

To look at the history of late socialism beyond the limitations of totalitarian and neo-totalitarian approaches, one has to transcend and reconceptualize the simplistic model of “Homo Sovieticus” and the accompanying dichotomous modes of social space organization (private vs official, kitchen vs public places), Soviet politics (leadership/regime vs people/masses, high vs low classes, “them” vs “us”), and ideological participation (cynicism vs sincerity, official vs unofficial language/song/text). Despite substantial criticism (Yurchak), those dichotomies are still powerful. However, the complexity of late Soviet experience with its volatile, contingent, situational ideological commitment can’t be reduced to doublethink and doublespeak.

The aim of the workshop is to take a more complex approach to late Soviet rural and urban transformations by focussing on the constitutive functions of things and objects in the fabric of late Soviet society: the ways people attach specific symbolic meanings to objects in a process of “singularization of objects” (Kopytoff), the modes of rearrangement and replacement of objects in the course of changing “regimes of value” (Appadurai), and the configurations by which vibrant and dynamic materiality (Bennett) shapes relations and communities while reorganizing spaces and narratives (Butler/Athanasidou).

Contributions to the workshop will reflect on Soviet citizens’ experiences and practices and their entanglement with expert visions and discourses on object affordances and their structural, psychological, and social effects.

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Organizer

Prof. Dr. Ekaterina Emeliantseva (U of Zurich)

East European History, Department of History
University of Zurich

Conference assistance
Andrea Keller

Research project "Late Soviet Village"
<https://latesovietvillage.com>

Venue

University of Zurich, Room SOE-E-8
Schönberggasse 11, 8001 Zurich



Further Information

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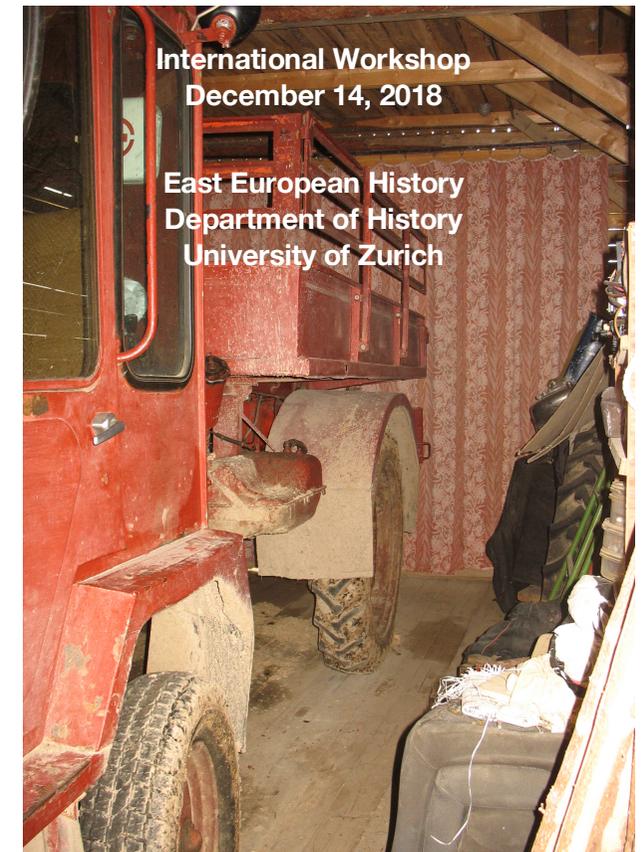
Guest auditors are kindly requested to register in advance with Andrea Keller: andrea.keller2@uzh.ch.



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

LATE SOVIET MATERIAL CULTURE

Things and Objects between
“Rural” and “Urban”



International Workshop
December 14, 2018

East European History
Department of History
University of Zurich

Friday, December 14, 2018

10.15–10.30

Introduction

Ekaterina Emeliantseva Koller (U of Zurich)

10.30–12.30

Panel I: Materialism(s)

Chair: Anna Sokolova (U of Zurich)

- Serguei A. Oushakine (Princeton U)
Veshchism: What did we know about New Materialism before it became fashionable?
- Alexey Golubev (U of Houston)
Elemental Materialism in Soviet Culture and Society

Comment: Craig Campbell (U of Texas at Austin)

12.30-14.00 Lunch break

14.00-16.00

Panel II: Things and Objects

Chair: Tatiana Voronina (U of Zurich)

- Yulia Karpova (U of Aarhus/Budapest)
"Stabilizing objects": developing product design guidelines for Soviet North-Western countryside, 1973-1975
- Alyona Sokolnikova (Moscow Design Museum/ Stuttgart)
A Secret Life of Things: experimental concepts&objects of the late Soviet design.

Comment: Ekaterina Emeliantseva Koller (U of Zurich)

16:00-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-18:30

Panel III: Nature and Landscapes

Chair: Ekaterina Emeliantseva Koller (U of Zurich)

- Anna Sokolova (U of Zurich)
Urbanizing the woods: timber industry settlements in late Soviet Karelia
- Tyler Adkins (Princeton University)
Talkan in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: The History of the Senses and the Senses of History in Altai Republic, Siberia.
- Craig Campbell (U of Texas at Austin):
Communist Cement: Theses on late Soviet Industrialism and the Siberian Pastoral

Comment: Alexey Golubev (U of Houston)

Concluding discussion

19:30 Dinner