! We don’t need the EU!”

On March 20, David McAllister, chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, accused Russia of deliberately destabilizing Serbia in order to prevent the Balkan country from joining the EU. He has also alleged that Russia supports nationalist leaders throughout the Balkans.

In Montenegro, two Russian intelligence officers stand accused of masterminding a failed coup on election day in October 2016 to prevent the Balkan nation from joining NATO. Last month, a Montenegrin special prosecutor stated that “Russian state bodies were involved on a certain level.”

Any move that destabilizes the Balkans would send a strong message to the West: Russia is a critical regional powerbroker.

Displays of superpower status “could be a trump card in the election,” says Denis Volkov of the Levada Center, “but the demonstration of Russia’s global role has to be plausible.”

### Hesitation Blues

So far, there is no consensus in the Kremlin on whether to boost tension in Serbia. “Cooler heads understand it may be riskier than [involvement] in Syria,” says Frolov.

Meanwhile, decisionmakers must take into account the public mood. Last year, polls repeatedly showed that Russians are tired of war. Armed conflicts are increasingly seen as an irrational waste of resources, and human losses — first in Ukraine, then in Syria — as something Russia doesn’t need.

The Russian public sees the country’s newly achieved superpower status as a source of international respect, but Russians are more eager for this status to be used for dialogue, than for confrontation, says Volkov.

“The feeling is: ‘Now we can’t be ignored,’” he says.

As a result, the challenge for the Russian leadership will be to avoid backsliding into real conflicts that might undermine stability, something Russians hold dear.

Putin seems to understand this, says Fyodor Lukyanov, editor-in-chief of the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*. He is too cautious to attempt a full-scale restoration of Soviet grandeur.

“Besides Syria [and Ukraine], it’s either isolated local episodes, or just talk,” Lukyanov says.

So far, there is no clear indication that the Kremlin has decided on a central idea for Putin’s electoral platform. One of the challenges for the Kremlin will be addressing economic stagnation and declining living standards that will likely persist in Russia for a few more years. The other will be getting voters to the polls. But nostalgia for Soviet greatness could still drive electoral mobilization. Recent debates over holding the election on the fourth anniversary of the Crimean annexation reflect an appeal to that nostalgia.

Russia’s global influence will be a key part of the campaign, but the nostalgia card has already been played, says Lukyanov.

“Putin will have to explain why Russians need [global influence] and what they get from it,” he says.

Political consultant Evgeny Minchenko frames the issue more bluntly: Restoring Russia’s superpower status was the purpose of Putin’s third term.

“Now the question is ‘what’s next?’” he says. **TMT**





“Come on, stop spreading lies and false news.” — Foreign Ministry Spokesperson **Maria Zakharova** to CNN

15.03.2017

Russia Today, launches “Fake Check.”



A recent study suggests people trust news – even from marginal outlets – if they trust the person who shared it on social media.

9000

people shared a November 2016 tweet by ex-National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

# Borrowing the Worst from the West

By **Alexey Kovalev** a.kovalev@imedia.ru

## Russia’s obsession with ‘fake news’ is just beginning

Using “fake news” as a counterargument to any criticism is in vogue these days in Russia. Like Donald Trump and his supporters shouting on Twitter about whatever’s published by The New York Times or aired on CNN, Russian officials at all levels of government are in love with hating fake news.

For example, Russia’s Foreign Ministry recently launched a webpage where it claims to debunk “false information about Russia” by stamping the word “FAKE” in bold, red letters across screenshots of the offending news articles.

Similarly, the Kremlin’s foreign propaganda television network, RT, now has a website called “FakeCheck,” which supposedly discredits stories by turning them into quizzes with “correct answers,” such as, “Julian Assange has no ties to the Kremlin.”

As Russia’s prime minister faces new allegations that he controls a vast empire of illicit real estate, members of the parliament refuse to call for an investigation, saying the accusations against Dmitry Medvedev are nothing more than “fake news.”

### A tradition of trickery

In Russia, screaming “fake news” as a response to any criticism has an older relative in “whataboutism” — a rhetorical fallacy favored by both Soviet and modern Russian propaganda, where Moscow’s actions are justified through reference to real or perceived slights by the Kremlin’s foes abroad.

“You say Russia invaded Ukraine, but what about the 2003 invasion of Iraq?”

In many cases, the criticism isn’t unfounded, but Russia is essentially saying, “You’re doing it, so it’s okay for us too.”

By asking reporters things like, “You think our country is so innocent?” Donald Trump has turned whataboutism on its head, undermining his own country’s claim to moral superiority. Trump uses the same tactic Vladimir Putin often employs against the U.S.

Using the term “fake news” to deflect criticism is hardly the first time Russian officials have adopted questionable rhetoric and practices from the West to justify unpopular moves at home and abroad.

Seldom do you hear Russian lawmakers refer to China or Saudi Arabia, when proposing repressive legislation. No, they’re far more likely to cite the real or invented “progressive” steps taken by governments in the West.

Vladimir Putin was elected to his third presidential term in 2012, amid months of anti-authoritarian protests against the results of parliamentary elections the year before, when Putin’s party, United Russia, predictably won big.

When Putin was again comfortably settled in the Kremlin, his loyalists began to cast a wide net of new, repressive measures to preempt future dissent. Since then, most of these initiatives have, to some extent, quoted “foreign experience,” as a way of shutting down Russia’s West-leaning opposition.

For example, take one of the first and the most notorious pieces of legislation passed shortly after Putin’s inauguration in 2012, when United Russia deputy Alexander Sidyakin introduced a bill that would place much harsher fines on people who organize public demonstrations.

Strangely, Sidyakin claimed that his legislation was modeled in part on similar laws in Switzerland and Sweden, two of the most democratic nations in the world. When Russian reporters reached out to police commissioners in these countries, they denied that any such laws exist there.

Of course, Russian lawmakers also draw on real practices in the West, like the UK’s Investigative Powers Act, also known as the Snoopers’ Charter, which the State Duma has used to justify “tightening the screws” on Russian Internet freedoms.

### Borrowing the worst

So-called “moral crisis” is another reverse-engineered bogeyman. In fact, Russia is in the grips of a moral panic right

now: there’s an epidemic of teenage suicides orchestrated by insidious online “death groups” busy “hypnotizing” teens, if Russian officials and the state-controlled media are to be believed.

Of course, police statistics say fewer than 1 percent of the few hundred teenage suicides last year can be attributed to the direct influence of the Internet.

Americans who remember politicians blaming video games and rap music for violent crimes will recognize this hysteria: first, the mass media amplifies a dubious, vaguely sourced idea about rumored behavior among youths. Then there’s a flurry of panicked coverage, featuring self-declared experts confirming the latest dangerous trend. Nervous parents demand action from the government, and lawmakers looking to score easy political points toss out hamfisted, populist legislation.

Sober analysis swirls down the drain, and the whole process repeats when the news cycle moves on to the next catastrophe.

As “fake news” stonewalling seeps deeper into Russian politics, nearly any discussion risks absurdity. For instance, Ufa, the capital city of the Russian republic of Bashkortostan, has been in the headlines this winter because the local authorities consistently fail to clear the streets of snow. With dirty ice piling high throughout the city, Ufa’s mayor has ludicrously insisted that the story is “fake news” purveyed by an unscrupulous media.

Ostensibly, Russian officials’ whataboutism and their penchant for calling the Western media “fake news” are meant to declare Moscow’s opposition to Europe and America. Seen another way, however, parroting the West’s most nonsensical, authoritarian, and corrupt practices reveals a deep desire to share something with these foreigners. Unfortunately, the people in the Russian government seem happy to settle for the lowest common denominator. **TMT**

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*"They [gays] won't be allowed to come here, even from the West!"* **Sergei Davydov**, mayor of Svetogorsk

