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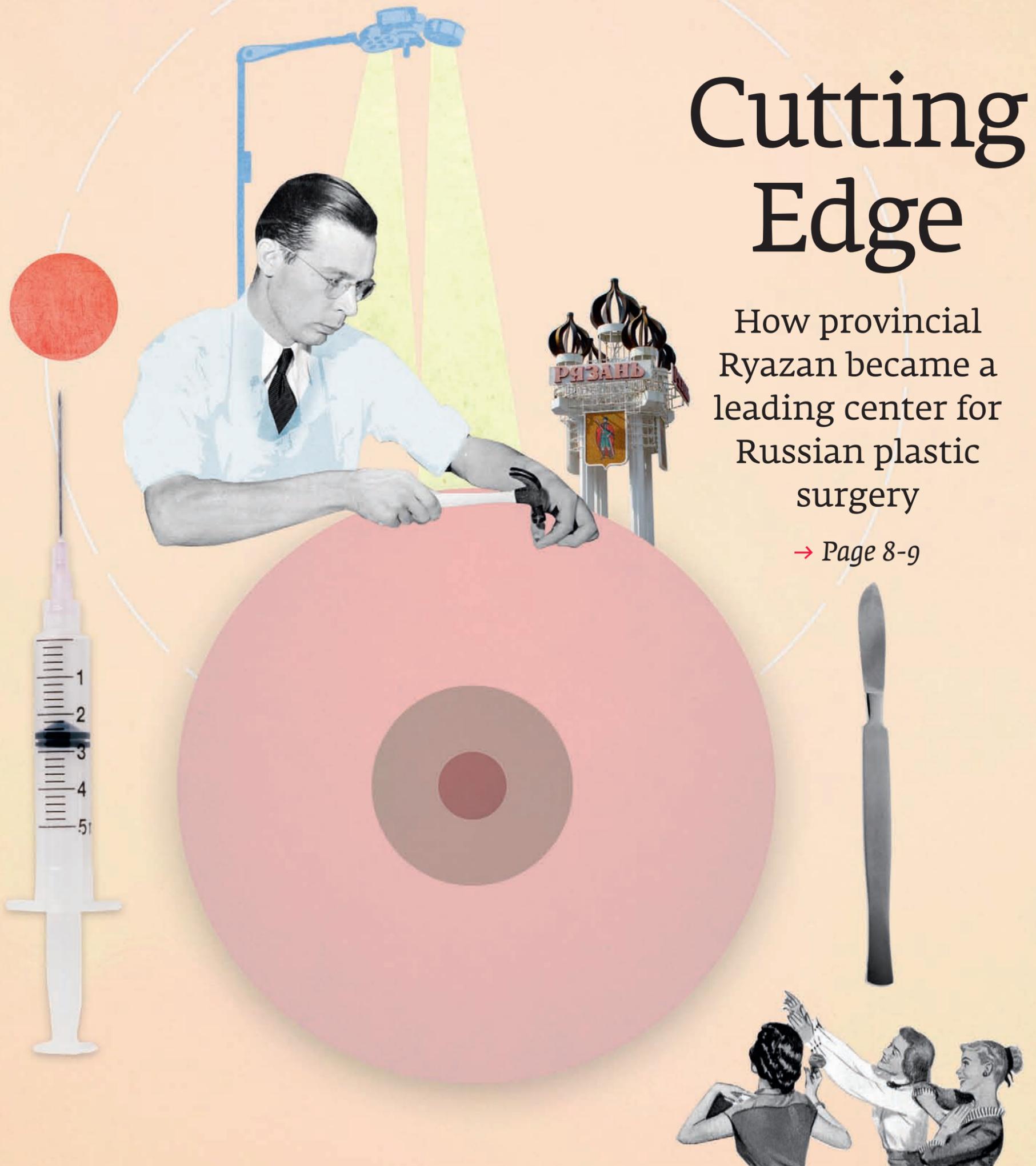
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“By adopting such laws the authorities reinforce stigma and encourage homophobia,”  
ECHR on ruling

2013

controversial anti-gay  
“propaganda” law passed.

\$55,800

compensation Russia  
must pay to each  
of the plaintiffs.



While lawmakers in other former Soviet states have proposed similar anti-gay laws, they have been struck down in parliament.

## Court Gesture

By **Matthew Kupfer** newsreporter@imedia.ru

### International human rights ruling offers a strong rebuke to Russia’s position on LGBT rights

On June 20, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that an infamous Russian law against “gay propaganda” violated freedom of expression.

Notably, only one ECHR judge voted against the ruling: Dmitry Dedov, Russia’s representative in the court. In his dissent, Dedov wrote that “positive portrayals of homosexuality have a negative impact on children’s development and place them at risk of sexual violence.” But six other judges — from countries as diverse as Cyprus and Slovakia — disagreed.

There could hardly be a more demonstrative verdict on gay rights in Russia. As the LGBT community racks up victories around the globe, Russia increasingly finds itself as an outlier in Europe.

Not that Russia’s anti-gay law was ever mainstream. Passed in 2013 to ban “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations among minors,” the law provoked a public outcry throughout the West. Prominent celebrities called for boycotting all things Russian. Activists called for their countries to pull out of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, to be hosted in Sochi. The law provoked genuine fear among some LGBT athletes that they could face discrimination or arrest during the games.

Ultimately, the boycott effort failed. But the Kremlin found itself on the defensive. Numerous Western leaders declined to attend the Olympics, and the U.S. sent a delega-



REUTERS

tion featuring prominent gay athletes to Sochi, a symbolic rebuke to the Kremlin.

Several years later, the “gay propaganda” law’s effects on Russian society are still toxic. In April, the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper revealed that security forces in Russia’s Chechnya region were detaining, torturing and even killing gay men en masse. One of the reasons cited by Novaya Gazeta for the crackdown was, in part, the anti-gay law.

A group of activists led by Nikolai Alexeyev, one of the plaintiffs in the ECHR’s current ruling, had been submitting petitions to hold LGBT protests in cities across Russia. The activists understood their applications would be rejected. They were actually collecting rejection letters to build a case in the ECHR against the “gay propaganda” law. Unfortunately, their petitions to hold marches in the conservative

Caucasus region, where Chechnya is located, provoked significant local blowback. That appears to have led the authorities to carry out “preventative detentions” of gays.

Now Russia must pay Alexeyev and two other LGBT activists, Nikolai Bayev and Alexei Kiselyov, nearly 50 thousand euros (around \$55,800) in compensation each, the ECHR ruled. The ruling cannot alter Russian legislation, but it does set a precedent for future ECHR cases against Russia over its “gay propaganda” law.

It also makes a clear statement that Russia’s position on LGBT rights is backward. In recent weeks, Taiwan’s constitutional court has legalized same-sex marriages. Ireland’s parliament elected the country’s first openly gay prime minister. Last week, even Serbia — a Russian ally and Orthodox Slavic country — appointed a lesbian prime minister.

Meanwhile, on June 18, over 2,000 Ukrainians marched through central Kiev in support of LGBT rights. Despite aggressive opposition from conservative and nationalist forces, the Kiev Pride rally went off with hardly a hitch, thanks to the efforts of over six thousand law enforcement officers. Among the Ukrainian demonstrators was a small delegation of LGBT activists from St. Petersburg.

“It is impossible to march in Russia,” activist Alexei Nazarov told The Moscow Times. “So we can only do it abroad.” **TMT**

#### FAMILY AFFAIRS

## Why the Putin-Stone Interviews Remind Us How Little We Know

By **Mikhail Fishman**  
Editor-in-chief, The Moscow Times



SOFIA MIRODOVA

American filmmaker Oliver Stone has faced intense criticism since the release of his 4-hour “Putin Interviews” earlier this month. His detractors have attacked him for giving a platform to the Russian president and asking softball questions.

The controversial film, just broadcast on Russian state television, does have its intriguing moments. Most compelling are the casual outtakes interspersed between the interview questions. In a film reportedly cut down from 18 hours of footage, these scenes can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

For example, Putin moving from one room of the Kremlin to another, or just walking down the Kremlin hall. (“Don’t you feel lonely roaming here at nights?” Stone asks. Putin fudges.)

Or Putin is feeding a stallion in a barn. Or chatting about women’s “bad days” and “natural cycles.” From that latter scene, it’s obvious that Putin is not intending to send any real message, but just saying the first thing that came to his mind. Telling, no doubt, in its own right.

In one moment, Putin tells Stone he is going to have a family meal with his daughters right after the interview. He then admits he is now a grandfather sees his grandchildren “very rarely.” Of course, we never see this family reunion, not even from a distance.

After the revelation about his grandkids made news, Putin took the point further during his live annual phone-in show. “I have grandchildren and they live a normal life,” he said. “One of them is already in kindergarten.” He added: “My second grandson was born just recently.”

Putin explained that he was not going into any detail — age, names — to avoid jeopardizing his grandkids’ “normal lives” and “their ordinary interactions with other children.” But with so little information available, we wouldn’t know if Putin was stretching the truth.

It is hardly news that Putin is reticent to discuss his private affairs. What’s interesting, though, is that his rare revelations about his own family stylistically fall into the same category as his judgments on any other private or non-political matter. The more specific Putin answers about, say, the events of February 2014 in Ukraine, the more he is vague about his own interests. It’s as if he doesn’t have much to share.

