

Architectural Study in Kiev, Ukraine

In 1982, the architectural historian Titus Hewryk presented an exhibition called "The Lost Architecture of Kiev" at the Ukrainian Museum in New York. The exhibition featured photos of 30 architectural sites, mostly religious, that were destroyed between 1920 and 1941 according to Stalin's policy of obliterating religious and cultural monuments. The book illustrates the impact of destructive Soviet policies on Kiev's architectural landmarks by accentuating the void left by this "lost" architecture. The exhibition catalogue includes archival photos of the structures as they looked in the early part of the 20th century. Accompanying texts describe the history of each monument's transformation and its eventual destruction. Some texts relate what has been built on the site after demolition, but there are no photos of what stands there today.

Yet we cannot only look at the history of Ukrainian architecture in the negative. New structures were built to replace those that disappeared, and their presence is equally important in illustrating how the Soviet ideology affected the way Kievans think about their city. In the spirit of recent books pairing historic photographs with contemporary views of the same site (i.e., John Huddleston, *Killing Ground: Photographs of the Civil War and the Changing American Landscape*, 2003; Douglas Levere, *New York Changing*, 2004), I wish to produce a companion volume to *The Lost Architecture of Kiev*, showing the contemporary scenes that have replaced the architectural landmarks on the sites Hewryk researched. The photographic documentation will be supported by historical research on the new buildings, from text derived from interviews and conversations with Kievan citizens at the sites, and from my own critical observations based on my background in architectural history and theory and Ukrainian history and culture.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

As the capital of a country that has been trying to establish its position in the world since declaring independence 14 years ago, Kiev is a city in flux. Visitors to the city regularly return with news of rampant new construction. In late 2004, Viktor Yushchenko was elected president of Ukraine with promises to transform the nation's political and social trends to align Ukraine more closely with the West. I plan to explore how these shifts in attitude will begin to manifest themselves in the built environment. This book will use photographs and writing to catalogue this transitional moment of Kiev in 2005, as it works to reconcile its long, rich history, more recent Soviet past, and aspirations toward Westernization:

By examining the present, my project provides a foundation from which to speculate about the future. What stands now on the sites of the "lost" landmarks destroyed in the 1920s and 1930s? The "found" architecture of Kiev reveals more about the city's relationship to its history and the attitudes of its policymakers toward shaping its future architectural character. Will Kievans focus on restoring the city's historic pre-Soviet heritage; will they preserve or dismantle defunct Soviet monuments; will they follow Western models for urban development in tandem with political ideological shifts?

Through the process of studying and documenting the contemporary sites, I will begin to understand their role in the greater fabric of the city of Kiev.

Supplementing my observations with historical research will open insights into the social implications of the new construction. As a collection of 30 distinct parts of the city, the book will illustrate the city's recent architectural heritage and serve as a body through which to explore the shaping forces of economics, government policy, and cultural trends.

ACTIVITIES

The project starts with the existing documentation in Titus Hewryk's *The Lost Architecture of Kiev*. I have arranged to view his archive of material before going to Ukraine. These photographs, drawings, maps, and texts will serve as a foundation for my further research. In Kiev, my first task will be to identify and investigate the sites in Hewryk's book, discerning their relationship to each other and to the city as a whole. After cataloguing the present state of each site, I will tally how many monuments have been restored, what kinds of buildings have been built to replace the demolished religious landmarks, and which sites remain empty. I will also look for traces of what stood there before, such as a commemorative plaque or formal historical reference in the design of the new building. My documentation is not limited to these 30 sites. I will include other prominent structures that are today's architectural landmarks of Kiev. Photographing each site over a period of months, I will track any changes or renovations that take place.

I am also interested in how the sites are populated. Who visits them? What purpose do the buildings serve? What is the demographic of the visitors - old, young, poor, wealthy, which political affiliation? I will talk to visitors, ask them about their memories of the site, find out how many people are aware of the landmarks that once stood on the premises, inquire how they feel about the contemporary architecture. The recent shift in the Ukrainian government toward democratic ideals and the greater sense of security among the general population will make people more open about their views and toward talking to foreigners than six or 12 months ago.

I am fluent in Ukrainian, but plan to enroll in Russian language courses to aid me in research and in general communication, as Kiev is a bilingual city. To augment my on-site observations, I will contact architectural historians and scholars in Kiev to learn more about the history of these sites. I will consult the archives of the National

Institute of Fine Arts and Architecture to research articles about the architectural transformations that occurred on these sites since the 1940s. I have contacted Larysa Skoryk, architect and head of the architecture department at the National Institute of Fine Arts and Architecture, for assistance in navigating Kiev's somewhat insular network of architects. To see the most recent proposals by architects and developers for shaping of the city, I plan to attend the weekly meetings of the city Architectural Design Review Board.

As I photograph and become better acquainted with the sites, I will be thinking about the layout and organization of the final book. Joseph Sywenkyj, a professional photographer whose work has been published in the *New Yorker*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and other international publications, will critique my work and assist in the selection of final images. I will produce a copy of the book myself to show to potential publishers, such as the Ukrainian Museum in New York (who published *The Lost Architecture of Kiev*) and the Shevchenko Scientific Society (also with a chapter in New York).