**2013**

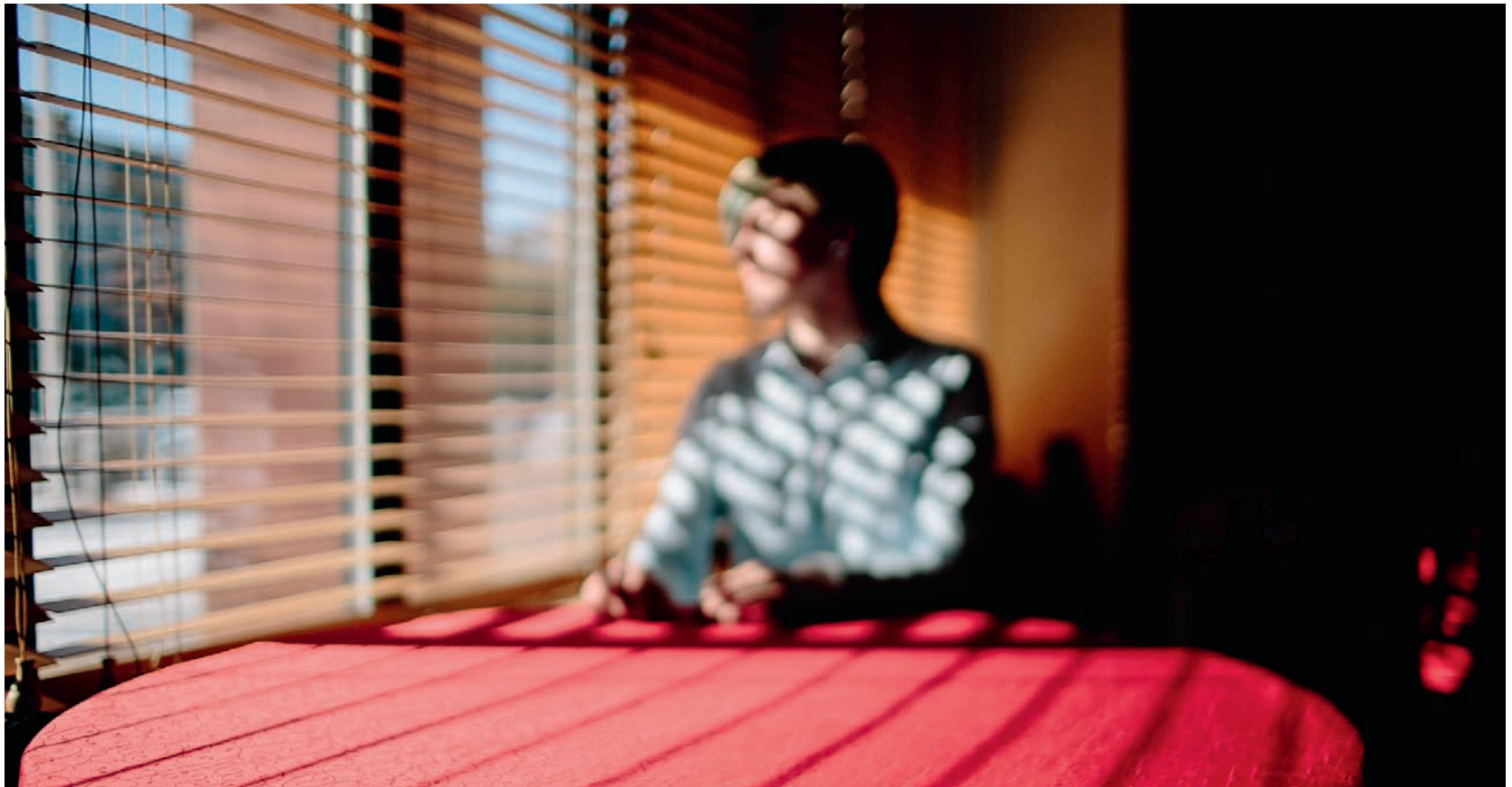
Russia passes gay propaganda law.

**81 %**

of Russians are intolerant to homosexuality according to WTSIOM poll in 2016.



**Svetogorsk** is a small town on the border with Finland with the population of approximately 16,000 people.



# A City Without Gays

By **Yevgenia Volunkova** [newsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:newsreporter@imedia.ru) | Photos by **Kseniia Ivanova**

The LGBTQ community is almost invisible in provincial Russia. But a small town mayor has declared war on them regardless

**S**vetogorsk, Russia — It all began with a penis-shaped lollipop called “Mr. Bob” that appeared in a bakery in Svetogorsk, a small town on Russia’s border with Finland.

A photo of the candy appeared in social networks, where the town’s mayor — a former military man named Sergei Davydov — came across them. The indignant mayor paid a personal visit to the bakery to deliver a tongue-lashing.

“Right near the school,” he complained. “Do you even know what you are selling?”

The incensed mayor went on to proclaim: “This city does not have and will never have any gays. They won’t be allowed to come here, even from the West!” The mayor’s comments electrified social media.

While officials in neighboring cities chimed in to support Davydov’s proclamation, it represented a challenge to others: LGBT activists descended on the town to proudly declare, “gays have set foot in Svetogorsk.” Then they were arrested by for not having the requisite documents to visit a border town.

The scandal rages on—nearly 100 LGBT activists are planning two more rallies in the “city without gays.” But the story of Svetogorsk and its crusading mayor highlights the grim reality for gays in provincial Russia, where a life in the closet beats one of threats, intimidation and violence.

## A city of ordinary people

Drab concrete panel housing dominates Svetogorsk’s skyline. Soviet playgrounds rust in the courtyards. There are no cinemas or nightclubs. A moss covered statue of Lenin — slowly being eroded by the elements — stands in the town’s center, a relic of a bygone era.

The town has little to offer visitors. Most Russians tourists pass through on their way to Imatra. Finns stop in just to buy cigarettes and gasoline. But locals enjoy a degree of freedom thanks to the border: Many hold multiple-entry

Schengen visas that allow them to cycle into Finland for shopping and leisure.

But the border’s influence on the town seems to end there — particularly on issues of sexual morality. On March 1, Finland legalized gay marriage. Meanwhile, in Svetogorsk, gays fear for their physical safety.

Sasha is a short, slender young woman. She has green bangs and gauged ears. She always carries a rainbow ribbon, the symbol of the LGBT community. In St. Petersburg, she wears it openly. When she visits her hometown, she hides it.

She realized she was a lesbian in high school in Svetogorsk, when she fell in love with a female classmate. But she never revealed her feelings to her friend.

“That was unimaginable,” she says. “If someone had found out, I would have been beaten. Once, we walked around town holding hands and people threw stones at our backs.”

Now, Sasha lives in St. Petersburg. She returns home only rarely to visit relatives. Her sister knows about her sexual orientation, but her parents do not.

“I don’t like coming here,” Sasha says. “Within a few days I fall into depression. Last time I was here, my haircut was shorter and a guy screamed ‘faggot’ at me and cursed me to high heaven.”

Passersby do turn to gaze at Sasha — sometimes with open contempt. Looking or seeming different can be dangerous, she says, which forces gays to hide their sexuality. Lesbians can walk in public, but gay men face greater scrutiny.

“If you’re gay, you’re toast,” Sasha says. “I would advise all gays to leave this city.”

## Beating gays

Officially, Svetogorsk may have no gays, but it has plenty of addicts. With few other avenues for recreation, locals have

turned to alcohol and other vices. Illegal drugs have become a serious problem.

“One in three people [in Svetogorsk] knows which drugs to buy and where to get them,” Sasha says. “But the mayor considers gays to be the main danger facing the city.”

Of the city’s limited restaurant and bar scene, the most intimidating, Sasha says, is the White Nights café, where the “cream of the city’s homophobes” gather in the evenings. She recommends the “Pizza Beer” joint instead.

It is 2 a.m. Three young men at a neighboring table down “Patriot” cocktails colored in the red, blue, and white of the Russian flag: vodka, grenadine syrup, and blue curacao. They wash it down with beer.

Asked about the mayor’s recent statement on gays, the men are dismissive.

“He’s an idiot! So what if there are gays?” says one.

“He’s embarrassing the city,” another concludes.

But not all the town’s residents are so friendly. Three young men stand drinking near a local supermarket. “[The mayor] is absolutely right!” one says. “Those faggots shouldn’t hang around here. Let them go to Finland!”

“If I see any gays around here, I’ll kick their asses,” agrees a second.

The controversy has spilled into cyberspace too. In an invitation-only social network group dedicated to Svetogorsk, a heated discussion about LGBT people rages. Residents are divided in their opinions. One writes that there are no gays in the city because “they would be [beaten] every 100 meters.” Another proposes feeding the gays to the city’s homeless dogs. Many simply laugh at the subject, relishing the controversy.

## “I still have to live here”

Vadim, a homosexual resident of Svetogorsk, is afraid to leave his home. After a long conversation on social media, he finally agrees to meet in person, but asks not to be photographed. “I still have to live here,” he explains.



# Russian Tales

The Moscow Times  
No. 5796

7



“[The gay propaganda law] is aimed at defending our kids and does not discriminate homosexuals” - Vladimir Putin

1993

Russia decriminalizes homosexuality.



“I’ve been fined for attending a gay parade for \$260. Me and Anna, we’ve been holding a banner ‘Make Love Not War’. We were quickly detained,” – Elena Kostyuchenko, a gay activist

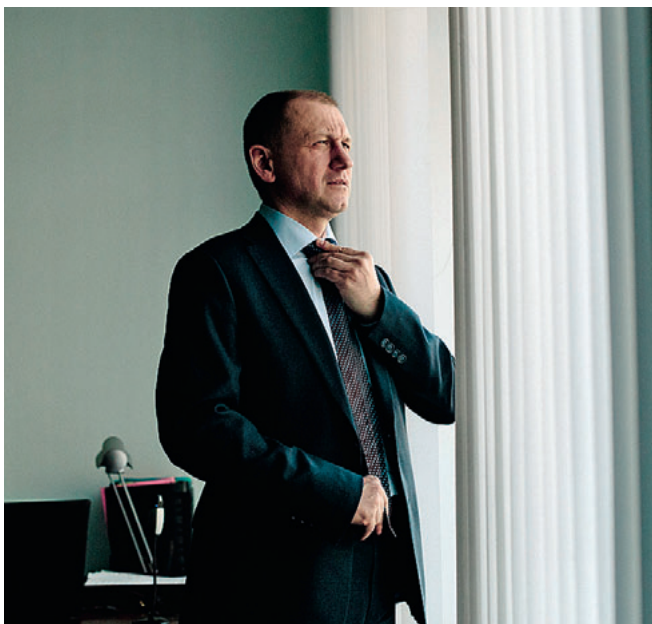
5 %

of Russians claimed they know any gays or lesbians personally (Levada-Center, 2015).