During the last 16 years, the president has given us no more information about his family as he has done about his personal interests. We don’t know what he reads, what movies he likes, or whether he has friends or hobbies.

We know the president really likes hockey. And that Putin’s personal pursuit turned into a highly publicized national event known as the Night Hockey League. We know that he drunk tea and played badminton with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who served as president from 2008 to 2012 — though these scenes had the air of an orchestrated PR stunt. Other than that, we’ve seen Putin playing with a dog, riding a horse and flying with a stork.

Take a step back, however, and you’ll be hard-pressed to think of a single image of him having fun with others. We have never seen Putin enjoying something or sharing a mun-

dane emotion with any other human being. It’s almost as difficult to imagine Putin having a family dinner — or playing with his grandson — as it is to call him a pro-Western liberal.

Oliver Stone interviewed the Russian president in his natural habitat: Red Square, the offices and halls of the Kremlin, Putin’s vast mansions in Sochi and outside Moscow, his official jet, his car, his gym, his pool. Even the venue of an empty hockey stadium had the sense of a huge private amphitheater.

But all these presidential spaces seemed free of any trace of Putin’s own personality. His responses to Stone’s friendly questions were — as usual — a weird mix of pompous bureaucratic clichés and colloquial observations, jokes and interjections. Nothing was disclosed beyond them; nothing that would reveal the individual behind a statesman.

Putin has not always been this way. Indeed, Stone’s film begins with Putin recalling how he became president. In 1999, when Russia’s first president, Boris Yeltsin, suggested that the then FSB director run for president, Putin is said to have hesitated. That path would mean giving up his “normal, ordinary life,” Putin tells Stone.

The archival footage from the early 2000s Stone includes also depicts a human being rather than powerful strongman. But over the years, Putin’s persona has expanded — or shrunk, depending on your perspective — into that of a depersonalized Russian pharaoh. Nearly seventeen years after Putin made his choice, there is no way back. **TMT**



*"This was nothing special"* - Polina Kostyleva, head of Navalny's St. Petersburg office on the police abuses

1,769

arrests during Jun 12 anti-corruption protests.



Russia has long been criticized by human rights organizations for torture and abuse carried out by police.

923

Number of days protestors at anti-corruption rallies in St. Petersburg have spent in jail.



PAVEL GOLOVKIN / AP

With hundreds of arrests across dozens of cities, Russian authorities have been uncompromising in their response to unsanctioned anti-corruption rallies.

# 'I had to breathe through my clothes'

By Howard Amos [newsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:newsreporter@imedia.ru)

## Protesters complain of abuse and use of pepper spray while in detention

When anti-corruption protests took place in cities across Russia earlier this month, police in St. Petersburg detained over 600 demonstrators.

The experience of these people in jail is highlighting the seemingly widespread abuse of prisoners by the Russian police.

Protester Oleg Kabatov says he had never been arrested before, so he was unprepared for what awaited him. For two days after his detention in St. Petersburg, Kabatov was held in police custody where he witnessed an incident that has provoked widespread outrage.

According to Kabatov and several other eyewitnesses, police officers used pepper spray in the close confines of precinct cells, causing detainees to experience severe breathing difficulties.

"They brought in a very drunk person who was quite aggressive," says Kabatov. "One of the policemen hit him...then they sprayed the gas and closed the [cell] door...the gas got to us via the ventilation system."

Kabatov was in a cell with 11 other people, many of whom were so badly affected that their skin turned red, they sweated profusely and coughed constantly. "I had to breathe through my clothes," says Kabatov.

The ordeal only ended when one detainee, who had smuggled in a mobile phone, summoned an ambulance.

"The paramedic was surprised by what was going on and said 'you need to get ten ambulances here. What have you done? It's impossible to breathe,'" according to a woman in a neighboring cell quoted by OVD-Info, an NGO that tracks political arrests. "They checked my pulse and then left," said the woman, who declined to have her name published by OVD-Info for fear of retribution.

The incident is one of many allegations of police abuse in St. Petersburg since the June 12 demonstrations organized by opposition leader and presidential hopeful Alexei Navalny.

"People saw [for the first time] that the state is a repressive mechanism," says Polina

Kostyleva, the head of Navalny's headquarters in St. Petersburg.

But police have denied they did anything illegal in the incident with the pepper spray. "In accordance with the law, a police officer used special measures," a St. Petersburg police spokesman told the RIA Novosti news agency.

The legality of what occurred depends on the chain of events, says Boris Panteleev, the St. Petersburg coordinator of gulag.ru, which monitors prison abuses. Under certain circumstances, officers can resort to pepper spray.

"It is not commonly used but it happens," Panteleev says.

Russia has long been criticized for a culture of police brutality, including allegations of torture much worse than what the St. Petersburg protesters apparently faced. Victims and activists have reported cases where police have beaten detainees, administered electric shocks to their genitalia and hung them by handcuffs. Long disappearances within the prison system, when families cannot locate their loved ones, also occur.

"Torture and other ill-treatment continued to be widespread and systematic during initial detention and in prison colonies," international human rights charity Amnesty International concluded in a report on abuses in Russia published earlier this year.

OVD-Info estimates that 2,000 people — including over 800 in Moscow — were detained across Russia after the June 12 anti-corruption rallies. The 640 detentions in St. Petersburg have led local courts to hand down a total of 923 days of arrest and 4.3 million rubles (\$74,000) in fines, according to Kostyleva.

Other incidents recorded in St. Petersburg include alleged assault. "Two detainees were taken to a separate room behind an iron door and beaten up," activist Denis Styazhkin wrote on Twitter on June 12.

Kostyleva tells the story of a female protester who had to spend time in a cell infested with bedbugs. Local journalist Arseny

Vesnin says he spoke to one man who was hospitalized with pneumonia after two days in custody. He was housed in a cell where there was one blanket for six people and the temperature never rose above 10 degrees Celsius.

Monitoring groups maintain that there is nothing unusual in many of these stories.

Instances of detainees sleeping in cor-

ridors, receiving little food and being held without charges for more than three hours or barred access to a lawyer are "very common" across Russia, says gulag.ru's Panteleev.

After his experiences in jail, Navalny supporter Kabatov says he will not attend another protest if there is a risk of being arrested.

"A second conviction could mean a real sentence in a real prison colony," he says. **TMT**

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“Secret and uncontrollable communication channels will be used by terrorists and extremists” – **Alexander Zharov** Head of Roskomnadzor

**2018**

new anti-secrecy bills due to go into effect.

**15 Billion**

messages sent on Telegram every day.



Countries like Iran have required people using popular **Telegram** channels to register with the government.



## Tilting at Virtual Windmills

By [Daria Litvinova](#) and [David Kharebov](#) [newsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:newsreporter@imedia.ru) | Illustration by [Sofia Miroedova](#)

Russian authorities want to wipe anonymity out of the Internet. But is it possible?

The internet has long been a wild horse the Kremlin struggled to tame. Authorities first understood the scale of the problem during the 2011-12 Bolotnaya protests, which were organized and coordinated online.

A crackdown of sorts ensued as the authorities attempted to wrest back control. In short succession, they introduced new injunctions, restrictions, and new draconian legislation.

But the actions made little difference because Russian internet users learned to adapt. They learned to navigate online obstacles imposed by the government by using secure virtual private networks (VPNs) and other anonymizing software. They moved their correspondence to encrypted messengers that can't be easily monitored. They used social networking sites that refused to store personal users' personal data on Russian servers. Protesters still coordinate demonstrations through social media and online messenger apps.

The authorities, however, are determined to catch up. This month, Russia's lower chamber of parliament is considering two bills that would restrict the internet even further.

One would heavily restrict the use of VPN services and anonymizing software. The other aims to wipe out anonymity in messengers by forcing them to tie user accounts with cell phone numbers and people's identities.

But even if introduced, there is no guarantee the new laws will work.

“[Authorities] don't have the means to control the internet,” Anton Merkurov, an independent IT analyst, told *The Moscow Times*. “Hence the incompetent, unimplementable laws.”

### U-turn on VPNs

The first of the new bills made headlines as a bill “banning VPN” services. That description is not entirely accurate.

Instead, the legislation would allow Roskomnadzor, Russia's infamous media and internet watchdog, to ban VPN services and anonymizing programs if they refuse to block access to websites already banned by Roskomnadzor.

According to Roskomsvoboda, an internet rights group, there are 6 million banned sites already. Far from all feature illicit content. Artyom Kozlyuk, head of the group, told *The Moscow Times* that when authorities want to block one website, they shut off an IP address, even though other sites use the same address.

“Thousands of websites end up being blocked, even though they don't violate any Russian laws,” he said.

The head of Roskomnadzor, Alexander Zharov, told reporters one year ago that he doesn't see any point in fighting VPNs or online anonymizers.

“It is technically possible to start blocking anonymizers,” Zharov said in an interview in February 2016. “But I consider it absolutely pointless... New ones will pop up to replace the ones we block.”

The bill currently sitting in the parliament, however, was masterminded by Roskomnadzor, the *Vedomosti* newspaper reported, citing unidentified government sources.

The *Moscow Times* failed to reach either Zharov or his spokesman Vadim Ampelonsky for comment.

