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Political Economy of the Contemporary Art Market in Russia, 1990–2022*

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the late perestroika period, when the socialist realist tradition lost its official status and support from the state, the Russian contemporary art scene attempted to follow common international tendencies. Like other aspects of post-Soviet cultural life, it underwent a process of marketisation when individual artistic creativity and an artist's reputation acquired its economic value. However, this process was not straightforward; only a handful of artists were able to enter the high-end luxury art market with its own distribution channels and demand patterns. Like in other countries, the process of creation of economic value in the Russian contemporary art market represents a special case of business activity. It depends to a higher degree on artist branding, tastes, and networking as well as global and national trends in consumption. This makes investment in this type of art risky involving high transaction costs. Starting with the establishment of the first art galleries and emergence of the institution of art dealers in the late 1980s, the Russian contemporary art market and its actors have been to a great extent oriented towards importation and imitation of the key Western practices and institutional patterns.¹ Besides the above-mentioned galleries and art dealers, these include art fairs, auction houses, specialised museums and art curatorship, critics, academic and educational institutions, and commercial expertise.

In the early 1990s, there was a hope that the newly created galleries would connect potentially existing demand for contemporary art objects with artists. The private art gallery as an institution of remuneration of artistic talent puts a gallerist

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1 Valentin Diaconov, "Twenty Years Is Not Much Compared to Eternity: Galleries as Commissioners and Promoters of the Art of Young Russian Capitalism in the 1990s," in Kate Fowle and Ruth Addison, eds., *Access Moscow: The Art Life of a City Revealed, 1990–2000* (Moscow: Garage, 2016), pp. 62–67; Svetlana Kharchenkova, Nataliya Komarova, and Olav Velthuis, "Official Art Organizations in the Emerging Markets of China and Russia," in Olav Velthuis and Stefano Baia Curioni, eds., *Cosmopolitan Canvases: The Globalization of Markets for Contemporary Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 78–101.

at the centre of a dense network within a commercially underpinned system of artistic life making them a real market maker. A gallerist discovers and selects a number of talented artists who are connected to the gallery, and promotes the reputation of these artists through a network of art critics, dealers, museum curators, and directors. As a result, this reputation is transformed into increased value of art objects acquired by private and corporate collectors, and contemporary art museums alike.² This ideal model of the gallery system arose under the particular historic circumstances of 1950–70s' USA, where the presence of abundant financial resources and economic prosperity coincided with the leading role of US artists in the international art scene and inflow of European art dealers during the Second World War. The latter brought about and further developed its own sophisticated practices of marketisation and promotion of art objects. It was the activities of such gallerists as Leo Castelli, who was a pioneer in the field, that made contemporary art "contemporary", as we define it today, and truly global.³ As a part of the globalisation process, this model was subsequently transferred into different institutional and social environments, including continental Europe, Japan, and later even the BRIC countries.⁴

The formation of the Russian contemporary art market has not so far been a success story. Compared to other emerging markets, notably China, the institutional structure of the Russian market remained relatively weak throughout the 2000s and 2010s.⁵ Some significant art scenes, notably the Multimedia Art Museum, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Vinzavod Modern Art Centre, did emerge in Moscow during the last decades. However, the infrastructure of the contemporary art business remains relatively underdeveloped. It is mainly restricted to Moscow, with St Petersburg and other large million cities lagging behind. The demand for contemporary Russian art is still limited since the influence of a new generation of cosmopolitan private businessmen, who are the

2 Nataliya Komarova and Olav Velthuis, "Local Contexts as Activation Mechanisms of Market Development: Contemporary Art in Emerging Markets," *Consumption Markets & Culture* 21:1 (2018), pp. 1–21.

3 Philip Hook, *Rogues' Gallery: A History of Art and Its Dealers* (London: Profile Books, 2017).

4 Claire McAndrew, *Globalisation and the Art Market: Emerging Economies and the Art Trade in 2008* (Maastricht: European Fine Art Foundation, 2009); Iain Robertson, *A New Art from Emerging Markets* (Surrey: Lund Humphries, 2011); Andrés Solimano, *The Evolution of Contemporary Arts Markets: Aesthetics, Money and Turbulence* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021); Olav Velthuis and Stefano Baia Curioni, "Making Markets Global," in Velthuis and Curioni, *Cosmopolitan Canvases*, pp. 1–30.