← The border town of Svetogorsk is closed from the general public, requiring special permits to access.

→ “Marriage between people of the same sex do not enable our state to grow,” says Svetogorsk’s mayor



At 25, Vadim is a modest and polite young man. He became aware of his sexual orientation at 13. Then, his classmates began harassing and beating him because, according to Vadim, he was not like them.

“I was a quiet, stay-at-home boy. Many times I was the object of my classmates’ homophobic bullying,” he says. “I don’t even want to recall what they did to me at school.”

Before the “gay-free city” scandal, Vadim says he didn’t have a clue who the city’s leading official was. Now he knows that the mayor is “not a very intelligent person.”

“He [the mayor] should at least look at dating sites or something!” Vadim says. “He would see how many gays and lesbians in Svetogorsk are looking for partners!”

Vadim does not understand why the mayor considers him — a quiet person — a danger to the city. In his opinion, the high cost of utilities and the city’s trash-covered sidewalks are the real danger.

“I have talked with other gays in Svetogorsk through dating sites,” he says. “But we’re afraid to exchange photos.”

That fear is not unwarranted. They are well aware of incidents in which far right activist lure gay men into meetings through dating sites and then torture them on camera.

Vadim is convinced that the mayor’s statements have only “encouraged violence against weak and oppressed groups that already have no chance for a normal existence.”

## “We don’t expect them here”

Svetogorsk Mayor Sergei Davydov, 48, has supervised the city administration since 2011. Before that, he worked as military commissar of Vyborg. He ended his military career with the rank of colonel and says he dreams of making Svetogorsk a beautiful and inviting city.

With a touch of pride, Davydov says that Svetogorsk has a social center that helps lonely pensioners and sick children, and that a charity concert raised 70,000 rubles (\$1,211) to help needy families.

But the penis lollipops nullify “all of our efforts for patriotic education,” he says.

Davydov says he didn’t ban the candies. He simply went down to the store and had a conversation with the managers, who were quite surprised by the news.

“I told them: ‘If you want to sell such things, open a [sex shop].’ A person’s moral outlook is the main thing,” he says.

“If it is not prohibited by law, I have no right to prohibit it,” continues Davydov. But he admits that he is wary of homosexuals, and believes the Russian Orthodox Church advocates the proper relationship between man and woman.

Besides, gay marriages don’t produce children. Russia needs to increase its population, the mayor explains. It is therefore inadmissible to permit same-sex marriages as they do just a few kilometers away in Finland.

“Marriage between people of the same sex do not enable our state to develop and grow,” Davydov says.

That means that, under his watch, people like Sasha and Vadim will have to seek their happiness in private — or in another city entirely.

Sasha has chosen the latter. On her return to St. Petersburg, she pulls out the rainbow ribbon and pins it on her breast pocket.

“Finally, St. Petersburg!” she exclaims. “I don’t have to hide anymore!” **TMT**

This is an abridged and adapted version of an article first published on the Takiedela.ru website.



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*"Alessandra's Italian optimism provides relief from the dark Russian mentality where everyone wants to die."* — **Oleg Loyevsky**, critic.

41

regional productions will be staged at Golden Mask.

April 19, 2017

Golden Mask Festival Awards Ceremony at the Stanislavsky Musical Theater.



In Shakespeare's **"The Taming of the Shrew,"** Petruccio psychologically harasses his unwilling bride until she becomes an obedient wife.

# The Italian Who Came Into the Cold

By **Emily Erken** artsreporter@imedia.ru

After failing to launch an acting career in Italy, Alessandra Giuntini now stages cosmopolitan theater in provincial Russia

Russians often claim that Moscow and St. Petersburg are intellectual bubbles, but theater director Alessandra Giuntini's career testifies to the fertile art scene in the country's regions.

The young Italian director has staged plays in a number of provincial cities in European Russia and further afield in Siberia, including Perm, Krasnoyarsk, Kemerovo, Novokuznetsk, and Omsk.

Earlier this month, the Kurgan Drama Theater presented Giuntini's latest work, "The Shrew," at the Meyerhold Center as part of the Golden Mask Festival's "Plus" series, which brings out-of-competition stage productions to Moscow from February to April.

Ten years ago, Giuntini left her Tuscan hometown of Pistoia for St. Petersburg in a last-ditch attempt at forging an acting career. After graduating from the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts (and mastering Russian), the budding director finally caught a break in Siberia.

According to the critic and director Oleg Loyevsky, Giuntini's southern cheerfulness gives her an edge in Russia.

"Alessandra is colorful, energetic, and from a different culture. Her Italian optimism is great: It provides relief from the dark Russian mentality where everyone wants to die," he told The Moscow Times.

Giuntini's popularity in frosty Siberia keeps her on the road for most of the year.

The Soviet strategy of using art to "engineer the soul" of a new homo-Sovieticus left a network of theaters in every distant town. In these grand Empire-style buildings, state-supported troupes stage the classics, but they also host theater laboratories to sample new directorial talent.

Vera Senkina, one of the curators of the "Mask Plus" series, says that Siberian theater is determined to evolve and is anything but backward. "Many theaters are orienting themselves toward the capitals, following new trends, and making sure to invite interesting directors," she told The Moscow Times.

In a typical laboratory, young directors produce short sketches with actors from the local troupe in about four days.



↑ Alessandra Giuntini, director and actress, posing for the camera.

← Irina Khramova as Katerina in Giuntini's *The Shrew*, performing on March 2 at the Meyerhold Center.

## Emotion before realism

Giuntini says her transformation is also cognitive, that she thinks "not in words, but in emotions." This aligns her with a current dramatic approach to emotion that rips away Soviet theater's "window into the past." Frenzied actors in surreal costumes abandon filmic realism, depicting not so much characters as interpersonal relationships through dance, song and absurdist comedy. Emotional energy remains central as realist portraits disappear.

This style works best when the audience is already familiar with the original story, as it was for Giuntini's "The Shrew" ("Stroptivaya"), an adaptation of Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew."

In "The Shrew," Giuntini conveys her feminist message without sloganeering or profanity. Her Katerina is a social misfit, a somnambulist surrounded by a chirpy ensemble in white and lurid pink, cheerfully tripping around the stage. Because she is female, the oddball must marry, but only the beastly Petruccio will have her.

Baroque polyphonic music underscores Giuntini's allusions to 17th-century commedia dell'arte — Katerina's shallow sister is the pretty Columbine. Her groom, Petruccio, appears at their wedding in Pierrot the clown's collar and face paint. Pitiable Petruccio leads Katerina, balancing on pointe shoes, into marriage.

Giuntini's "rosy social tragi-comedy," as she pitched it to the Kurgan Drama Theater, is chock-full of feminism. The director takes a page from Pina Bausch's "Café Muller" by having Katerina repeatedly hurl her body into Petruccio's arms, then crash to the stage with a thud.

Whereas Bausch's work insists that in every heterosexual relationship men oppress women, Giuntini points her critique at society in forming the concepts of femininity and normalcy, women included. Near the end of the play, a video projector shows clips of middle-aged Russian women defining "what a woman is."

The documentary theater finale brings the surrealism of "The Shrew" into stark reality. As she told The Moscow Times, "I just want the audience to think, and if they will be angry, that would also be good."

## The benefits of censorship

Despite Giuntini's progressive outlook and multiple run-ins with the police, the director embraces the limitations of Russian life.

"In some sense, it's good that there is censorship in Russia," Giuntini told the SuperOmsk newspaper. "The brain starts working, you have to push your imagination further to overcome obstacles and express your thoughts."

Giuntini has yet to stage a full-length play in St. Petersburg or Moscow, although she hints that her debut may not be far away. But until then, the 33-year-old director remains optimistic, and praises the theater world of her adopted homeland for its ability to persevere.

"In the long run, everything gets done. There will be complications, something [wrong] with the budget, another thing appears, but in the end, something will happen." **TMT**

It's a nerve-wracking process, but for Giuntini, almost every laboratory results in an invitation to stage a full-length play at the theater.

## Fish out of water

As an Italian in Siberia, the director is always a bit exotic. Indeed, Giuntini cuts an unusual picture—the petite brunette has a nose ring and wears her buoyant curls lopped off at the ears.

Unfortunately, her unusual appearance and accent have attracted unwanted attention. She has been detained a number of times after police took her for "an immigrant from the Near East," Giuntini told the Tagabout newspaper in an interview. (Her mother is Georgian.) "But when they realized I was Italian, everything immediately changed: I was their best friend, a favored guest."