### Networks to benefit

The second bill, which focuses on the use of anonymous messengers, passed its first reading last week. If adopted, it would force online messengers to link user accounts with their phone numbers. It would also make users' personal data available to law enforcement agencies.

Another consequence of the bill is that it would require messenger companies to have contracts with cellular networks. Access to messengers that refused to comply with the legislation would be blocked.

Before March 2017, only Russian messaging services like *Vkontakte* or *Odnoklassniki* were required to register with authorities, says Kozlyuk from Roskomsvoboda. Since March, however, the watchdog has started adding international messengers to the list upon the request of the Federal Security Service.

“So far they've been only adding mid-sized ones,” says Kozlyuk. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or Telegram have not made the list yet.

Kozlyuk believes the legislative initiative was lobbied by cellular networks unhappy with the fact that messengers are bypassing paid-for services.

Anna Lander, spokesperson for the Media and Communications Union — Russia's largest cellular networks Beeline, MTS, and Megafon are members — that helped draft the bill, echoes his sentiment: “Putting the messengers on legal radars ensures there are common competition rules in the field of messaging,” she told *The Moscow Times*.

### Unclear prospects

If history is anything to go by, messaging giants — Facebook, WhatsApp or Telegram — are unlikely to comply with the legislation.

“Remember how authorities passed a law forcing foreign companies to store users' personal data on Russian servers? They just ignored it,” says Merkurov.

Blocking any one of these extremely popular programs would require serious political will. It is not clear that such will exists, says Kozlyuk: “Roskomnadzor has been dragging out negotiations with companies like Facebook for months. It isn't ready to take political responsibility and damage its own image even further.”

Both bills have a long way to go. With lawmakers keen to avoid outrage, they will be cautious in pushing them through, says political analyst Yekaterina Schulmann.

“No one wants to repeat the ‘success’ of the notorious ‘Yarovaya package’ [a set of draconian anti-terrorism laws],” she told *The Moscow Times*. “The politicians use anonymizing software and encrypted messengers themselves. They feel safe with them and wouldn't want to lose this safety.” **TMT**

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*"If lurid fantasies are mixed with credible accusations, then the former undermine the credibility of the latter"*  
– Mark Galeotti

2006

Former agent Alexander Litvinenko killed in London.



Buzzfeed was the first media outlet to publish an unverified dossier about Donald Trump. The document contains lurid allegations about the U.S. president's conduct in Russia.

28,000

Number of Russians living in the UK (0.0004% of the total population).

# It's the Russians Wot Done It

The Kremlin is a convenient villain for our troubled times — and that narrative is playing right into Putin's hands



Op-Ed by Mark Galeotti  
Senior Researcher, Institute of International Relations Prague

Last week the online media company BuzzFeed released "From Russia With Blood," part of a series alleging that 14 people have been assassinated in Britain — a "ring of death" that British authorities reportedly ignored or covered up.

Dramatic stuff.

Whether or not it is all true (and I have my doubts), it speaks to the current East-West atmosphere, in which Russia can safely be blamed for anything.

The BuzzFeed account is certainly an exciting read. There are cases which definitely ought to have been considered more closely (suicide by slashing oneself repeatedly with two knives? Really?) There are cases where understandably-grieving friends are trotted out to affirm that their loved ones would never commit suicide (as is common in such cases).

Then there are the shockers. Stories airily assuming that suicides could be induced by psychotropic drugs, or cunning Russian agents could mask every sign of murder. Accompanying is a large, anonymous cast of sources casting doubt on official accounts, coroners' reports, and the government line. Many, incidentally, are apparently U.S. intelligence officers eager to present the Brits as feckless and foolish.

Perhaps the article's crowning glory is the passage in which "a current senior national security advisor to the British government" is willing to tell BuzzFeed that the government is too scared to act "because the Kremlin could inflict massive harm on Britain by unleashing cyberattacks, destabilising the economy, or mobilising elements of Britain's large Russian population to 'cause disruption.'" Somehow a "general war with Russia" crops up in the same paragraph, as if Putin would somehow leapfrog NATO's European members and drop paratroopers in Milton Keynes if Boris Johnson says something else nasty about him.

Full disclosure: I was interviewed for this piece, and actually agree that the British government is sometimes disinclined to get too muscular on Russian cases. However, rather than some bizarre fear of war or "Britain's large Russian population" — 28,000 nationals out of a population of 65 million, by the way, half as many as Canadians or Somalis — I suspect Britain's government partly senses that conflict with Moscow is pointless, and partly that its allies would provide minimal support like they did after Britain took a stronger line following the 2006 assassination of Litvinenko in London.

The article conflates Russian gangsterdom and officialdom — yes, they connect, and one hand sometimes washes the other, but they are not quite the same — and rolls together rumour, innuendo, paranoia and



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A new report by BuzzFeed, citing U.S. intelligence officials claims British authorities as either foolish or feckless in their investigations of Russia-related deaths on home soil.

serious reportage in one package that seems to be crying out for a film adaptation. Can it be true that Britain is especially unable or unwilling to prevent Russian death squads wandering at will? Is London really less competent and more supine than, say, Italy or Greece?

But so long as the foundations of the story are built on anonymous sources and open questions, it is hard to know how to judge it. In the absence of objective benchmarks, subjective expectations come to the fore. And here, of course, the Russians shine as the baddies of choice. Whether or not this is Cold War 2.0, the Russkies are undoubtedly reprising their greatest hits as the ubiquitous bad guys of the Western imagination.

So what? Prussian King Fredrick the Great memorably said that to defend everything is to defend nothing. By the same token, blaming everything on Moscow runs the risk of pinning nothing on them. If lurid fantasies are mixed with credible accusations, then the former undermine the credibility of the latter. The Kremlin and its naïve Western apologists can then simply hand-wave anything away as "Russophobia."

Here is the tragedy. There is so much on which the record is clear — from Moscow's direct involvement in the Donbas and indirect responsibility for the downing of the MH17 passenger plane, through to Litvinenko's assassination and numerous attempts to influence Western politics — that, ironically enough, it is the Kremlin that stands to gain from this fervid atmosphere.

The second problem is that it may also strengthen the Kremlin's hand in other ways.

Litvinenko's viciously theatrical death killed off much of the fashionable anti-Putinism of the Londongrad set, for example. Chastened, they turned to charity, and to enjoying their wealth with apolitical abandon.

I have called this "dark power," the malign shadow of "soft power." The latter accumulates power through moral stature or appealing example. The former, through fear.

If we assume Russia unleashes Slavic ninjas to murder at will abroad without ever being caught; if we believe they are the psychological grandmasters behind every piece

of Western stupidity, right from Trump to Brexit; if we consider them ten foot tall and twice as smart — we empower Putin and his cohorts.

Furthermore, we blind ourselves to the realities of the situation and spend our time preparing for a threat that never is. Alas, such are the depressing ironies of modern Russia-bashing. **TMT**



"You just picture the characters in the place." **David Lynch** on imagining *Twin Peaks*

**1993**

Twin Peaks premieres in Russia, 3 years after U.S.

**18**

number of episodes in third season of Twin Peaks.



**Twin Peaks** has won Emmy, Golden Globe and Grammy awards. It is considered one of the most influential TV series ever made.



The original *Twin Peaks* series revelled in a mysticism that found a responsive audience in post-Soviet Russia

# Peak Obsession

By **Howard Amos** [newsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:newsreporter@imedia.ru)

## Debut of a new season of U.S. drama evokes memories of a Russian craze

**Y**oung crime reporter Sergei Sokolov was working for Moscow's *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper in the early 1990s when the first series of cult U.S. television drama *Twin Peaks* was broadcast.

Sokolov was so entranced by David Lynch's murder mystery set in smalltown America that he and three other colleagues made it the subject of a column. Every week, they would pore over the plot details in an attempt to identify the killer.

The title of the column — "Who killed Laura Palmer?" — referred to the prom-queen in the series, whose death prompts FBI Agent Dale Cooper to travel to the town of Twin Peaks in Washington State. In ensuing investigation, he falls in love and unearths a web of sordid secrets and a mystical netherworld.

"Twin Peaks had a huge resonance among young people and everyone went mad over finding out who the murderer was," says Sokolov, now deputy editor at the newspaper. "In terms of influence there are only two shows that can compare: *House* and *Game of Thrones*."

With a third series of *Twin Peaks* now available, Russia is revisiting a passion for Lynch's grandiose, fictional world — one that is populated by fraudsters, demons, drug addicts, rapists and a psychic lady who always carries a log.

"It's most interesting to follow up on what has happened to us and to Lynch," Russian author Dmitry Bykov wrote in a recent column for *Novaya Gazeta*. He describes the original series as a "memorial to the bloody, feverish, glamorous and stupid 1990s."

The new series features many of the same actors, including Kyle MacLachlan as Agent Cooper. It picks up where series two left off — with Cooper apparently possessed by a demon after a show-down in the paranormal Black Lodge.

*Twin Peaks* first aired in Russia in November 1993, more than two years after the first two seasons were shown in the United States. Back then, Russians were wild about mass produced Latin American soaps, and *Santa Barbara*, another American melodrama.

*Twin Peaks* stood out.