5 Elise Herrala, *Art of Transition: The Field of Art in Post-Soviet Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022); Nataliya Komarova, "Ups and Downs of Art Commerce: Narratives of "Crisis" in the Contemporary Art Markets of Russia and India," *Theory and Society* 46 (2017), pp. 319–352; Nataliya Komarova, "Between the Market and Noncommercial Art Institutions: Early Career Strategies of Contemporary Artists in Emerging Art Scenes," *Poetics* 71 (2018), pp. 33–42; Komarova and Velthuis, "Local Contexts as Activation Mechanisms."

main buyers of such art in Russia, has been declining as a social stratum after the 2008–09 crisis. From the viewpoint of political economy, the lack of a large domestic art market and the initial reliance of art market actors on the nascent oligarchic class that lost political power in Putin's Russia can be identified as the main factors behind this failure. Hence, the ups and downs of the contemporary art market in Russia reflect particular stages of development of capitalism after the end of communism, from the systemic collapse of the 1990s, through the short-lived "prosperity" of the 2000s, and finally through stagnation of the economy and the rise of state capitalism at the expense of private comprador capitalism in the 2010s. The purpose of this article is therefore to discuss the main stages of the Russian contemporary art market in connection with the evolution of Russia's post-Soviet capitalism and how its subsequent political economic regimes affected the institutional setting for the marketisation of art. To achieve this purpose, the study is based on qualitative analysis of available published sources such as reports, interviews with art market professionals, memoirs, non-academic periodicals, exhibition catalogues, and social media resources including internal discussions between art market participants.⁶ In addition, I use four interviews that I collected during my field trips to Moscow. The qualitative analysis is based on conventional methods of source criticism.⁷

2. PREVIOUS LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALISATION

To begin with, it would be essential to problematise what contemporary art is in Russia and what kind of artistic practices are related to this definition. This question is not as self-evident as it may seem for internationally trained art critics or scholars. Largely, the broad Russian public outside artistic circles, including political decision-makers, remain unaware of what contemporary art is and what kinds of artists are present in the Russian art scene.⁸ If a passer-by in a Russian street would be asked to name the most famous contemporary artists in Russia

6 In the 2010s, Facebook was an important meeting point for uncensored debate within the Russian artistic community. In March 2022, Facebook was prohibited in Russia. Many Russian users deleted their accounts or locked them from the public, which makes printed Facebook discussions of the 2010s valuable historic sources now.

7 Torsten Thurén, *Källkritik* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1997).

8 The situation is changing though among the middle-aged and in particular young generations, not least due to the emergence of new contemporary art scenes in Moscow and other large Russian cities. These new museums and galleries alongside educational and exhibition projects such as *Nemoskva* make young Russians aware of the existence of contemporary art compared to what it used to be twenty years ago. See Larisa Petrova and Alisa Prudnikova, *Chto-to novoe i neobychnoe': Auditoriya sovremennogo iskusstva v krupnykh gorodakh Rossii* (Moscow and Yekaterinburg: Armchair Scientist; Yekaterinburg Academy of Contemporary Art, 2018).

today, there is a risk that Zurab Tsereteli and Nikas Safronov would be named.⁹ The first gained publicity due to his monumental statues installed in Russian cities, notwithstanding strong protests from the public, architect community, and art critics, which happened mainly because of Tsereteli's connections to the top of the Russian bureaucracy.¹⁰ The second acquired the status of a celebrity in the Russian mass media due to his "psychological portraits" of questionable quality of other celebrities and high-ranking bureaucrats. The financial success and high status of such artists have very little to do with market competition but rather bear witness to the tastes of the ruling Russian elites and the lack of an infrastructure that would verify, sanction, and evaluate artistic quality. On the other side of the spectrum, there are plenty of practicing artists, especially in the Russian province, who remain within the limits of the old realist tradition. As a rule, they are members of official art associations inherited from the Soviet past discussed by Kharchenkova with co-authors,¹¹ which nowadays do not receive substantial financial support from the state but remain an important channel that secures the financial and organisational survival of such artists. All these actively practicing artists constitute, in some very literal sense, contemporary art.¹² Concentration on painting techniques of traditional visual art rather than on making a statement within a specific cultural context is what characterises such artists. The quality of the art objects they create is not necessarily poor, but these artists exist outside the context of cutting-edge practices of global contemporary art movements. While agreeing that the definition of "contemporary" should be viewed "as a condition of being alive to and alongside other moments, artists, and objects,"¹³ meaning that any art object in the past was embedded in a specific epoch, this article understands by contemporary art those artistic practices that are characteristic of our particular historical moment. In other words, it includes art as it developed since the 1950s as a reaction to and further evolution of modernism, including such art movements as post-modernism, conceptualism, performance