At other times, unfamiliarity with the rules or an unwillingness to follow them has also resulted in problems. She was put straight on the first plane back to Krasnoyarsk after landing in the Arctic city of Norilsk, which can only be visited by foreigners with special permission. In St. Petersburg, a migration officer threatened to deport her for turning in residency paperwork one hour too late. After the actress staged an Italian-style meltdown, the officers assuaged her tears — by sending her to court instead.

Giuntini's transformation on Russian soil has come with some difficulty. She describes herself as having been "absolutely wild" before she entered the Theater Academy. "No one could control me... now, I am thoughtful, serious, although for Russians, I am still cheerful," she says.

Mastering the social intricacies of the language also proved challenging. Although Giuntini now speaks near-perfect Russian, Loyevsky recounts how, as an actress fresh out of the theater academy, she filled a formal toast to the governor of the Leningrad region with Russian obscenities. Apparently, she had yet to appreciate the fine distinction between language for the dormitory and for a formal ceremony.

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РЕСТОРАНА





*"It's a symbol of Moscow," says Alexandra Selivanova, a historian of Moscow's avant garde architecture.*

## 2001

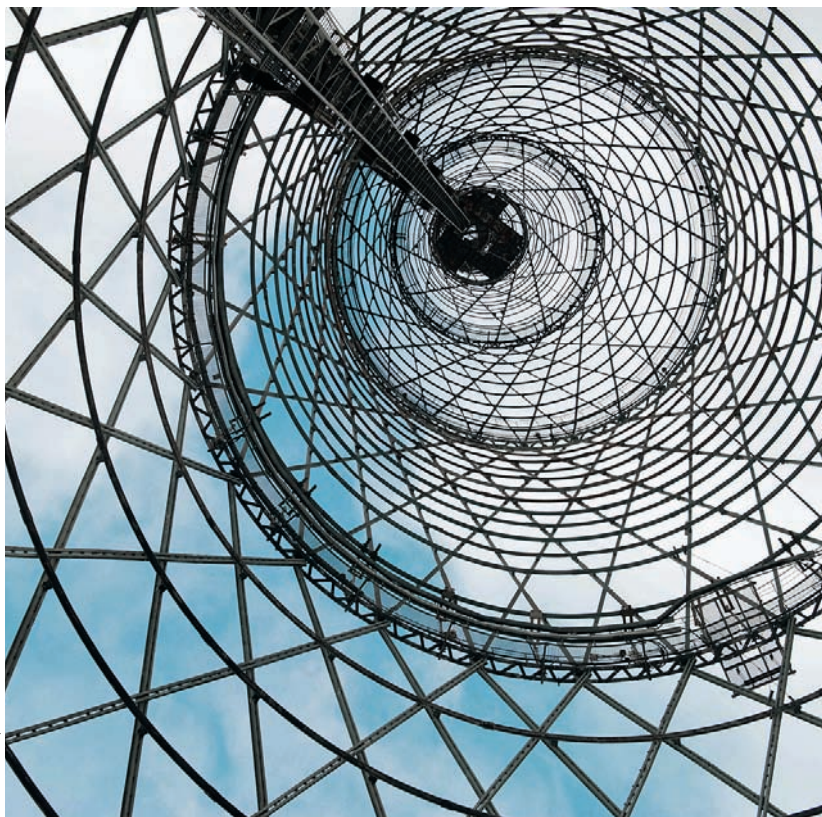
Shukhov Tower's last broadcast.



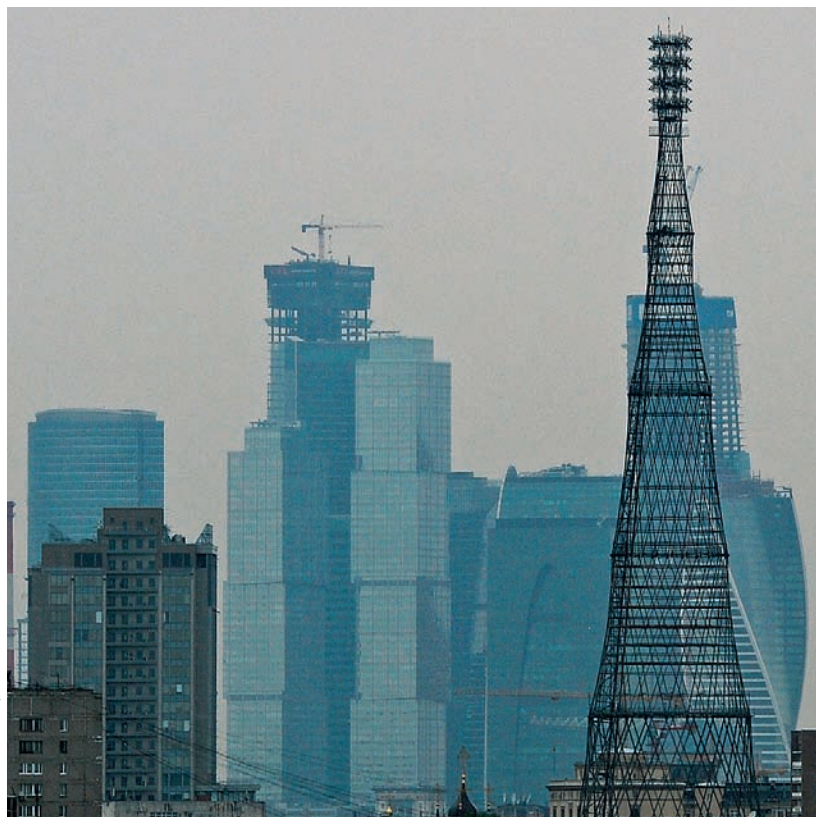
1919 - the year engineer Vladimir Shukhov designed the Shukhov Tower, construction finished in 1922.

## 1937

the first successful black and white TV broadcast from the Shukhov Tower.



ILYA PITALEV / RIA NOVOSTI



ALEXSEY FILIPPOV / RIA NOVOSTI

The iconic Shukhov Tower is celebrating its 95th birthday. The tower hasn't undergone any restoration since its construction. It has been embroiled in a bureaucratic struggle over its conservation for many years.

# From Soviet TV Icon to Abandoned Landmark

By **Ola Cichowlas** o.cichowlas@imedia.ru

## Activists fight to save Moscow's iconic Shukhov Tower

Nearly a century after its construction, Moscow's southern Shabolovka neighborhood remains one of the gems of Russian 1920s avant garde architecture. Designed as a model "socialist utopia" on what was then the remote outskirts of Moscow, Shabolovka features innovative residential buildings, baths, schools, and hospitals — all built to represent the Soviet vision of the future.

The neighborhood's centerpiece, and the starting point for Shabolovka's development in the '20s, is an icon of avant garde architecture: the Shukhov Tower, built as the headquarters of Soviet radio in March 1922.

Shabolovka and its tower — the tallest building in Moscow at that time — gave birth to new aesthetics in Soviet urban design. What Malevich and Kandinsky were for art, architect Vladimir Shukhov and his associates were for architecture.

But 95 years later, activists are struggling to save the iconic tower from collapse.

"It's a symbol of Moscow," says Alexandra Selivanova, a Moscow architecture historian who believes the Shukhov tower is a landmark of global importance.

Selivanova runs the local Avant Garde Center, a gallery dedicated to 1920s art and architecture located inside a constructivist housing estate. But in recent years, saving the Shukhov Tower and the surrounding neighborhood has literally become her career.

### Bureaucratic Nightmare

Since its final broadcast in 2001, the Shukhov Tower has found itself imprisoned in a maze of red tape. The decaying communist obelisk's fate is uncertain.

For years, historians and architectural heritage watchdogs have been fighting a losing battle to have the tower restored. But in 95 years of existence, the iconic structure has never been renovated. In Moscow's harsh climate, that is a serious problem: The metal has started to rust.

Legally, the building belongs to the Ministry of Communications, but the government agency is in no hurry to renovate — it contends that the tower has outlived its usefulness.

But when the ministry attempted to move the tower from its historic location, it was met with widespread protests from concerned Muscovites and Russia's Ministry of Culture.

However, the Culture Ministry was loath to commit to anything big. It said it would only take responsibility for the monument if the Communications Ministry would allocate funds for renovation. Eventually, a solution was reached: Communications would carry out temporary stabilization work inside the tower, and experts would later carry out a full-scale renovation. The Federal Service for the Protection of Cultural Heritage declared this a victory.

But Selivanova says the stabilization work was carried out without expert consultation and risks damaging the tower.

The metal is still rusting and is on the brink of collapse, she says. The temporary stabilizers, which have been installed for a year, may actually be harming the building by "imposing huge weights on the structure."

But the Ministry of Communications — still the tower's owner — is in no hurry. It has asked to delay the renovation and look for the right company to do it.

The problem also lies with the fact that few experts in Russia are experienced in restoring a metallic structure of such heights, says Vladimir Shukhov, the tower architect's great grandson, who runs the Shukhov Foundation. His foundation suggested Moscow host an international conference on the subject and invite experts who have worked on Paris' Eiffel Tower and London's bridges.

Shukhov says those experts were ready to come to Moscow to work on such a prestigious project. But the plan was called off when the Communications Ministry failed to take part.