"It was thunder in a clear sky, like chewing gum with a new taste — people tried and they liked it," says Oleg Bykov, a 36-year-old designer from the Siberian city of Omsk. The superfan manages a *Twin Peaks* social media community, which has more than 67,000 subscribers.

Much of the appeal of the original series lay in its embrace of mysticism, which flourished in post-Soviet Russia, and in its depiction of life outside of a big city.

"We had only just found out what America was," says Sokolov. "Twin Peaks showed a rural America that looked like our own countryside."

The obsession with *Twin Peaks* in the 1990s reportedly even reached the highest levels of the Russian political elite.

A book about the series, "Reflections: An Oral History of *Twin Peaks*," claims that former Soviet President Mikhail

Gorbachev was even moved to ask U.S. President George W. H. Bush to find out who killed Laura Palmer, whose naked corpse is found wrapped in plastic in the first episode.

Bush was unable, however, to make Lynch divulge the secret. Gorbachev himself stonewalled a question about the show in a 2014 interview with *The Moscow Times*, saying he had no recollection of it.

The column penned by Sokolov and his friends was not the only ink spilled in the Russian press about *Twin Peaks*. In the art and culture section of now-defunct newspaper *Segodnya*, journalists published long exchanges under the title "Weekly Dialogue," assessing each episode's cultural significance.

Since the 1990s, *Twin Peaks* has continued to win over younger fans in Russia and has been shown again on television a number of times.

"I love Lynch's work and his approach to life," says Darya Zaitseva, 24, an architecture student in Moscow. "He is not involved in the day-to-day, he is not interested in world news, he doesn't read gossip or books about himself. He lives only for his ideas, which means his work is as pure as it's possible to be."

The new series, which began last month, has generated a lot of interest and is available to watch in parallel with its release in the United States. But it seems unlikely to provoke the same furor as its predecessors.

"Briefly and rudely you can say that the first four episodes are more mysterious than the entire original series," a reviewer in daily newspaper *Vedomosti* wrote. Sokolov said he no longer found it interesting since it had fully entered the realm of the supernatural.

The new series is "chaotic," says Olga Nikitina, 21, a journalist in Moscow: "Nothing from the episodes that have been shown makes any sense."

But *Twin Peaks* fan group coordinator Bykov contends Lynch's genius is just as strong.

"A quarter of a century has gone by and much has changed," he says. "We have changed and *Twin Peaks* has changed. Your favorite gum has just gotten a new taste." **TMT**


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# Precious memory of Moscow



They say you should leave a coin in a place you want to return to. Or you could bring a coin back from a city you like, and make it one to remember. The Russian Otkritie Bank\* provides you with an excellent chance to do just that.

Many tourists come to Moscow and, of course, they want to take souvenirs of the Russian capital back with them as a keepsake. There is a wide choice of souvenirs, such as traditional nesting dolls and painted wooden handicraft, black caviar and the famous Baltic amber. However, matryoshka dolls and those caps with earflaps that people from warm places love so much have become commonplace — no more a surprise than a bottle of vodka. Those who are in Russia not for the first time, or who have friends and acquaintances who have already been here, especially feel this.

At the same time, many tourists miss an excellent opportunity not only to preserve the memory of the visit, but also to acquire an original and unique gift — a coin of precious metal.

It's understandable. After all, few people think of a bank as a place where you can buy a memorable gift. Going to the bank is rarely associated with pleasant memories. But that's not really the case, since you'll find practically the best choice of gold and silver coins at some of the best prices in Moscow at Otkritie Bank, the largest private bank in Russia\*\*.

The St. George the Victorious coin is among the most popular. This coin, made of high-quality Russian .999 gold, is an excellent souvenir — St. George is depicted on the coat-of-arms of Moscow. It contains 7.78 grams of pure gold, and costs about the same as half a kilo of black caviar. The caviar will be eaten sooner or later, but the coin will remain, and it can even be part of your legacy.

Coins commemorating the 2014 Sochi Olympics are sold at a comparable price, and those who want to get the 2018 FIFA World Cup gold can do so today — the coins are already on sale.

It should be noted that, in Moscow, souvenirs are quite expensive. For example, for the price of a St. George the Victorious gold coin, you can buy only two silver-plated — not even silver — cup holders with Russian symbols on them, or one decent amber pendant.

All these coins are for investment, that is, their price is close to the price of the gold contained in them. They are both souvenirs and investments, because their price grows along with the price of gold. Keep export restrictions in mind, however. You can easily take valuables worth less than \$10,000 across the border. You can show customs officials documents issued by the bank to confirm the cost of the coins being exported. Although these coins are official payment instruments of the Russian Federation with a face value of 50 rubles (about \$1), customs officials will most likely value them at the cost of the gold they contain.

The bank sells not only gold, but also silver coins. These are relatively inexpensive, but they can weigh up to 1 kg.

Collectors may be interested in commemorative coins. They are more



**The St. George the Victorious coin is among the most popular. This coin, made of high-quality Russian .999 gold, is an excellent souvenir — St. George is depicted on the coat-of-arms of Moscow.**

expensive, but much rarer. Some of the coins were issued 10-15 years ago and are hard to find on the market — for example, there was a series of coins commemorating Russian ballet released in the 1990s.

Volcanoes of Kamchatka was a very limited edition in 2008, and in 2009 coins were dedicated to the Russian writers Chekhov and Gogol. Coins depicting Russian monasteries are also quite rare. A kilogram of silver, especially in such an original form, is a gift worthy of the richest man.

The bank also offers a large selection of collectable coins from foreign countries. Some of them the bank offers exclusively, for

example, coins dedicated to the cult Soviet animated film "The Hedgehog in the Fog." There are also combined options, for example, a silver coin with a gold inset in the shape of a horseshoe, a symbol of luck, as well as coins dedicated to historical events and even images of Russian saints.

Bank Otkritie branches are located throughout Moscow, especially within the Garden Ring, where most of Moscow's highlights are to be found. Purchasing a coin in the bank takes just a few minutes — all you need is your passport with you. Every department has a consultant who can recommend which coins are best for you. For

all foreign guests, English-language service is provided by trained specialists. The telephone number of this service can be seen at the entrance to each branch.

Some offices of Otkritie Bank are especially convenient. One of those is the Nikitsky branch on Bolshaya Nikitskaya Street. It is located near the Moscow Conservatory and in the immediate vicinity of the Kremlin. The large office on Verkhnyaya Radishchevskaya Street, near the legendary Stalin skyscraper on Kotelnicheskaya Embankment, offers an assortment of large silver coins. Visitors to the city may also like the Smolensky office, located next to one of the architectural landmarks of Moscow — the Foreign Ministry high-rise, as well as one of its most famous streets — the Arbat. And speaking of emotions and memories that a visit to the bank can make, you can expect a completely new impression here. This premium bank office has very special interiors and is combined with a cozy coffeehouse. So bring the children. They will enjoy it too.

**Detailed information about the service is available on the following site: <https://www.open.ru/en>, or at +7 495 232-25-14 (Mon. through Sat., 9:00 to 20:00).**

**Smolensky Branch  
Smolenskaya-Sennaya Square, 27,  
Building 1, Moscow 119121  
Tel.: +7 495 232-25-14**

\* PJSC Bank FC Otkritie, operating under the brand name Otkritie Bank. General License No. 2209 of 24.11.2014 issued by the Bank of Russia.

\*\* According to the Interfax-CEA rating based on Russian-standard financial statements for Q1 2017.





*“Plastic surgery should be for the people” - Vyacheslav Ivanov, plastic surgeon in Ryazan*

**\$500**

the average cost of a nose job in Ryazan.



Ryazan has been the center of the Soviet Union and then Russia's aviation since 1955.

**68 %**

of Russians have a negative attitude towards plastic surgery (Levada Center).

Putin over his eighteen years in power suggests the president has possibly undergone more than one plastic surgery operation.

Plastic surgeons The Moscow Times spoke to for this article declined to comment on Putin's face. Just like the president's family, his rumoured botox injections are not a topic for public discussion.

“He looks good,” Alexandra, the Da Vinci patient, says. “If only all Russian men in their 60s looked like him.”

## Beauty for the tsars

It is no coincidence that Ryazan has turned into a mini beauty capital. The city is home to the world's first make-up shop, which paved the way to a multi-million empire that took over Hollywood in the 1920s: Max Factor.

The Max Factor make-up giant was founded by Polish Jew Maksymilian Faktorowicz. Born in Lodz, then one of the Russian Empire's largest industrial hubs, Faktorowicz went on to become chief cosmetic for the Russian imperial family in St. Petersburg.

In 1897, he founded a make-up store and salon on Ryazan's main “Postal Street” (then known as “Happy Street” and now a pedestrianized boulevard). Faktorowicz fled Russia following anti semitic pogroms which spread across the Russian Empire, including in Ryazan, in 1904.

Faktorowicz supposedly used his make-up to make himself look sick, which allowed him to get to what is now Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic. From there, he boarded a ship for the States, where American authorities registered him as Max Factor at Ellis Island.

“This is not an art,” Faktorowicz told a Hollywood reporter in Los Angeles in 1924.

“It is a business.”

All that is left of that business in Ryazan is a dilapidated low-rise, Tsarist-era, red-brick building. But Faktorowicz's legacy lives on.

