

expanse



the brief statement for the russian negation

We are being called by the expanse again. In the air there is spilt intrasound emitted by the moving smoothly laminating horizons. And the stuff that seems to be near demands assuring all the time. If you look into a telescope of art holding it to your eyes with the side of magnifying lenses, you can discover in the half-open pause the depth of your own position. Focusing on the expanse gives a possibility of a parallel vision and allows to see not only the stereoscopic picture of what is near you but also to open your eyes to your vision itself. A word can be heard properly only when it is uttered quietly. Only at the edge of your vision can you discern significant values. “The further the larger” – this is the law of perspective that has turned back to look at itself. Only when pierced with our detached glances, our prolonged shapeless space pulls itself together.

“Beautiful Far-away-ness, don’t you be cruel to me”

Expanse as a synonym of “Siberia”

(Russian Identity)

Contemplating over historic lot of the endless Russian spreading it is worth while noticing the utopian motivation of the first explorers of Siberian wilderness who were looking for the mythical country called Belovodie and a space for internal freedom and who in passing performed diffuse expansion of Russia to the east. The energy of aspiration is a characteristic property of the initial Siberian identity. Although long before the Russian came to Siberia there had been in existence the phenomenon of “people with a long will”, who realized that memorable passionarity of Chingiz Khan’s.

At the same time, over the last centuries in Russia there has accumulated a negative semantics of Siberian “far-away-ness” in terms of forcible removal of people from the “mainland” social life to the exile, to the penal servitude.

Nowadays consciousness and creative compensation for geographical, historical and psychological remoteness of Siberia from generally accepted Russian and world’s cultural centers must be assumed as a basis of “the stretching of Russia” project which implies its cultural territorialisation far away. Broadening the horizon of Russian self-identity till “world limits”, Siberian “traction” is able to give an impulse of life-inspiring identity of a super-territory stretching between the “Far” East and the “near” West.

Expanse as a conceptual perspective (the universal problem sphere)

The theme of expanse is saturated with significant meaningful contexts. Moreover, as Merleau-Ponty put it: "Stretching and thinking are outer and inner faces". The notion of *expanse* implies a fundamental hold-out area of conscience because the phenomenon of broadness and expanse appears only with the perception of depth.

Arranging the Biennale's conceptual resource, we can be guided by the following motives from which separate projects, if not rubrics of exposition and discussion, are formed:

1. The aura of expanse.

Nearness of the world. The evaporation of expanse as somewhat choppy horizon, the chopiness being between us.

The existential mechanics of space has a built-in spring of distance that sets potential tension of its field of values. From Heidegger's point of view a Thing is constituted by the *nearness* of the world. "Formation a Thing is drawing the world nearer" and "only something that is lightened by the world will become a Thing one day". His contemporary Walter Benjamin associates genuineness with *expanse*: reasoning from "a here-and-now work of art, that is from the unique environment in which it is situated, ... the aura can be defined as a unique perception of expanse, however close the object could be". There seems to be a discrepancy, but actually both thinkers relate the nature of aural field of a thing or a material value to the special phenomenon of a distance. A thing is attributed with a function of "drawing the expanse closer".

2. Horizontal-wise expanse.

Depth measurement. Braking the penetrability of the world. The return of expanse – the intensification of achievement. Space stretching as a creative task. Russian roads. Mythical and poetical energy of the way charged with a faraway target. A hero's movement experience.

With the world's penetrability and transparency growing, aural distance shrinks. The world space compression is in the direct relation with increase in the speed of physical distance coverage, the distance between places. "Nowadays, in the time of globalization, when the world time pressure is growing ... the risk for an event to disappear is becoming the sense of our history" (Paul Virilio). In this context culture as one of real resistance forces in contrast to super-high-speed thoroughfares of global civilization should form some paths of super-low-speed movement. Cultural values as multi-dimensional sense structures hamper the fast unifying consumption. From this it is not far to the paradoxical cultural strategy of the world's transparency smothering, the revision of its openness – to the call to "close the world a little".

3. Memory expanse.

Time-wave length. The presence of expanse here and now. "The future is here".

"... it is one of the most joyful and mournful circumstances of our life that a human being actually lives not in a postponed future or past. He is featured on all these waves-levels at once and at the same time. And he who is tuned up to experience what is happening here and now in its entirety, reaches this reality of strategic vision and comprehension. It is not he who is looking into the boundless expanse, into farther infinite future, but he who feels, so to speak, its presence in this rhythmical pattern. In harmonic ratios of these masses, in the architectonics of the present". (Oleg Guenisaretsky)

4. Vertical-wise expanse.

Height measurement. Outer-space probing. A look up in the heaven.

As Rilke stated: "Russian land borders on God".

"Sense synthesized in Russia ... is too big, too high for a human being". (Xenia Golubovich)

5. Faraway values.

Moving something away to make it larger.

A well-known example of a scope phenomenon is the following: the closer the Moon to the horizon the bigger it is.

“Face to face, one cannot see the face, The large can be seen from a distance” (Esenin).

6. The dictionary of expanse.

Anthology of spacial narrative. “Transparent motives of the Russian language of the world pattern”. Travel stories.

“Russians are sort of infinitely far away from their own words, they are not close to their meanings, they are not in their homes. And Russia itself is far in respect of Russians, like a dream that is never to come true...” “A Russian, being a hero of its national ethics and optics, demands to absolutely vent himself, craving to come to “a no-return point” in his swing”. (Xenia Golubovich)

Thus, the given “Siberian” Biennale is positioned as the expanse’s creative experience supplier, as a distant reflexivity station, as a observatory for inculcation in the visitors long-sightedness and the sense of time.

The project format of the Biennale

While developing strategic vector of artistic research of Siberia the project participants are proposed to focus on such an essential property of our vast homeland as *distance* and closely connected with it abilities to be farsighted and to foresee.

The Krasnoyarsk Biennale is aimed to research the relations of land and territory, the target cultural result being a creative image of territory that should have multiple meanings and motivate a person’s self-identity in space.

The organizational structure of the VIII-th project to a considerable degree continues to be formed with expeditionary participation of representatives of visual art and region-study areas. The common purpose is - by means of contemporary art and museum-communicational practices - to bring out “the world dimension”, “the ferment of expanse” in memorable objects and local places.

The Biennale project offers to arrange a highlight of a meeting of thinking art and region-study in “points of increase” and on “cultural paths” of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, based on recently accepted regional strategy of creativity growth in culture. Founding the precedent of creative communication (determined in foreign practice as “Artist in residence”), we believe that an artist in residence can offer a different “perpendicular” view of cultural phenomena of landscape and subject-matter of museum area and place in which it aspires to be. The Biennale curator invites authors ready to set off for “a faraway humanitarian excursion” – a journey to some definite Siberian places and in co-operation with the local museum to experiment on artistic-symbolical “restoration of the perpendicular of expanse”.

Along with artists who are directly engaged with Siberian expanse, there is being organized an additional group of authors and their works that participate in “from outside” project “scanning” a rippled horizon from a distance.

Apart from external and internal interactions with definite Russian latitudes and longitudes, cases of artistic “converting” of distance in other cultural-landscape contexts are also welcomed to the exposition context.

Visionnaire experiences, lengths of soul stretching, distance-measuring systems and far-sighted objects are expected as project results. As well as optical devices of expanse and observatories.

Hence the common united task of the curator and authors is to materialize the space of a crossroad of non-uniformly directed views. Such “a net of far-sightedness” should be woven and cast over interior and exterior areas of the Krasnoyarsk Museum Center at Strelka.

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