### Living For Today

Last weekend, the Shukhov Foundation and Selivanova's Avant Garde Center marked the Shukhov tower's 95th birthday by organizing a street festival. They invited local school children to build a miniature of the tower. "Paris has its tower, we have ours," one of the event's stickers read.

"The Eiffel Tower was built as an art project," says Shukhov's great grandson. "But the Shukhov Tower was a technological achievement."

Presenting the monument to journalists, Shukhov stood as close to his great-grandfather's tower as possible. Currently, it is closed to the public and cut off from the main road with gates and barbed wire. "The Ministry of Culture only owns the land five meters out from the edge of the tower," he says. "They don't need it, but also don't allow tourists to use it."

For many architecture enthusiasts, visiting Moscow is about getting a glimpse of the Shukhov Tower. A miniature version of it stands permanently in a London museum. With this year's centenary of the Russian revolution, photographs and miniatures of the tower have gone on show at prestigious museums across the Western world. In Moscow, however, some tourists must go to absurd lengths to get a good view of the tower, climbing over fences and sometimes getting into trouble with the police.

The tower's iconic status is understandable. From 1937 until the late 1960s, the daily news program that beamed into living rooms across the Soviet Union's 11 time zones opened with footage of the Shukhov broadcasting tower in Moscow.

The tower has become the symbol of Russian technology and, especially, of the power of television.

In 2009, Vladimir Putin met the Communications Minister and supported plans for the tower's renovation. "It is one of the symbols of our television," Putin said.

But in bureaucratic Russia, talk is cheap. "Eight years have passed and nothing has changed," says Shukhov. **TMT**





**“Nicholas and Alexandra”** by Robert K. Massie is a classic account of the Romanov family and the fall of Imperial Russia.

# 1862

The Russian State Library first opened its doors.

# SOUP

was divided into “rich” and “poor” in ancient Russia, depending on its heartiness.



There has been a marketplace on the site currently occupied by **Danilovsky Market** for around 700 years, according to historians.

## THE WORD'S WORTH

# Trumpeting in Russian

*Тум: tweet (on Twitter)*



By **Michele A. Berdy**  
Moscow-based translator and interpreter, author of “The Russian Word’s Worth” (Glas), a collection of her columns.

For the last couple of months I’ve put myself in translation jail: I’ve been reading Donald Trump’s tweets in the original English (or what passes for English in Trump’s night-time missives to the world) and in their Russian translation(s). My goal: to figure out if the secret of his popularity in Russia is due to how he sounds in Russian.

Tentative conclusion: Yes. Trump sounds much better in Russian than in English. Whether for clarity, out of a tradition of cleaning up leaders’ speech, or out of political affinity, translators cut Trump’s repetitions, tidy up the thoughts that trail off, and raise the tone to a more presidential level.

For example, the agreement on immigrants with Australia wasn’t a “dumb deal” in Russian. It was the more forceful чёртова сделка (a damned deal). Mexicans weren’t “bad hombres.” They were шайка плохих парней (a gang of bad guys), as if Trump was referring to a drug cartel, not random fellows from south of the border.

Trump’s meandering statements are generally cleaned up. For example, he said: “They have sanctions on Russia — let’s see if we can make some good deals with Russia. For one thing, I think nuclear weapons should be way down and reduced very substantially, that’s part of it.” In Russian it is: Они [страны Запада] наложили санкции на Россию. Давайте посмотрим, сможем ли мы заключить какие-то хорошие сделки с Россией. Я думаю, начнем с того, что ядерное оружие должно быть очень значительно сокращено. The back-translation shows a more coherent Trump: “They [Western countries] have sanctioned Russia. Let’s see if we can make some good deals with Russia. I think we should start by significantly reducing nuclear arms.”

Trump also sounds more grown-up in Russian. His recent comment about President Putin was: “Don’t know him, but certainly he is a tough cookie, and I don’t know how he’s doing for Russia but we’re going find out one day, I guess.” In Russian translation: Я не знаю его лично, но, очевидно, он крепкий орешек. Я не знаю, каков он для России, но рано или поздно, думаю, мы это выясним. This is back-translated as: “I don’t know him personally, but it’s clear that he’s tough. I don’t know how he’s been for Russia, but sooner or later I think we’ll find out.”

Trump’s shorthand Twitter verdicts sound less childish in Russian, sometimes just thanks to Russian grammar: “Terrible!” is Чудовищно! (“It’s monstrous!”) or Ужасно (“It’s terrible!”). “Sad!” becomes Печально! (“It’s sad!”) — although I dearly want it to be translated as the snarky Печалька! Sometimes there is a clarifying translation. “Weak!” written about Obama, was Слабак! (“Weakling!”) in one translation.

Sometimes the Russian press just avoids Trump’s tweets and off-the-cuff remarks and sticks with press releases or official statements. As a result, Russians are often puzzled by criticism of the U.S. president. They read: Трамп подписал указ, предусматривающий ужесточение иммиграционной политики... и запрещающий въезд гражданам стран, вызывающих “особую озабоченность” (“Trump signed an order that tightened the immigration policy... banning entry to citizens of countries that are of ‘special concern’”). What’s the problem with that?

The Russian press may be less enamored of Trump lately, but you can’t tell that from how he’s translated. But there is another problem: figuring out what he means.

That’s next week. Stay tuned. **TMT**

## MY MOSCOW

# Food for Thought

By **Alastair Gill** a.gill@imedia.ru

Cookery and writing keep Jennifer Eremeeva’s fire burning



Jennifer Eremeeva has been inspired by Russians’ reaction to the embargo on Western food imports.

Author and journalist Jennifer Eremeeva first came to Russia from the U.S. in 1988. Since then she has worked as a tour guide, in banking and more recently as a cookery and travel writer. She published her memoir “Lenin Lives Next Door: Marriage, Martinis, and Mayhem in Moscow” in 2014 and is currently working on a historical novel.

**I’m from New England, most specifically Massachusetts.** I went to boarding school in Connecticut and then I went to university in New York City, so I stayed on the east coast.

**I sort of fell in love with Russia when I was about 13.** We didn’t have a television because it broke and we asked our parents: “Are you going to fix the television?” and they said “No, we don’t think we need to fix the television.” So I’d go down to the school library and look through all the books and read voraciously, and one of the books was “Nicholas and Alexandra” by Robert K. Massie. And from the moment I opened that book I was determined to go to Russia, by hook or by crook.

**I met my husband at a mutual friend’s birthday party in May 1991.** He was in the military, he had a very important job as the commandant of the Leningradsky Railway Station, so he was a useful person to know if you were in the travel business, but it was certainly not something we should have been doing, hanging out together, not for him and not for me.

**I’ve had my moments when I’d like to leave Russia.** But now I’m so back and forth that it’s almost an ideal setup for me, I’d never want to leave permanently.

**It’s been a very long three-year slog since the invasion of Crimea.** But at the same time, I thought that the food industry would collapse, and it’s just flourishing. And it’s flourishing almost because of the sanctions, because you have very innovative people doing things like cheese-making, and the stuff that’s going on in Danilovsky Market. And it’s just been very heartening and fascinating to watch.

**The foreigners who are here are really exceptional people.** You have to have a lot of guts to come here, stay here, make a business, possibly make a family. A lot of people have left, and the ones who have stayed are the entrepreneurs, and they’re in it for the long haul, and I admire that.

**I’m working on a cookbook about Russian soup, because we should have more Russian soup.** Nothing says hospitality the way a warm bowl of soup does. And I love that trend in Russian cooking now where we’re taking traditional recipes but we’re lightening them up and boosting the flavors and playing around with things.

**Delicatessen’s not exactly in my neighborhood, but it’s not so far.** The most innovative flavor experiments are going on there, and it’s just marvelous for cocktails. It’s a great place to spend the evening and get lots of little plates with friends. Delicatessen, 20 Ul. Sadovaya-Karetnaya, Metro Tsvetnoi Bulvar

**I think what they’re doing at Danilovsky Market is phenomenal, but I also shop at Leningradsky Market, which is on my subway line.** If you’re looking to save money, it’s not so intense, and the prices are sometimes a third of what they can be elsewhere. Everybody’s very friendly, there’s a little coffee shop there, during the week there’s almost no one there, they have wonderful produce and great meat, and everything’s very affordable. Leningradsky Market, 11 Ulitsa Chasovaya, Metro Aeroport

**I love the Russian State Library, it’s one of the best deals in town.** For 100 rubles [\$1.75] you get a library card for three years, and you can just go in. It’s just the most incredible place. I don’t often see that side of academic Moscow, and it’s a fascinating world that hasn’t really changed in the last 30 years. I try to get there as much as I can to do some work. I love sitting in the reading rooms with the backlight lamps and the wooden desks. **TMT**

Russian State Library, 3 Vozdvizhenka Ul., Metro Biblioteka Imeni Lenina



# Out & About



Weekly round-up of all that's new, delicious and fun in Moscow.



Nathan Sawaya's sculpture of a T-Rex is the centerpiece of his Moscow exhibit.