## Things go wrong

Perhaps this unique history is part of the reason why plastic surgeons have found such a home in Ryazan. The more immediately tangible reason, however, is the town's close proximity to the Russian capital, with its big bucks, bling and body culture.

“We are close enough to Moscow for our clients to get to us easily,” says Da Vinci's leading surgeon Viktor Bezukov.

On average, Bezukov performs a dozen operations a week. The most common procedures are face lifts, which cost 26,000 rubles (\$450) on average. The surgeon has built an enviable reputation in town, and judging by complementary posts left by women on local beauty forums, he is easily the most popular surgeon in the region.

“Like all beauticians, I want women to feel comfortable in their own skin,” says Bezukov. “It's my profession to ensure this.”

The surgeon says that most patients worry about safety, but that standards are improving in the industry.

Sometimes things can go wrong, especially when operations are conducted by unqualified surgeons. Last year, Ryazan made national headlines when a 32-year-old woman died on the operating table during a nose enhancement procedure. She had suffered heart failure whilst unconscious and under general anaesthetic.

“As a surgeon, that incident horrified me,” says Berzukov.

Following the incident, local authorities and federal security officers (FSB) searched Ryazan's plastic surgery clinics.

Practitioners stress the need for water tight regulation. “Getting the appropriate training and operating within the law is essential,” surgeon Vyacheslav Ivanov told The Moscow Times.

## Silicone for the people

The incident did not, it seems, put off clients from flocking to Ryazan's clinics.

Both Berzukov and Ivanov say — on the contrary — their clientele is growing, and it includes an ever wider cross-section of Russian society.

When the former governor set up Ryazan's first clinics in the early 2000s, the regulars were primarily the wives of local officials; today's patients are more diverse.

“We have girls of all ages over 18 and of all sizes,” says Ivanov. “It's becoming more like going to the dentist: Plastic surgery is, and should be, for the people.” **TMT**





**Pavel Ryabushinsky** was a wealthy entrepreneur who ran a workshop in his mansion devoted to the restoration of ancient icons.

## UNFAIR OBSERVER

## Tigers in the Bushes



Unfair Observer is a secret Russian journalist offering a satirical take on the worst and most absurd developments happening in Russia.

Last Friday, Russia lost its last major independent news publication after businessman Grigory Beryozkin purchased the RBC media holding. In case you only read in English, RBC was a well-respected outlet, combining business news with exposés about Putin's children, the role of offshore firms in Russia's economy and Kremlin money funneled to Ukraine's war-torn Donbass region.

Beryozkin, who made a fortune through his ties to the government, said he would not meddle in RBC's editorial policy. If you only read in English, you might believe him.

But life is short, so let's cut to the chase: RBC was taken over by the collective Putin. Now it will be boring.

This is a problem because media, at its core, is a warning system. And it is supposed to trade in worry, not complacency. Much as humans evolved eyes in order to warn their brains about tigers in the bushes, societies formed media when they grew so big that warnings about wars, pestilence, revolts and tax hikes could not be propagated via fireside chats—at least until Beryozkin came along.

It's difficult to believe today, but Russia once had a thriving media industry. The grass was greener then, Putin's job was to tote his superior's briefcase, and people who did bad things could count on a thorough thrashing in the *Kommersant* daily or even on TV.

Fast forward several presidential terms and only the Latvia-based *Meduza.io* is left standing (and, of course, for now, *The Moscow Times*). The rest are now managed by Beryozkin's of their own, and only bark through their muzzles.

Russian media is boring now because Putin is boring. A trade secret: There's no job in journalism more horrible—aside from, perhaps, Aleppo correspondent—than covering Putin's call-in shows. Because they are gouge-your-eyes-out boring, and they're getting worse. If you had the misfortune to watch last week's call-in, or the wisdom to just read a summary, you know what I'm talking about.

Just try writing up a checklist—say, the U.S., the Russian economy, the opposition, sanctions, demography, healthcare, oil dependence, constitutional rights. If you have ever paid attention to Russia for more than five minutes, you'll know Putin's answers by heart: All these things are either doing fine or don't exist (like economic problems)—with the exception of America, which does exist, but Putin rather wishes it didn't.

The collective Putin is boring because, in its world, things are perfect. Any problems are, at best, local slip-ups. "You live on \$50 a month? How quaint," Putin (singular) told a woman during last week's call-in.

The Russian ruling class has turned its warning system into a dumbed-down version of the three wise monkeys—see no tiger, hear no tiger, speak of no tiger. The tigers are still lurking in the bushes, but, in Russia, you don't speak of them.

Or maybe you do. Online television network Dozhd reported last weekend that the staff of the sycophantic Channel One has been tasked with compiling weekly reports on the public mood for the Kremlin. Those reports are apparently uncensored and cover plenty of grassroots Kremlin-bashing. And both sides take them "very seriously."

So the authorities dismantle the real media, make phony media do the real job, and then classify it. One could almost believe that things actually aren't perfect! Luckily, now that RBC is going down, we'll never know. **TMT**

**9.5 Mln**

Population of Cairo, Egypt.

**5 Kilograms**

Personal allowance for import of sanctioned Western foodstuffs into Russia.



**Maxim Gorky** was a Russian writer and five-time Nobel Prize nominee. He controversially returned to the USSR from exile in Italy in 1932 after accepting an invitation from Josef Stalin.

## MY MOSCOW

## Say Cheese

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

There's one thing arts guru Ruth Addison can't get enough of



RUTH ADDISON / PERSONAL ARCHIVE

Ruth Addison says she has acculturated in Moscow and has no plans to leave.

**B**rought up in a working-class family in northeast England, Ruth Addison spent five years working for the British Council in Cairo. She moved to Russia to become deputy director of the organization's Moscow branch in 2002. After completing a part-time MA in Art History, she ran a gallery. Since 2015 she has been Chief Editor for Garage Museum of Contemporary Art.

**When I first came to Moscow I hated it, I absolutely hated it.** I didn't want to leave Cairo, so that was part of the issue, and I kind of knew some Russian but not very much. It was strange because I came from a developing country to a European country. In Egypt, people speak a little bit of English. I came here and was really surprised that people don't really speak English, so it was a real struggle. I was here on my own and I felt quite isolated.

**If you're here for a while, you have to try to get out of purely expat circles.** As soon as I made some Russian friends, then I made some more. At first sight they're quite dour and unfriendly, but they're not really, you just need to make one friend, and then you've got a thousand.

**I get friends to bring cheese, it's the best ever gift.** If anyone's traveling and they say "What do you want us to bring?"—bring us cheese! I don't even need anything like salami, but parmesan, cheddar, I just ask friends to bring it. Or bring it myself. I always bring in slightly under the five kilos that are allowed. I've had lots of very heavy suitcases recently.

**I've only been to Danilovsky Market once, I didn't really like it.** I tend to go to Dorogmilovsky, which is a bit closer to home for me. And there I usually buy Georgian cheeses, so sulguni, and chanakh, smelly sheep's cheese.

Dorogmilovsky Market, 10 Ulitsa Mozhaisky Val, Metro Kievskaya

**The city's always been pretty clean from my point of view.** Russians might disagree with that, but I always tend to see Moscow as a clean city if you compare it to London. I'm not going to compare it to Cairo, because Cairo's not a clean city.

**I like being right in the center because you can walk everywhere.** In the summer there are lots of places with terraces, so I can take the dog and have a cup of coffee. I used to go a lot to Coffeemania on Nikitskaya, but now I just get too tense about how expensive it is. So across the road from there is a place called Prostiye Veshchi. It's small, but it's a nicer terrace because you're in a garden.

Prostiye Veshchi, 14 Bolshaya Nikitskaya Ulitsa, Metro Arbatskaya

**Karetny Dvor is fantastic.** They have an amazing terrace: In the summer you can go and sit there and have dinner. It's open 24 hours, so if you have a hankering for kebabs at 3 o'clock in the morning, you can go there. The clientele is quite mixed, so from the people-watching point of view it's interesting. We quite often go in a bigish group, so you just order a load of [Turkish/Greek appetizers] meze and then kebabs, and it's just a nice social way of eating, because you're all sharing food.

Karetny Dvor, 52/55 Povarskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 3, Metro Barrikadnaya

**I really like what's known as the Gorky House.** [Writer Maxim] Gorky lived there for a while, though it's actually the Ryabushinsky House. It was built by Fyodor Shekhtel, the Russian Art Nouveau architect. When Gorky was persuaded that he needed to return to the USSR, he got this beautiful house that had belonged to the merchant Ryabushinsky. Plus I'm interested in Gorky as a personality. He's a very ambiguous character. He's one of those people that's really easy to think, "If it was me I'd have done it differently"—but would you have done it differently? He's a fascinating character for me. Ryabushinsky House (Gorky Museum), 6/2 Malaya Nikitskaya Ulitsa, Metro Arbatskaya

**I think contemporary art is still a bit of an acquired taste here.** If you compare visitor numbers to the kind of exhibitions that the Manezh does on history—the history of Russia and the Soviet Union, of which there have been a whole series—there were massive numbers at those exhibitions. And I don't think you would get those kind of numbers for a contemporary art exhibition. **TMT**

# Out & About



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



The 'Old Moscow' set at Mosfilm features a number of streets that recreate the pre-1812 appearance of the city.