NECESSITY TO TRAVEL ABROAD and APPROPRIATENESS OF ONE YEAR

Traveling to Kiev is imperative to my project, to understand the physical space of the 30 sites enumerated in Hewryk's book. I will see how the chosen sites relate to each other within the greater fabric of the city and will identify additional architectural monuments to add to my documentation of the greater architectural panorama. A year in Kiev gives me ample time to get to know the places that I am documenting and to track any architectural changes and improvements. Photographing over the course of a year, I will begin to internalize the atmosphere of the city and observe details in the construction and use of the space that reflect the culture of the city. I will have the opportunity to talk to visitors, meet with local scholars, and research

the history of the structures through the university archives. Within the year I will produce many photographs and written drafts, show them to critics, and produce a thoughtful final product.

PREPARATION FOR TRAVELING ABROAD

I toured to Ukraine in 1997, and now wish to reexamine Kiev from an architectural point of view. As a U.S. citizen, I need a multiple-entry visa to spend one year in Ukraine, which can be obtained through the Ukrainian embassy in New York for \$165.00, one month prior to departure. I have many contacts in the New York Ukrainian community who travel back and forth to Kiev and can help me find lodging there.

In preparation for carrying out my proposed project, I have contacted Kievan architect Larysa Skoryk, who will advise my historical research and serve as liaisons to the Kiev architectural community, which is otherwise wary of outsiders. Titus Hewryk, author of *The Lost Architecture of Kiev*, will introduce me to the archive of material he collected and to his Ukrainian architectural colleagues. I have also been researching the spatial transition of former Soviet cities to their present states, watching Mike Lewis and Laura Mulvey's *Disgraced Monuments*, reading Svetlana Boym's "Nostalgia, Moscow Style" (*Harvard Design Magazine*, Winter/Spring 2001), and studying the satiric art of the Russian-American artist team Komar and Melamid (*Monumental Propaganda*, exhibition sponsored by Independent Curators Inc., 1995).

As someone who grew up immersed in Ukrainian culture, I am familiar with diaspora attitudes of overwhelming patriotism toward the "Fatherland," devotion to the Greek Orthodox faith that prevails across the country, and extreme bitterness toward the oppressive Soviet state. Over 13 years of Ukrainian Saturday school and

scouts I studied Ukrainian history, literature, grammar, and culture. I speak, read, and write Ukrainian fluently; I have a proficient understanding of Russian, but will continue to study it formally to increase my research capabilities.

I spent a summer in the Czech Republic in 2001, after my third year at Barnard College. There I enjoyed navigating a new Eastern European culture, learning the language and customs, and becoming familiar with the capital city of Prague. I spent two months studying theater and architecture by attending site-specific theater workshops and interning at the Czech Theater Institute in preparation for the Prague Quadrennial, an international exhibition of theater architecture. The trip was funded by the Barnard Centennial Scholars program, which provides a select group of students with a \$4000 grant to pursue an independent project. I documented my trip through photographs and writing which I later compiled into an evening of travel stories presented by me in a picture-strewn room designed to evoke memories of past journeys.

Architectural photography has always been an interest of mine. I took a course in 35mm SLR photography and darkroom development while in college. Every time I travel, I take many photos of the urban landscape. I plan to consult with professional photographer Joseph Sywenkyj in Kiev for feedback on my work as the project develops.

RELATIONSHIP TO CAREER GOALS

I majored in architecture at Barnard, studying design, history, and theory. In seminars on architectural history and criticism, I learned to read buildings with a critical eye and, through writing, to relate them both aesthetically and functionally to the greater society of which they are a part. I have continued writing about architecture and published a few short pieces in *Log*, a journal of writing on

architecture and the contemporary city edited by Cynthia Davidson, the internationally renowned architectural critic who was my supervisor at Eisenman Architects.

For two years after graduation (2002-2004), I worked in the publications department of Eisenman Architects, selecting images of Eisenman's projects for publication in international journals, for books, for exhibitions. I learned how to tell a story through images and about all aspects of book production, from conceptualizing and collecting material, to image selection and editing, to layout and production. In addition to working on publications and brochures at EA, I created a portfolio-book of my architectural work from college, using design skills that I further developed after graduation.

My eventual goal is to write about architecture and space and how it both shapes and reflects the thinking of the people and societies who inhabit it. Studying the built landscape of Kiev through photographs and historic research would give me the opportunity to further train my critical eye. Over time in Kiev I will establish contacts with Ukrainian architects, architectural historians, writers, and photographers who will form an invaluable network for future architectural study and critical work in the region. After my year abroad, I plan to enter a Master's program in architectural history where I can pursue my interests in greater depth and hone my critical writing skills.

MERIT OF PROJECT

With the election of Viktor Yushchenko as president, Ukraine is on the cusp of a new political, social, and cultural era. This transformative energy is visible in the crowds of protesters who demonstrated against election fraud and in the many new building projects going on in the city. The time for mourning all that Ukraine has lost

is passing. I wish to document what Ukraine is constructing - on the sites identified by Hewryk and in other areas of Kiev. Viewed next to Hewryk's book, it will provide an alternative position for analyzing Soviet architectural policy, a visual contrast between Kiev of the 20th century and that of the 21st.

The project also reflects the change in attitude from a generation that longs to preserve the past and one that looks to the future. I plan to present photographs that are not merely descriptive images of architectural landmarks, but that give a sense of the atmosphere of the sites and convey how they make up the city fabric as a whole. I will design the book so that images are interspersed with writing, giving an account of the visual landscape of Kiev that is supported by historical background, reactions from visitors, and my own observations.