9 In the 1990s and early 2000s, with all probability, Ilya Glazunov would also be included in a passer-by's short list.

10 Helena Goscilo, "Zurab Tsereteli's Exegi Monumentum, Luzhkov's Largesse, and the Collateral Rewards of Animosity," in Helena Goscilo and Vlad Strukov, eds., *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia: Shocking Chic* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 221–254.

11 Kharchenkova, Komarova, and Velthuis, "Official Art Organizations," in Velthuis and Curioni, *Cosmopolitan Canvases*, pp. 78–101.

12 This corresponds exactly to the definition of contemporary art produced by bureaucrats from the Russian Ministry of Culture and its affiliated expert community. See Artgid (19 July 2017), "Sovremennoe iskusstvo po Minkul'tu," <https://artguide.com/posts/1298> (accessed on 3 November 2022).

13 Richard E. Meyer, *What Was Contemporary Art?* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

art, video art, etc.¹⁴ Specific Russian movements that evolved in dialogue with global art, such as Sots Art and radical Moscow actionism, also fit this definition.¹⁵

Academic research addressing the Russian contemporary art market and its main actors is limited. The works on a number of aspects of this market presented by Olav Velthuis' research group, which studied contemporary art markets in the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) countries, is a notable exception. Kharchenkova with co-authors investigates the interdependency between official art organisations inherited from the communist past and the Russian art world, putting this issue into a comparative perspective with China. It demonstrates that art can survive at the periphery of the market being supported by alternative financial means.¹⁶ Komarova compares "crisis" narratives of contemporary art markets in Russia and India.¹⁷ Survival mechanisms for art galleries in the Russian and Indian contexts are discussed by Komarova and Velthuis.¹⁸ Elise Herrala approaches the role played by galleries within Russian contemporary art from a general perspective.¹⁹ Some credible descriptive reviews have been produced by insiders, such as art critics and dealers.²⁰ Lena Jonson and Andrei Erofeev explore the political dimension of Russian contemporary art, in particular the role it played in the 2011–2012 public unrest in Moscow and its relation to the current conservative tendency within Russian political and cultural life.²¹ Still, there is no work that would sum up the evolution of the Russian contemporary art market after 1991 in connection with the main stages of post-Soviet Russia's political economy, including its related macroeconomic policy regimes of the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. The ambition of the present article is to fill this research gap.

In general, the international contemporary art market has attracted the attention of academic researchers who approached the theme from a number of theoretical points. Art economists have attempted to apply neoclassical

14 Terry Smith, *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

15 Kate Fowle, "Moscow Art Life: 1990–2000," pp. 6–37.

16 Kharchenkova et al, "Official Art Organizations."

17 Komarova, "Ups and Downs of Art Commerce."

18 Komarova and Velthuis, "Local Contexts as Activation Mechanisms of Market Development."

19 Herrala, *Art of Transition*, pp. 91–117.

20 Vladimir Babkov, ed., *Galereinyi biznes: Rossiiskii i zarubeshnii opyt* (Moscow: Art-Manager, 2012); Andrei Kovalev, "Installing the 1990s," in Fowle and Addison, eds., *Access Moscow*, pp. 38–55; Irina Kulik, "Yarkii mir: Vsio, chto vam neobhodimo znat' v sovremennom rossiiskom iskusstve," in *Gentlemen's Quarterly Rossiya* 9 (2011), pp. 176–181.