## Behind the Silver Screen: A Trip Around Mosfilm

By Emily Erken [artsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:artsreporter@imedia.ru)

The museum at Russia's most famous movie studio offers a journey through history

A watchtower looms over an empty cobblestone street, guarding the two-story wooden houses and ancient churches from fire. Orthodox crosses gleam in the sunlight, while pastel-painted plaster hides behind layers of soot. All that is missing is the people.

This is Moscow in its former glory, before the Great Fire of 1812 destroyed most of the city. As long as you are careful not to peek around the corners, the illusion holds. But step back and you realize where you are — a movie set.

Every day, the Mosfilm Museum leads groups on a whirlwind tour through its 34.5-hectare site in southwest Moscow. Here visitors can admire the breathtaking period sets, sound stages, and extensive costume and prop collection. Unlike a normal museum with historical pieces, Mosfilm's collection is "active," meaning that film crews can borrow and return exhibition pieces as needed.

Yelena Morozova, head of the Mosfilm Museum, says this happens frequently. Last year, when Russian-Armenian director (and Mosfilm head) Karen Shakhnazarov shot a new version of "Anna Karenina," he borrowed all of the carriages in one of the main halls.

"A group came for the tour," Morozova told The Moscow Times, "but all of the exhibits were gone!"

### A working studio

Approximately 1,000 people work at Mosfilm full-time, although in its Soviet heyday, there were up to 5,000 full-time cinema staff. These days, the on-site population can vary greatly, depending on studio schedules.

"Sometimes it's emptier than empty," says Morozova, "Then, there may be whole crowds, people running around."

In the busy periods, tour groups might catch groups of actors in costume. The tour route also changes, depending on which sound stages are in use, as tours pass through the main building, with 13 shooting pavilions.

Most guides will lead the group into a small room housing an Orthodox church set. The space faithfully imitates the iconostasis, golden crosses, icons—some real, some imitations. The set even replicates the desk where old ladies sell candles and other items. The only thing missing is the roof—the church set is open on top so that the crew can shine bright lights onto the actors' faces.

### Something for everyone

The museum's five exhibition rooms hold props and costumes for every taste, from weaponry to masks and wigs. Keen-eyed visitors might recognize the iconic "gazirovka" soda-water machines that appear in the 1965

comedy "Operation Y and Shurik's Other Adventures."

Those who don't know Soviet-era films well can appreciate the collection of old cars, which are kept in pristine condition, and which you are unlikely to see elsewhere. For example, the museum holds a GAZ AAMPZ-1, a 1934 fire truck used in the 1971 adaptation of Ilf and Petrov's "12 Chairs."

A third room is dedicated to the art of masking—death masks line the walls, across from a collection of wild-colored wigs used in sci-fi movies. The best section documents an actor's transformation into a ghoul through make-up and prostheses.

The Soviet-era set pieces, the props, costumes, and set pieces for Shakhnazarov's new version of Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina" appear again and again throughout the tour. Anna's elegant 19th-century dresses and carriages illustrate the luxury of the mid-19th

century aristocratic life. The swords, guns, and an early machine gun loaded onto a carriage from the battle scenes demonstrate how those aristocrats later paid for their high life (Mosfilm commissioned 3,000 costumes for the shoot.)

### A living museum

For "Anna Karenina," Shakhnazarov added an "Old Petersburg" street next to the "Old Moscow" set, built 30 years ago. Guests walk through the stunning replica, surrounded by neo-classical mansions, Roman columns, and rectangular stone masonry. The whole street is made from wood and painted to look dirty from the coal-fired stoves that kept St. Petersburg warm.

According to our guide, the "old Moscow" street set has been used in so many Mosfilm movies that it has more than recouped the initial outlay of \$600,000. The false street has shaped a generation's imagination of what Moscow must have looked like long ago.

Guests can book 1.5-hour excursions through the Mosfilm website or through many city tour agencies. Tours in English and French are available, but be sure to call ahead, so that the museum can locate an appropriate guide. Expect a journey.

"You can be transported to another town, another country, a space station, another planet," says director Morozova, and "this can be achieved just by stepping from one set onto another." TMT

+7 (499) 143 9599

[mosfilm.ru/fans/excursion/](https://mosfilm.ru/fans/excursion/)

1 Ulitsa Mosfilmovskaya

Metro Kievskaya, then take Bus 205, 119, or trolley 7, 17, 34 to the Mosfilm stop



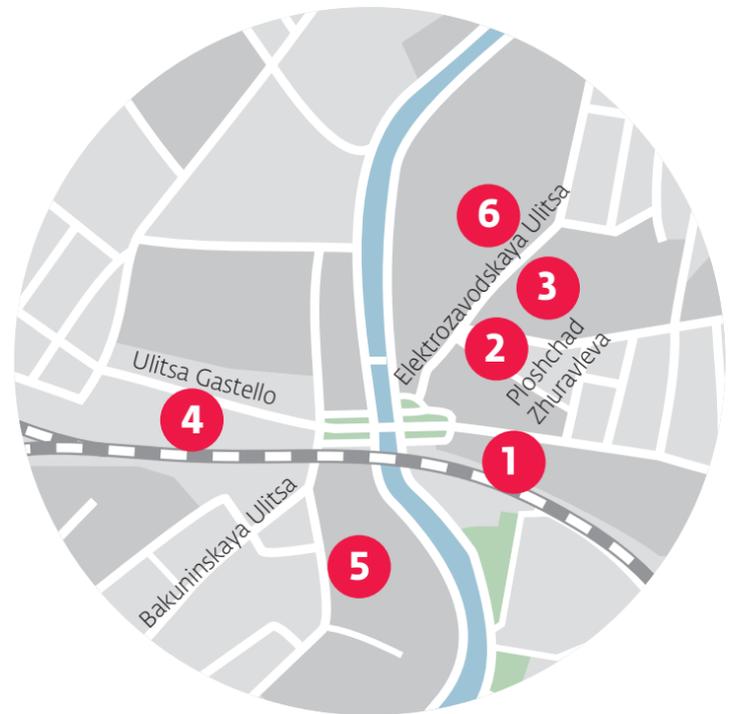
Scenes from the new version of 'Anna Karenina' by Karen Shakhnazarov were shot on Mosfilm's sets.

MOSFILM / FACEBOOK

# Elektrozavod: A Former Industrial District With More Than Meets the Eye

By [Daria Demidova](#) artsreporter@imedia.ru | Illustration by [Liza Lunz](#)

Mansions and palaces surround a vast electrical plant in northeast Moscow



## 1) Elektroavodskaya metro station

Unlike many others of its generation, the Elektroavodskaya station is incredibly bright, thanks to 318 bulbs installed in aluminum cups. Carved bas-reliefs on the pillars depict the workers of the nearby Electrical Light Bulb factory, which gave the station its name. Ascending to the vestibule of the station, you will see the portraits of physicists in the niches under the dome. These are Soviet citizens who contributed to the study of electricity.

The 4-kilometer stretch of railway to the Elektroavod plant was the first industrial railroad in Moscow to be supplied with electric power.

## 2) 'Palace on the Yauza' Concert Hall

1 Ploshchad Zhuravleva

This venue began life in 1903 as a playhouse for ordinary Muscovites, with a focus on classical drama. In 1947, the Art Deco building was reconstructed in a new style and became a Soviet community center. It was often used as a filming location for popular TV shows and movies, including "The Carnival Night." It got a new lease of life in the late 1980s as a rock club, but since 2008 it has been used by the Sovremennik theater company.

## 3) Nosov's mansion

12 Elektroavodskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 1

The inspiration for this wooden Art Deco mansion built by Lev Kekushev was an American country house seen by the client — the wealthy textile manufacturer Vasily Nosov — in the Scientific American magazine. It took just nine months to complete the mansion, which is composed of several layers of wooden panels. Renovated some years ago, the house regained its large open porch, which was enclosed in glass in Soviet times.



## 4) Elizabeth's Palace

44 Ulitsa Castello

Squeezed between Ulitsa Castello and a railroad, this Baroque building is the last vestige of a large royal estate. In 1789, Empress Elizabeth erected a gorgeous palace here in peaceful countryside. On her death, the building stood idle for over a century before passing to a charity, which opened a hospital with a pharmacy and a shelter for the poor. In the 1920s, the charity closed and the former royal chambers became communal apartments.

## 5) Pokrov Church in Rubtsovo

83 Bakuninskaya Ulitsa

There are several churches in Moscow dedicated to the Protection ("Pokrov" in Russian) of Our Lady. However, this one is also believed to have given its name to the Arbatsko-Pokrovskaya line of the Moscow metro. Built in 1627 to mark the vanquishing of the Poles, it symbolizes the regaining of national unity and the end of the period in Russia known as the Time of Troubles, when Polish-Lithuanian forces invaded after a successional crisis.

A sculptural group of three tunnel construction workers adorns the pavilion of the Elektroavodskaya metro station, opened in 1944.

## 6) Elektroavod plant

21 Elektroavodskaya Ulitsa

An enormous electric light bulb factory, Elektroavod was built in 1915 to unite several electromechanical workshops. The idea to build it in the form of a gothic castle (visible in the main entrance) was not realized completely because of the austerity that followed the Russian Civil War. Launched in 1925, the plant became a leader in the Soviet electrical industry. After production ceased in 2008, the facilities were turned into art galleries and studios.