## Nathan Sawaya: Bringing Lego to Life

By Ruth Moore artsreporter@imedia.ru

The New York-based artist's sculptures fascinate kids and adults alike

Made from 80,020 individual Lego bricks, artist Nathan Sawaya's six-meter long replica of a Tyrannosaurus Rex is anything but child's play. The sculpture, currently on display at Moscow's ExpoCenter, took three months to complete and required an in-depth study of dinosaur anatomy, not to mention some complex engineering.

"Each sculpture has its own obstacles and challenges," says Sawaya, who is based in New York City. "For example, creating a human form out of rectangular bricks requires special attention to detail to get the curves of the human body formed from thousands of little corners."

Sawaya's Lego creations have toured London, New York and Paris as part of the hugely popular exhibition "The Art of the Brick." Organizers expect the Moscow show to attract 200,000 visitors over a two-month run.

Russian Lego enthusiasts can enjoy an array of Sawaya's most iconic works, including "Yellow," a sculpture of a man with hundreds of lego bricks pouring from his chest. Despite the numerous "don't touch" signs dotted around the hall, temptation proves too much for some of the exhibition's younger visitors, who poke their hands inside "Yellow"'s chest cavity in search of a stray brick. Fortunately, Sawaya's works are sturdier than the average Lego construction.

"When I am building, I glue as I go," says Sawaya. "That means each brick is glued into place, and if I make a mistake, I use a hammer and chisel to separate the bricks. It can be a slow process."

Sawaya creates his artwork in his Los Angeles studio, where he stores over six million bricks sorted into different shapes and colors. Most of his sculptures have been transported whole to Moscow, although the dinosaur was so big it had to be broken down into smaller pieces and reconstructed on site.

His inspiration comes from all sorts of places, but mainly from travel. For the Moscow exhibition he created a life-size ballerina wearing a rainbow-colored tutu, a nod to the country's great tradition of classical dance.

"I carry a sketchpad with me when I'm traveling so I can jot down ideas as they come to me. Once I have a solid idea, I envision the final piece before I put down the first brick," he says.

It's no mystery why Sawaya's work has such a universal appeal. Lego was voted "Toy of the Century" by Fortune Magazine and last year alone the brand sold 75 billion pieces worldwide. Given that Lego has been produced since 1958, there is now enough in existence for everyone in the world to own at least 75 bricks. The brand opened its first store in Russia in 1995 and in-country sales have improved year on year ever since.

At the end of the exhibition visitors are encouraged to tackle several large basins of Lego and get working on their own creations. There are twice as many adults jostling elbow-to-elbow as children.

Pasha, aged eight, has come to the exhibi-

tion with his mum and younger brother. "I like playing with Lego because you can build from a set or you can make up your own," he told The Moscow Times.

One of the most playful series in "The Art of the Brick" pays homage to iconic artworks, including Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," Michelangelo's "David" and even a Lego brick rendering of Edvard Munch's "The Scream." Sawaya says that mastering techniques from impressionism to classical sculpture in brick form allows them to be more "relatable" to audiences, even people who wouldn't usually set foot inside an art gallery.

"People can connect with the artwork on a different level because of their familiarity with the toy," he says.

Sawaya hasn't always been an artist. After graduating college he pursued a successful career as a corporate lawyer and Lego was initially just a therapeutic way of dealing with the stress and long hours of his day job. When people began commissioning pieces from him he took a leap of faith, quit his job and began building full time.

"In the end, it was not that difficult of a choice," he says. "Now I can look back and acknowledge that the worst day as an artist is still better than the best day as a lawyer." **TMT**

"The Art of the Brick" runs through April 16 at ExpoCenter

**+7 (800) 707-37-99**

expocentr.ru

14 Krasnopresnenskaya Naberezhnaya  
Metro Vystavochnaya



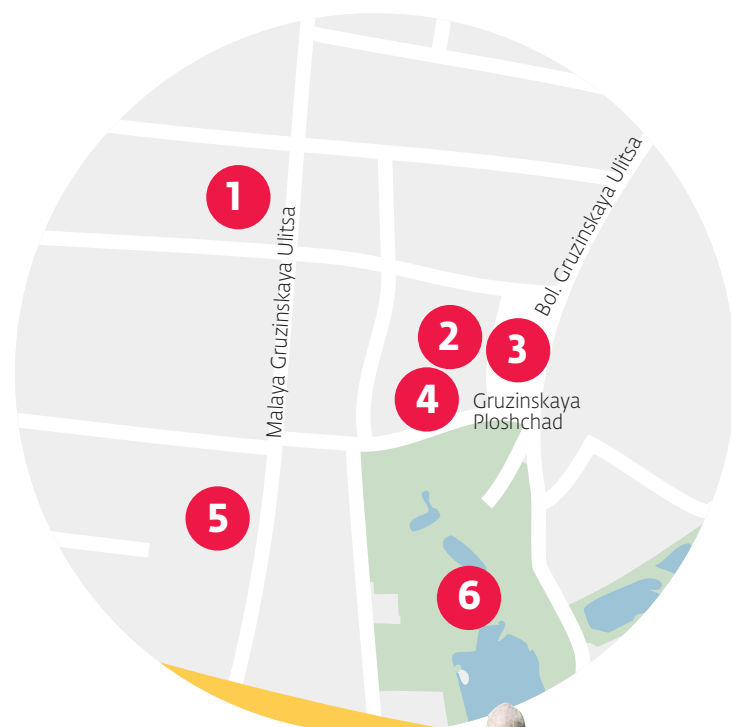
Sawaya poses beside his "Yellow" sculpture, which was used by Lady Gaga in the video for her song "G.U.Y."



# Gruzinskaya Ploshchad: Historic Heart of Moscow's Georgian Community

By **Daria Demidova** artsreporter@imedia.ru

A Roman Catholic cathedral, a Georgian Orthodox church, two museums and a zoo



## 1) Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary

27/13 Malaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa

It's hard to imagine that this majestic Catholic cathedral, built in the early 20th century, was designed as a small congregational church. With its capacity of 5,000, it's Russia's largest Roman Catholic church. The Polish community that pushed for its construction still forms the majority of the cathedral's parishioners and donors. The church is one of the city's best concert halls for organ music.

Over 1,000 species  
of animal are  
represented at the  
Moscow Zoo.  
The cost of looking  
after an elephant is  
over \$50 per day.

## 2) Gorbunov Mansion

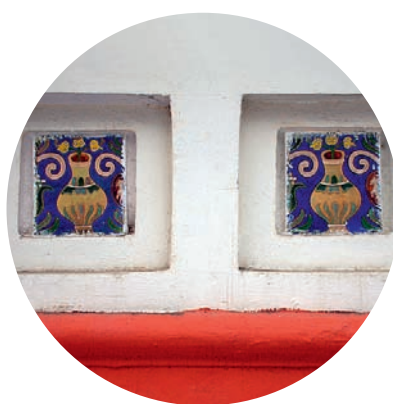
17 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa

This stately turn-of-the-century mansion once belonged to the Gorbunovs, a family of businessmen and philanthropists. But the row of statues in front of it, representing politicians, clergymen and artists, is the work of its current owner — sculptor Zurab Tsereteli. Notorious for several outsized and deeply unloved monuments in the city, Tsereteli is also founder of the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA), of which the mansion is part.

## 3) Monument to Shota Rustaveli

Gruzinskaya Ploshchad

The entire neighborhood used to be called Gruziny, meaning "the Georgians." This was due to its Georgian community, which swelled after Tsar Peter II granted the land to Vakhtang VI, ousted ruler of the Georgian kingdom of Kvemo Kartli. So the square was a natural choice for a monument to Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli. Unveiled on his 800th birthday in 1966, the statue is a meeting point for the community on St. George's Day.



## 4) Church of St. George the Victorious

13/1 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa

The Orthodox Church of St. George, Georgia's patron saint, has been a spiritual haven for the Georgian diaspora since the mid-18th century. Every element of the building's design echoes the country's architectural traditions. Note the grapevine-shaped cross. A legend credits this symbol to St. Nino, the first Christian preacher in Georgia, who made a cross by entwining two grapevines and securing them with her hair.

## 5) Timiryazev Biological Museum

15 Malaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa

Named after the great Russian biologist Kliment Timiryazev, the museum's collection is all about biology, physiology, botany, zoology, and everything related. The museum is fascinating for children — there are guided tours and interactive exhibitions with plenty of items to touch. The fairytale palace-like building is the legacy of the Russian Museum of Antiquities (its collection was later transferred to the Historical Museum).

58 kilograms  
of insects are  
bred monthly to  
feed the animals  
kept in the  
Moscow Zoo.

## 6) Moscow Zoo

1 Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa

Opened in 1864, Moscow Zoo is one of the oldest in Europe. It contains 8,000 animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ranging in size from elephants to piebald shrews. Following renovation work in 1990, a footbridge now links the two parts of the zoo divided by Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Ulitsa. The zoo's mission is not limited to exhibiting the world's biodiversity to the public: Scientists conduct research and breed endangered species here too.