21 Lena Jonson, *Art and Protest in Putin's Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Lena Jonson and Andrei Erofeev, eds., *Russia—Art Resistance and the Conservative-Authoritarian Zeitgeist* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

mainstream economics to study contemporary art markets.²² However, Zorloni's own empirical material demonstrates the inadequacy of this methodology to explain the functioning of the contemporary art market. The great information asymmetry between buyers and sellers of contemporary art objects makes it difficult to study the market in terms of formal modelling relying on supply and demand equilibrium explanations.²³ Other researchers focus on marketing strategies applied by the main actors to create artists' brands and achieve astronomical price levels of some art objects.²⁴ An alternative understanding of the contemporary art market is put forward by cultural sociologist Olav Velthuis who studies the contemporary art market as a cultural constellation where market exchange is highly ritualised and "involves a wide variety of symbols that transfer rich meanings between people who exchange goods with each other".²⁵ Although this approach contributes to an understanding of price settings and motivation of investors, it also fails to explain the contemporary art market as a comprehensive exchange system. Velthuis' own research demonstrates the existence of barriers to globalisation of contemporary art markets due to the deep connection of art dealers and artists with local social networks and market infrastructure. Thus, localisation puts limits on cross-border flows of art and artists.²⁶

Economic sociological studies of art view markets in network terms and investigate market exchange as embedded in social networks and practices. For example, sociologist Katherine Giuffre has developed her own methodology of formal network analysis. Creativity is viewed as a social and collective phenomenon rather than an individual personal characteristic and is, in many ways, produced by particular types of social structures. The social support acquired by artists and art dealers as a part of their embeddedness within a specific network context is subsequently transformed into economic value. Through this

22 Bruno S. Frey, *Economics of Art and Culture* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer); William D. Grampp, *Pricing the Priceless: Art, Artists, and Economics* (New York: Basic Books, 1989); Alessia Zorloni, *The Economics of Contemporary Art: Markets, Strategies and Stardom* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013).

23 Clare McAndrew, Suhail Malik, and Gerald Nestler, "Plotting the Art Market: An Interview with Clare McAndrew," *Finance and Society* 2:2 (2016), pp. 151–167.

24 Noah Horowitz, *Art of the Deal: Contemporary Art in a Global Financial Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Don Thompson, *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

25 Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 3.

26 Olav Velthuis, "Globalization of Markets for Contemporary Art: Why Local Ties Remains Dominant in Amsterdam and Berlin," *European Societies* 15:2 (2013), pp. 290–308; Velthuis and Curioni, "Making Markets Global."

mechanism, individual artistic careers, as well as the success of institutional actors such as art galleries and museums, become possible.²⁷

Andrés Solimano interconnects particular phases of development of the leading capitalist economies such as the UK, US, France, Germany and, more recently, China with transformation of national art markets during the last 120 years.²⁸ Starting from the 1970s, the latest phase of world capitalism's development, the rise of neoliberalism with its policies of marketisation, deregulation, labour repression, and privatisation as well as the rise of financialisation and increased wealth inequality paved the way for the commodification of art and expansion of the international art market. This outcome benefited primarily institutional solutions and practices that supported marketisation of art at the cost of public institutions. The latter faced budget cuts and have lost their importance in terms of promotion of contemporary art and evaluation of artistic quality. Art objects have been increasingly used as investment vehicles by wealthy global elites to perform a store-of-value function against increased price volatility of financial assets. While the presented tendency looks convincing, Solimano does not operate any systemic theoretical approach that would enable him to relate the change of types of capitalism and macroeconomic policy regimes with national and international art markets in a concise way. His conclusions are mainly based on personal insight and accessions rather than on relying on a well-defined theoretical tool.

In contrast, this study applies the theoretical framework of varieties of capitalism (VofC) in terms of how different types of capitalism interplay with the contemporary art market. Kharchenkova with co-authors briefly mentioned this approach regarding art markets,²⁹ yet its real application for Russia was delayed since the focus of their study was not specifically on the market. The definition of "varieties of cultural capitalism" that they suggest says little beyond the truism that organisation of commercial art life has its peculiarities in different countries or, indeed, as the same authors write, in different cities within the same country. Russia, as an emerging and developing market country (EMD), does not fit the dichotomy of liberal (Anglo-Saxon countries) market economies (LMEs) versus coordinated (Germany and Japan) market economies (CMEs) as was initially suggested by the main proponents of the VofC approach Hall and Soskice.³⁰ This is because in core capitalist economies (CCEs) represented by both LMEs and

27 Katherine A. Giuffre, "Sandpiles of Opportunity: Success in the Art World," *Social Forces* 77:3 (1999), pp. 815–832; Katherine A. Giuffre, *Collective Creativity: Art and Society in the South Pacific* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Katherine A. Giuffre, *Communities and Networks: Using Social Network Analysis to Rethink Urban and Community Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013).