SAGAH / INSTAGRAM



Sagah is the long-awaited follow-up to Crabs are Coming, a fixture on the Moscow hipster circuit.

## Sagah: Cutting a Long Story Short

By **Andrei Muchnik** [a.muchnik@imedia.ru](mailto:a.muchnik@imedia.ru)

*Eastern flavors are served up in a refreshingly simple setting at this new restaurant*

**W**hen the popular restaurant Crabs are Coming moved to the trendy Danilovsky Market, the space stayed boarded up for several months.

That space is now home to Sagah, a new restaurant belonging to the same owners, Maria Maximenko and Kseniya Alexeyeva.

There's nothing about Sagah that says "Moscow" or "Russia"—you could just as easily be in Brooklyn. The whitewashed space that greets the diner is an antidote to the dark lofts that have become standard interior design for Moscow bars and cafes of late.

But the minimalist decor, wooden ceiling and brick walls will be familiar to those who were regulars at Crabs are Coming. These elements play well with the furniture, which hints at the 1970s.

The restaurant boasts a long communal table that can accommodate up to 25 guests.

Potted plants inspire a distinctly homely ambience. A cactus stands outside the entrance door, next to the "smokers" bench.

But enough about the design, let's talk about food. The menu has been developed jointly by the owners and chef Alexander Chernov, who used to work with celebrity chef Anatoly Komm. The cuisine at Sagah resists easy classification, but there are certain Middle Eastern influences, as well as elements of Indian and East Asian cooking.

The drinks menu has been crafted by Denis Kryazhev, who works with one of Moscow's most prominent restaurateurs, Alexander Dellos. This is not the first time Kryazhev has collaborated with Sagah's owners—he also worked on their basement bar Drink Your Seoul, located downstairs from Crabs are Coming.

The starters include several types of Indian chutneys with lentil and rice chips (320

rubles/\$5.40 each). There's also a set of appetizers including pesto, harissa, and olive tapenade (390 rubles). They come with homemade pitas.

All of the seafood comes from the Russian Far East. Try the meaty crab legs, served with lemon risotto (890 rubles). The scallops with nori seaweed and garlic shoots (650 rubles) are also well worth investigating.

Sagah uses a charcoal grill for some of its dishes—the grilled lettuce with mint sauce and Dijon mustard (350 rubles) still retained a pleasant smoky smell when it arrived.

Also recommended are the baked root vegetables in sour cream sauce. The colors and textures of beet, carrot, sweet potato and parsnip mix in the dish to create an unforgettable palate (590 rubles).

Sagah offers some rare teas, like green tea combined with brown rice (250 rubles) or hojicha—a special type of roasted green tea

(280 rubles). The desserts are just as diverse as the main menu—try the sea buckthorn mousse, cheesecake with walnuts or Indian ice-cream, all for 300 rubles.

A breakfast menu is available here until 2 p.m. on weekdays and until 4 p.m. on weekends. You can get eggs with goat cheese and portobello mushrooms or with halloumi and vegetables for 400 rubles. The eggs can be scrambled, poached or sunny-side up.

This new addition to Moscow's restaurant scene may not have a particularly elaborate design or exotic dishes, but it does provide good, no-nonsense food without the pomp.

If Sagah were a fashion trend, it would certainly be normcore. **TM**

**+7 999 838 0469**

[facebook.com/sagahmoscow](https://facebook.com/sagahmoscow)  
9 Kalashny Pereulok  
Metro Tverskaya, Arbatskaya

### NEWS & OPENINGS



NOVIKOVGROUP.RU

#### **Snatch** Jazz in a factory

Moscow's #1 restaurateur Arkady Novikov has opened this new restaurant at the Tryokhgornaya Manufaktura, a factory-turned-creative cluster. There's a wide selection of wine and whiskey, as well as seven different steaks (from 650 rubles/\$11). Snatch is supposed to have the ambience of early 20th-century U.S. and UK jazz clubs and there will be jazz concerts from Thursday through Sunday.

**+7 (495) 120 1133**

[novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/snatch](http://novikovgroup.ru/restaurants/snatch)  
15 Ulitsa Rochdelskaya, Bldg. 30  
Metro 1905 Goda



VDNH.RU

#### **Stage on Water** Jazz at the Ostankino Estate

VDNKh Park's Green Theater opens a new summer stage next week – "Stage on Water." Located by the Garden Pond on the Ostankino Estate, it will host about 40 events, including jazz, rock and classical music concerts, as well as opera and ballet performances and readings by prominent writers. German electronic artist Haushka and contemporary classical composer Kirill Richter are already confirmed.

**+7 (495) 544 3400**

[vdmh.ru/water-theatre](http://vdmh.ru/water-theatre)  
7A Ulitsa 1-ya Ostankinskaya  
Metro VDNKh



UGLECHYE POLYE / FACEBOOK

#### **Uglechye Polye** Fresh produce from Uglich

A new organic produce store has opened near Patriarch's Ponds. A food company based in Uglich (Yaroslavl region), Uglechye Polye has teamed up with Ginza Project to open the shop. Various dairy products are available, including cheese, curd and Russian milk drinks. You can also pick up meat cuts and even organic detergents and cosmetics. All the fresh produce is grown in accordance with organic farming rules.

**+7 (495) 727 0847**

[facebook.com/ouglechepole](https://facebook.com/ouglechepole)  
5 Tryokhprudny Pereulok  
Metro Tverskaya, Mayakovskaya



BARRIQUE / FACEBOOK

#### **Café Barrique** Wine just off Tverskaya

Café Barrique is a new wine bar in one of the lanes around Tverskaya. "Barrique" is a term for a 200-liter oak barrel used in winemaking. There are two rooms, as well as a patio in the inner courtyard. More than 150 wines are on the menu, from 360 to 650 rubles (\$6-11) per glass. Bottles start at 1,450 rubles. As for food, there's pasta (from 350 rubles) and appetizers, like duck prosciutto (290 rubles).

**+7 (495) 995 1170**

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10/2 Blagoveshchensky Pereulok  
Metro Mayakovskaya

# Up Until Dawn: Make the Most of White Nights in St. Petersburg

## Tour the City by Bike ↓

### Cover half the city in one night

Since 1996 Peter Kozyrev has run Peterswalk, providing budget-conscious travelers with innovative walking tours of the northern capital. One of the hits of the Peterswalk summer program is the White Night Bike Tour, which sets off at 10:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. It takes in most of the main sights of the city center, including Palace Square, the Admiralty, the Bronze Horseman, the Field of Mars and the Church on Spilled Blood. Taking this 3.5-hour bike trip will allow you to see many areas that wouldn't fit into a single walking tour. Cruise around the embankments and historical quarters of Vasilevsky Island, watch the bridges over the Neva River open and enjoy the views of the city from a new angle at an unusual hour. The tour costs 2,000 rubles (\$33.50) per person including bike rental. +7 (812) 943 1229

peterswalk.com

Assembly point: 2 Moshkov Pereulok, inside the courtyard of Taiga Space.

10:30 p.m., Tues-Thur

Metro Admiralteiskaya, Nevsky Prospekt



PETERS WALK

## Camp Out by Lake Ladoga →

### White nights in the wilderness

For adventurous souls, a weekend out in the forest camping and hiking is an ideal way to get a taste of the ethereal beauty of northern Russia during the White Nights. You don't have to go far to reach pristine pine forests and lakes. The town of Priozersk, 2.5 hours north of St. Petersburg by suburban train, is located within hiking distance of Lake Ladoga, with forest trails along the shoreline. There are lots of good camping spots among the trees. If you don't fancy hiking 8-10 kilometers through the forest from town, take a taxi to the river port and walk southeast to Ladoga. Watching the luminous sky across the horizon with this vast lake from beside a campfire is an unforgettable experience. Take a tent, supplies, a map, a fully-charged cell phone and a power pack – GPS is handy. Trains to Priozersk run frequently from St. Petersburg's Finlyandsky Railway Station.



PIXABAY

*It's midsummer, which means it's the perfect time of year to head north to Russia's former imperial capital and experience its White Nights. Here are some ideas for sleepless nights in and around the city on the Neva.*

## Roof Music Fest →

### Summer rhythms above the city

One of the highlights of the White Nights season is the huge variety of cultural events on offer. A relative newcomer, Roof Music Fest is one of the most anticipated entries on the city's summer calendar. The festival, which offers indie, jazz and classical concerts, unites a string of different venues with one thing in common – a rooftop terrace. Highlights of this year's program include Georgian indie folk band Mgzavrebi on July 17, local favorite Billy's Band on July 21, as well as Belarusian pop-rock trio Iowa on Aug. 4. Ex 5'nizza singer Andrey Zaporozhets will appear with his new group Sunsay on July 6.