Salumeria uses cheeses produced in Russia by the local Italian community.

# Salumeria: A Feast Fit for an Emperor

By **Bradley Jardine** [artsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:artsreporter@imedia.ru)

*Uilliam Lamberti's new Italian venture works wonders with Russian-sourced cuisine*

A stone's throw away from Patriarch's Ponds, just off the trendy Malaya Bronnaya Ulitsa, the restaurateur Uilliam Lamberti and businessman Vladimir Davidi have sought to add yet another touch of Italy in the heart of the Russian capital with their new venture, Salumeria. And who would complain?

Italian cuisine has long been popular in the "Third Rome," but Lamberti and Davidi have gone back to basics to provide as authentic an Italian culinary experience as possible. Indeed, these rooms are packed to the brim with a wide enough selection of traditional delicacies to have satisfied even the most hedonistic of Roman emperors.

Salumeria offers an exquisite interior, with gleaming white tiles, weather-beaten columns and luxurious wooden furniture in warm autumnal tones. To the left of the entranceway

is a combined bar and open kitchen with a vintage, bronze coffee-machine on proud display.

Tables should be booked in advance—otherwise you are ushered to the bar with very vague perspectives on when exactly you'll be seated. But the cocktail selection at the bar makes for fine company. Try the Barolo Negroni (600 rubles) topped off with a Barolo Chinato flavored wine with a bitter kick. If you're feeling a little more bohemian, try the Dolce Vita cocktail (750 rubles) with a rich burst of passion fruit and a side glass of Italian sparkling wine.

The more promising the aperitif, the more unfortunate the long-awaited frantic shuffle from bar to table in a packed restaurant on a Sunday night. Salumeria's sleek veneer was also eroded somewhat by the salty head waitress readily "misplacing" the Dolce Vita cocktail during the migration. When quizzed as to

whether a replacement would be provided, the request was not met with understanding. The hostess sauntered off, dreamily waving her cape behind her, providing a very valuable lesson—if you want your Dolce Vita, you should fight for it.

That said, the culinary experience quickly erases any gripes with the service staff. Start with the burrata and marinated artichokes for 750 rubles (\$13), a cheese-based delicacy from southern Italy. According to the waiter, the cheeses in Salumeria are locally sourced in Russia and made by an Italian community. The attempt at "import substitution" is laudable—the mozzarella exterior gently gives way to the creamy abundance of Stracciatella within. For a traditional Italian meat-based delicacy, try porchetta (300 rubles/100 grams)—baked pork with herbal stuffing.

Perhaps predictably, the pizza deserves some acknowledgement. The restaurant's

handsome stone-bake ovens were certainly put to good use in crafting Pizza Salumeria (750 rubles). A tale as old as time—prosciutto, mozzarella balls and Parmesan cheese—no nonsense, and this is exactly what people come here for. If you're feeling adventurous try the octopus and potato pizza (800 rubles).

Vox populi have declared the restaurant to have "damn fine coffee"—a rumor I am pleased to confirm. Finish the meal off with caffè al cioccolato (200 rubles) which blends a nice, strong espresso with a glass smeared in melted dark chocolate. Or if you want to step up your cappuccino game, try cappuccino zabaione (300 rubles)—with whipped custard serving as the foam.

**+7 (499) 290-00-01**

[facebook.com/salumeria.moscow](https://facebook.com/salumeria.moscow)  
12/9 Spiridonovskiy Pereulok  
Metro Pushkinskaya

## NEWS & OPENINGS



COFFEE & BOOKS / INSTAGRAM

### Coffee & Books

Take a break from browsing Moscow's trendy bookstore chain Respublika has opened its first Coffee & Books stand inside its branch at the Atrium mall. Coffee & Books is the brainchild of Anastasia Godunova, former co-owner of the Good Enough coffee shop, which closed last January. Baristas here use beans from Owl Coffee Roasters to make a mean flat white or cappuccino for 220 rubles (\$3.80). There are also pastries from the small bakery Milló: Flower or carrot and walnut muffins go for 150 rubles.

33 Ulitsa Zemlyanoi Val  
Metro Kurskaya



ZHEN I SHEN / FACEBOOK

### Zhen i Shen

Pan-Asian cafe on Pokrovka Zhen i Shen, a wordplay on the Russian word for ginseng ("zhenshen"), is a new Pan-Asian place from the owners of Tochka Dzy. The chef is the same, Maxim Fazylov, a graduate of the Le Cordon Bleu culinary school and a former chef at Strana, Kotoroi Net. Try the Chinese bao steamed buns with chicken for 140 rubles (\$2.50) or duck (160 rubles), or udon or ramen noodles (from 320 rubles).

**+7 (925) 221 5346**

[facebook.com/ZhenishenPokrovka](https://facebook.com/ZhenishenPokrovka)  
1 Ulitsa Pokrovka  
Metro Kitai-Gorod



BRANDSHOP

### Brandshop

Heaven for sneakerheads

Last weekend Brandshop opened its doors again after an expansion that has seen it add 120 square meters devoted exclusively to sneakers. In 2016, the company became part of the international Adidas Consortium, allowing it to sell limited series sneakers and running shoes. Among the most awaited new releases are Nike Uptempo, Nike Air Max 95c, adidas Ultra Boost, and Reebok Workout Low.

**+7 (495) 544 5770**

[brandshop.ru](https://brandshop.ru)  
21 Petrovsky Bulvar  
Metro Trubnaya



PHIL'S / FACEBOOK

### Phil's

Just like in Philadelphia

The cheesesteak is a rather new concept on Moscow's fast-food scene and Phil's takes its mission to recreate the famous Philadelphia sandwich very seriously. The classic cheesesteak is made with grilled marbled beef, fried onions and cheese sauce and costs 250 rubles (\$4.40), while the specialty Phil's cheesesteak also includes pickles and tomatoes (310 rubles). Sandwiches can also be ordered with chicken.

**+7 (495) 636 2851**

[facebook.com/Phillssteaks](https://facebook.com/Phillssteaks)  
12-i Syromyatnichesky Pereulok  
Metro Kurskaya



# Pour that Perfect Pint: The 7 Best Craft Beer Bars in Moscow

## Vse Tvoi Druzya

### Craft beer bar with a cult status

This tiny bar off Tverskaya Ulitsa was opened by members of the Russian rap group ILWT and is packed almost every night. It focuses on Russian-produced craft beer and cider, but also sells some imported brews from 200 rubles (\$3.50). Try the persimmon-flavored golden ale “Ruka Boga” (Hand of God) by St. Petersburg’s Bakunin brewery for 250 rubles (\$4.30).

vk.com/craftbar

12/27 Malyy Gnezdnykovsky Pereulok  
Metro Tverskaya

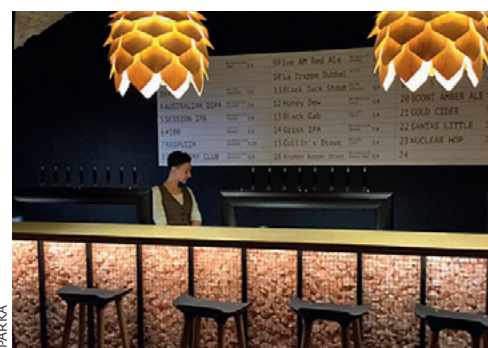
## Varka

### Craft and burgers

Varka was the first craft bar around Taganskaya metro station, which has now turned into something of a craft Mecca — nowhere else in the city is the concentration of craft bars so high. The selection here is constantly changing, with both Russian and imported craft beer on offer. Try a milky Black Jack chocolate stout by Moscow’s ID brewery for 200 rubles (\$3.50).

vk.com/varkacraftbar

1/5 Ulitsa Alexandra Solzhenitsyna



PARKA



PIXABAY

*The craft revolution took Moscow by storm in 2015. To help you navigate the increasingly sophisticated craft bar scene we’ve selected seven spots to experience Russian craft beer culture.*

## Parka

### Craft beer in a steam bath

Parka (not to be confused with Varka, partially owned by the same people) is a craft bar designed like a Russian bathhouse. “Parka” refers to being “steamed” at a bath. You can sit on the stepped benches or at a table downstairs. Besides the ubiquitous IPAs and APAs, try the “Clockwork Orange”-inspired Moloko+ chocolate stout for 250 rubles (\$4.30).

facebook.com/parkacraft

22 Pyatnitskaya Ulitsa  
Metro Tretyakovskaya, Novokuznetskaya

## Jawsspot

### Straight from the Urals

Jawsspot isn’t just another craft beer place — it’s a bar that belongs to one of the most popular brewers in Russia, the Sverdlovsk region’s Jaws. Original brews with witty names like Nuclear Laundry IPA (240 rubles) or Looking for a Human (260 rubles) and about a dozen others are all on tap. There’s also great bar food and a balcony with a view of Lubyanka and the FSB headquarters.

facebook.com/jawsspot-

Msk-1106360412795337/

25 Nikolskaya Ulitsa  
Metro Lubyanka

## Cans & Beer

### The writing on the wall

Opened by and for street artists, you can try your hand at graffiti yourself here. Draft beers include rare Norwegian brew Nogne Session IPA for 390 rubles (\$6.70).