Various locations  
roofmusicgroup.ru



ALASTAIR GILL

## Up on the Roof →

### Step from building to building

Exploring the roofs of St. Petersburg has been a cult summer activity for as long as anybody can remember. Many rooftops offer incredible views of the city's canals and rivers, and are popular spots for impromptu gatherings or romantic evenings with a bottle of wine. While gaining access to roofs was once easy, most lofts are now locked, meaning you need insider knowledge (or luck) these days. Nebanalny Peterburg (Unbanal Petersburg) offers several nocturnal rooftop excursions, including options to watch the raising of the bridges. The company also offers a daytime tour in English. Bring comfortable shoes.

unbanalpeter.ru/catalog/ekskursii-po-krysham



NEBANALNY PETERBURG

## St. Isaac's Colonnade ↓

### Get a bird's-eye view all night long

The debate over whether or not St. Petersburg's largest cathedral should be handed back to the Orthodox Church and reconsecrated is a hot topic, but tourists don't mind either way – the view from the cathedral's colonnade is stunning. Until Aug. 20 this viewpoint is open all night, allowing visitors a chance to catch stunning aerial views of the city's avenues, parks and waterways during the magical twilight that descends in the summer period. Open from 10:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m.; tickets cost 400 rubles (\$6.70).

eng.cathedral.ru

4 Isaakiyevskaya Ploshchad

Metro Admiralteiskaya



CATHEDRAL.RU

## Scarlet Sails

### Who needs a prom when you've got this?

The most spectacular event of St. Petersburg's White Nights is "Aliye Parusa" (Scarlet Sails). Officially a celebration for school leavers, the event grew into a celebration for the whole city, and attracts huge numbers, often over 2 million. After concerts on Palace Square, spectators cram the embankments for watershows on the Neva River before the bridges go up. The culmination of the evening is the appearance of a tall ship with red sails, which moves down the Neva as fireworks explode overhead. Russian pop-rock band Mumiy Troll headlines this year's Palace Square program, which kicks off at 20:00. Turn up several hours early if you want to get a good spot by the river to see the show.

Palace Square, central embankments



ROOF MUSIC FEST

## Watch the Raising of the Bridges →

### Join the throngs by the river

There are some things in this city of stone and water that never go out of fashion, and one of them is watching the drawbridges go up over the Neva River. The most popular spots are along Admiralteiskaya Naberezhnaya and Dvortsovaya Naberezhnaya, which offer the best views of the Palace and Trinity bridges going up. There's usually a carnival atmosphere, with bands playing nearby, food and drink stalls and party boats going up and down the river. Download the Most Have app to keep tabs on opening and closing times, and make sure you don't get stuck on the wrong side of the river or it could be a long night!

razvodka-mostov.ru



MOSTOTREST-SPB.RU

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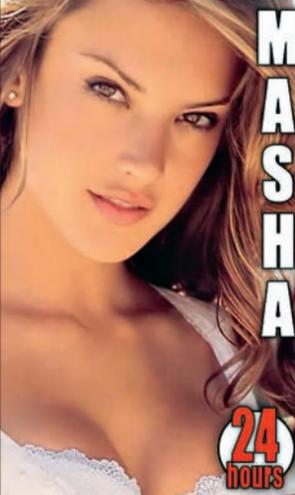
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# 16 What's On 22.06—28.06

## 22.06

**Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography**  
**North Korea: (Im)-possible to See**  
 Uncensored photos taken by an international team capture life in the closed state.  
 +7 (495) 228 9878  
 lumiere.ru  
 3 Bolotnaya  
 Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 1  
 M. Polyanka

## 23.06

**Cinema Moskva**  
**Anthropoid**  
 Set during WWII, this British thriller follows an assassination plot against the SS officer Reinhard Heydrich, the "Butcher of Prague," by two Czech resistance agents.  
 +7 (495) 642 4141  
 cinema.moscow  
 2 Ulitsa Okhotny Ryad  
 M. Teatralnaya

## 24.06

**Muzeon**  
**Ahmad Tea Music Festival**  
 One-day music festival with UK acts. Headlined by Richard Ashcroft (ex-The Verve frontman), plus Catfish and the Bottlemen, and Seafret.  
 +7 (499) 653 9065  
 ahmadteafest.ru  
 2 Ulitsa Krymsky Val  
 M. Oktyabrskaya

## 24.06

**Tsaritsyno**  
**Bosco Fresh Fest**  
 The first part of this two-day extravaganza on the Tsaritsyno Estate features Austrian DJ Parov Stelar, UK electronic group Morcheeba and UK rapper Roots Manuva.  
 +7 (499) 725 7287  
 boscofreshfest17.com  
 1 Dol'skaya Ulitsa  
 M. Tsaritsyno

## 25.06

**Tsaritsyno**  
**Bosco Fresh Fest**  
 English singer-songwriter John Newman headlines the second day of this music festival. Also appearing are UK musician SOHN and indie band The Boxer Rebellion.  
 +7 (499) 725 7287  
 boscofreshfest17.com  
 1 Dol'skaya Ulitsa  
 M. Tsaritsyno

## 25.06

**Sheremetyevo Airport**  
**Cirque du Soleil**  
 The world-famous Canadian company will perform a free preview from its show Totem, to be staged in Sochi from July 1-30.  
 5:45-6:45 p.m.  
 +7 (495) 280 1973  
 National Departures, Terminal D  
 Sheremetyevo Airport

## 27.06

**Gogol Center**  
**M(u)chenik**  
 Kirill Serebrennikov's production of Marius von Mayenburg's dark play "Martyr," which served as the basis for his film "The Student," which won an award at Cannes.  
 +7 (499) 262 9214  
 gogolcenter.com  
 8 Ulitsa Kazakova  
 M. Kurskaya

## Venetian Finds: Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese at the Pushkin Museum

By **Maria Michela D'Alessandro** artsreporter@imedia.ru

It is Venice in the 16th century, at the height of the Renaissance. As the art of the period witnesses the flowering of a golden age, three of the Adriatic republic's greatest painters are forging successful careers, producing canvases that will still be admired with wonder almost 500 years later.

These masters were the world-famous Venetian painters Titian Vecellio, Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese, artists whose names have long since become immortalized. In the past these artists have often been viewed as rivals, competing for a narrow coterie of wealthy Venetian clients.

Now their work has been brought together in Moscow at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts for a large-scale summer exhibition that questions these assumptions and attempts to present their artistic careers in a different light.

The project, titled "Renaissance Venice: Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese. From the Italian and Russian collections," is an opportunity to see 23 masterpieces by the three artists in one place. The paintings belong to the collections of both Italian and Russian museums, including the Pushkin Museum and the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

"It was not possible to show an exact number of paintings by each artist," the exhibition's Italian curator Thomas Dalla Costa told *The Moscow Times*. He explained that some of the works are being exhibited in Moscow for the first time, while others have never left Italian soil due to concerns over their preservation.



Tintoretto's painting is distinguished by its dramatic energy and bold use of color.

The main exhibition hall is dominated by Titian's "Salome," painted in the mid-1520s when the Renaissance reached maturity. "Salome," which belongs to the collection of the Doria Pamphilj Gallery in Rome, is rarely seen outside Italy. Its poetry and brightness of color impress, even given the small scale of the painting, placed between two works that were commissioned to the Italian painters by private buyers, Veronese's "Mars and Venus" and Tintoretto's "Christ and the Adulteress."

Working alongside the Russian curator Viktoria Markhova, the custodian of the Pushkin Museum's Italian collection, Dalla Costa and Aikema also tried to show portraits by the three painters. These are on display in

the museum's main corridor.

In the open room behind the colonnade, the characteristics of Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese are clearly visible in their religious works. These are compositions made for private customers and large altarpieces, a type of painting revolutionized by Venetian artists in the 16th century. At this time, Venetian painting was also known for the originality of its interpretation of erotic scenes, and artists from the republic often tackled sensual subjects in their explorations of mythological themes. Several of these paintings have been selected by the curators for the exhibition.

The exhibition is being held with the assistance of the Italian Embassy in Moscow and Ambassador Cesare Maria Ragagnini, who stressed the importance of relations between the two countries.

"Since I arrived in Moscow, several exhibitions have been presented at the Pushkin Museum; for this one the embassy definitely went to an unusual effort, but I am sure the visitors will appreciate it," he said. **TMT**

demonstrable anymore, and we can now even state the opposite," he continues.

Since Venice was a small city and probably both Tintoretto and Veronese took inspiration from Titian, the founder of the Venetian school, it can sound reductive today to talk about a rivalry between the artists.

Art professor Bernard Aikema, the academic supervisor of the exhibition, says that the main idea of the exhibition is to select works exploring the three main characteristics of the artists and Venetian painting.

"This is the color, the drama and the innovation of the style," he explains.

Unlike other exhibitions, "Renaissance Venice" at the Pushkin Museum is not organized thematically: The artworks are instead arranged in such a way as to highlight the differences in style between the artists — proof enough that they were never true rivals. The relationship among these Venetian Renaissance masters is reflected in their different artistic language and style; nevertheless Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese were constantly observing and studying each other's work, allowing them to complement rather than oppose one another.

After the end of the Venetian Renaissance, the three masters played an important role in the formation of the European artistic culture, inspiring the masters of the 17th century, such as Rubens, Rembrandt, Velazquez.

For Dalla Costa, the idea came in 2009 when a similar exhibition named "Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, rivals in Renaissance Venice," was running in Paris and Boston.

That exhibition, which presented the three artists as rivals, gave Dalla Costa the idea for the current show. "The rivalry is not