### Cans & Beer

cansandbeer.com

4 Pervy Gonchary Pereulok, Bldg. 2  
Metro Taganskaya



JAWSSPOT

## Glavpivmag

### Pioneers of the craft beer movement

Glavpivmag’s owners started with a stall at Rybny Market at Novokuznetskaya and then opened this proper place, located in a street leading off Chistoprudny Bulvar. Glavpivmag consists of two rooms: a beer store and a bar with a minimalist, no-nonsense aesthetic. Here they specialize in craft beer made by producers from around Russia. There are 40 varieties on tap — including Red Maniac, a chili-infused IPA for 280 rubles (\$4.90) — and around 100 from their selection of bottled ales. There’s food available too if you need to line your stomach: burgers, fish and chips and special biscuits. Flush with its recent success, Glavpivmag recently opened a second location on Tverskaya Ulitsa.

glavpivmag.com

2/21 Ulitsa Makarenko, Bldg. 1  
Metro Turgenevskaya



CRAFT & DRAFT / FACEBOOK

## Craft & Draft

### First on the scene at Taganskaya

The first bar to open in the famous “craft yard” on Taganskaya, which it now shares with Cans & Beer and HLSTK, Craft & Draft looks like an old-fashioned pub. The 20 beers on tap are supplemented by almost 100 types of bottled brews. Don’t miss the Mango Mayhem IPA by Moscow’s Beer Bros Brewery (BBB) for 250 rubles (\$4.30).

### Craft & Draft

craft-draft.ru

3 Pervy Gonchary Pereulok, Bldg. 3  
Metro Taganskaya

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# 16 What's On 23.03—29.03

## 23.03

### Flea Market

Snap up a bargain! Objects and antiques from various periods and countries will be on display here until March 26. Until 9 p.m. T-Module  
+7 (495) 585 7274  
bloxa.ru  
1 Tishinskaya Plushchad  
M. Mayakovskaya

## 24.03

### Goran Bregovic

The Balkan superstar and movie collaborator returns with his Wedding and Funerals Orchestra. Expect dancing. 8 p.m. Yotaspase  
+7 (495) 230 1030  
yotaspase.ru  
11 Ulitsa Ordzhonikidze  
M. Leninsky Prospekt

## 25.03

### Tom Odell

The English singer-songwriter comes to Moscow to perform songs from his 2016 album "Wrong Crowd." 8 p.m. Yotaspase  
+7 (495) 230 1030  
yotaspase.ru  
11 Ulitsa Ordzhonikidze  
M. Leninsky Prospekt

## 25.03

### Armenian Impressionism

Opening of new retrospective featuring 20 artists. Russian Impressionism Museum  
+7 (495) 145 7555  
rusimp.su  
15 Leningradsky Prospekt  
M. Belorusskaya

## 26.03

### Theater Night

Almost 60 Moscow theaters will be offering free entry to mark World Theater Day. Registration in advance is essential via the websites of participating theaters or social networks. Various venues  
kultura.mos.ru

## 26.03

### Irish Film Shorts

Part of the Irish Film Festival, this program of short films includes Benjamin Cleary's 2016 Oscar winner "Stutterer." Karo 11 Oktyabr  
+7 (903) 208 8459  
karofilm.ru  
24 Ulitsa Novy Arbat  
M. Arbatskaya

## 29.03

### Romeo & Juliet

A staging of Prokofiev's ballet by Yury Grigorevich for the Kremlin Ballet. Starts at 6 p.m. Kremlin Palace  
+7 (495) 620 7846  
kremlinpalace.org  
Moscow Kremlin, Troitsky Gate  
M. Alexandrovsky Sad

## Eclectic Six: Exciting Exhibitions to Catch in Moscow This Spring

By The Moscow Times artsreporter@imedia.ru

### 1) BRAT FILM FEST

Quirky videos from a prominent photographer

BRAT FILM FEST is a new project by Sergey Bratkov, a Ukrainian-born photographer known for his provocative art. The festival has converted Regina, one of Moscow's oldest galleries, into a small movie theater with a proper screen and rows of chairs. The gallery is showing 19 short films shot by Bratkov and his brother Yury from 2008 to 2016 during visits to their parents' house in a village near Kharkiv, Ukraine. Films with titles like "Gagarin" and "Exchange Beauty for Kerosene" present a humorous commentary on the events of those years.

Until April 15

Regina Gallery

1, 4-y Syromyatnichesky Pereulok

Metro Kurskaya

### 2) NAÏVE... NO (Naïve, But)

Naïve and professional art in one exhibition

In the last few years, there have been several exhibitions of Russian naïve art, but NAÏVE... NO (Naïve, But) at MMOMA takes a different approach. It juxtaposes art by professional

artists from the 20th and 21st centuries — like Mikhail Larionov, Ilya Mashkov, Konstantin Zvyozdochetov and even Kazimir Malevich — with works by genuine naïve artists, who had no formal training. The latter group features artists such as Niko Pirosmeni, Katya Medvedeva and Yelena Volkova.

Until May 1

Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA)

25 Ulitsa Petrovka

Metro Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya

### 3) Geltser: Collection

Ballerina's masterpieces reunited

The Nashi Khudozhniki gallery presents highlights from the famous collection of Yekaterina Geltser (1876–1962), a prima ballerina at the Bolshoi Theater and an avid art collector. Contemporaries used to call her collection "a little branch of the Tretyakov Gallery." The collection has been long lost, but Nashi Khudozhniki has managed to reunite 40 masterpieces, including works by greats such as Isaac Levitan, Mikhail Vrubel, Konstantin Korovin and Valentin Serov. Some of the works are on loan from

the Tretyakov Gallery or Bakhrushin Theater Museum, others are from private collections. Nashi Khudozhniki has also published a catalogue, which includes 80 artworks that used to belong to the famous ballet dancer.

Until April 27

Nashi Khudozhniki Gallery

2 Sechenovskiy Pereulok

Metro Park Kultury, Kropotkinskaya

### 4) Ilya Dolgov: Reef

Investigating man's relationship to nature

Voronezh-born Dolgov is one of the brightest stars on Russia's contemporary art scene. Twice nominated for the Kandinsky Prize, he also obtained a grant from the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in 2013. One of the key concerns that Dolgov's work addresses is nature and how we interact with it. His "Reef" installation continues his exploration of the relationship between man and nature: The work features canvases hanging over tidal lines of reed flotsam, rivers of sand, and wire sculptures suspended over rocks.

Until April 8

XL Gallery

1 4-y Syromyatnichesky Pereulok

Metro Kurskaya

### 5) Wool & Potatoes

Dramatic art piece and quest combined

Part of the Irish Week festival, this unusual show is part exhibit, part detective story. Artist Valery Korchagin has created a series of works based on the life of a mythical Soviet peasant named Ivan Skotinin, whose decaying archive was supposedly discovered in the attic of a house in the Volga region. But doubts gradually emerge about the true nature of Skotinin's identity and the secrets held by his old cottage.

Until March 27

Gnezdo Gallery

12 Maly Gnezdnikovskiy Pereulok, Floor 2

Metro Tverskaya

### 6) Giovanni Gastel: Canons of Beauty

Retrospective of top Italian photographer

Internationally acclaimed fashion photographer Giovanni Gastel has created a distinctive signature style in over 40 years exploring the nature of beauty. Gastel has never shied away from experimentation: His black and white and sepia-toned pictures often stray into an ethereal realm of poetry and lyricism. His pictures have appeared on the covers and inside magazines such as Harper's Bazaar, Vogue, Elle, Donna and Mondo, and have been exhibited all over the world.

Until May 5

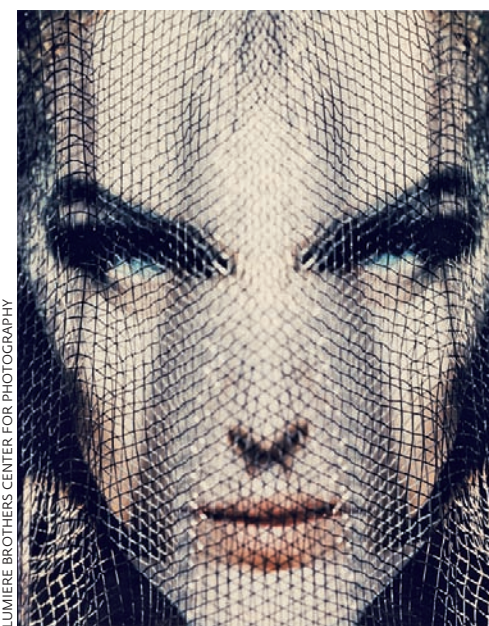
Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography

3 Bolotnaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 1

Metro Kropotkinskaya



Pavel Leonov is one of the artists featured in the 'NAÏVE... NO' exhibit at MMOMA.



Giovanni Gastel experiments with various techniques to give his photographs a poetic feel.



At 'BRAT FILM FEST,' viewers sit in a small movie theater to watch 16 short films by Sergey Bratkov.



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