28 Solimano, *The Evolution of Contemporary Arts Markets*.

29 Kharchenkova et al., "Official Art Organizations," pp. 78–101.

30 Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

CMEs the capitalist classes maintain autonomy in terms of capital accumulation as well as expansion of economic activity and investments abroad,³¹ which was not valid for Russia during the most part of its post-Soviet period. Instead, this study relies on the recent extension of the theory for EMDs developed by Andreas Nölke and his research group.³² In addition to Hall and Soskice's dichotomy, Nölke introduced two types of capitalism, namely the dependent market economy (DME) and the state-permeated market economy. For the latter, I prefer to use the definition of state capitalism, as Nölke's research group has been applying during the last two years.³³ These four ideal types of capitalism differ from each other in terms of how corporate governance, corporate finance, labour relations, domestic market, and international integration are organised. DMEs can be found in EMDs whose domestic enterprises became a part of global production chains controlled by multinational corporations. In DMEs, decision-making regarding research and development and investment allocation are made outside such countries, primarily in the headquarters of multinational corporations and financial institutions located in core capitalist economies in the West and Japan. Post-communist economies in Central Eastern Europe represent a typical example of a DME. Throughout the region, we can find EMDs that succeeded in embracing this ideal-type model attracting substantial investments from CCEs and achieving a relatively high level of growth (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, pre-2008 Hungary), or EMDs that failed alongside this strategy. The latter remain low-income countries with an unsustainable economic growth pattern (Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria, the Baltic countries, to name a few). In the more successful countries of the Visegrád Group, a new stratum of comprador elites, including their political and business factions, arose instead of domestic elites with roots in communist-time nomenklatura. These elites became gatekeepers of the new economic order and guaranteed the connection of their countries to CCEs in terms of political, economic, financial, and ideational ties.³⁴

Russia (as with Belarus and post-2008 Hungary, albeit with different development paths after 1989) represents against this pattern a special case. In the 1990s, it attempted to introduce its version of a DME, yet the market reforms

31 Jan Drahooupil, *Globalization and the State in Central and Eastern Europe: The Politics of Foreign Direct Investment* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 198.

32 Andreas Nölke, Tobias ten Brink, Simone Claar, and Christian May, "Domestic Structures, Foreign Economic Policies, and Global Economic Order: Implications from the Rise of Large Emerging Economies," *European Journal of International Relations* 21:3 (2015), pp. 538–567; Andreas Nölke, Tobias ten Brink, Simone Claar, and Christian May, *State-Permeated Capitalism in Large Emerging Economies* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

33 For a general theoretical discussion on the definition of state capitalism, see Ilias Alami and Adam D. Dixon, "State Capitalism(s) Redux? Theories, Tensions, Controversies," *Competition & Change* 24:1 (2020), pp. 70–94.

34 Jan Drahooupil, "Who Won the Contest for a New Property Class? Structural Transformation of Elites in the Visegrád Four Region," *Journal of East European Management Studies* 13:4 (2008), pp. 360–377.

failed, quickly leading to the economic collapse of the 1990s. That said, nobody advocated the creation of a dependent economic subsidiary to the West in Russia in public. This would be political suicide even in the times of friendly Russian–US/EU relations in the early 1990s. Officially, governments under Yeltsin and early Putin, especially the “young reformers” of the 1990s, proclaimed a replication of an LME. However, their intentions, as expressed in public and practical policy measures, would lead to the creation of a DME regime, providing that this policy were successfully implemented. This was a vision of a growing Russian economy based on imports of Western capital, technology, and business practices, with corresponding comprador political elites that would be in command of this transformation.³⁵ Latin America, especially but not exclusively Augusto Pinochet’s Chile, was a clear source of inspiration for this political vision.³⁶ In the 2000s, due to the initial economic growth of the early 2000s and inflows of hydrocarbon export income, it seemed that Russia was in the “right” direction toward embracing a DME model. However, the 2008 global crisis and the return of the Russian state to economy demonstrated that this task could not be accomplished. Political elites that advocated the creation of a DME regime with its reliance on inflows of foreign investment and take-over of Russian enterprises by foreign actors and domestic oligarchic groups went on retreat.³⁷

Instead, Russia under Putin started gradually to develop its own version of state capitalism that affected its energy sector, military industrial complex, and finance.³⁸ It has in common some characteristics that Nölke et al. identified for the largest state capitalist societies among EMDs, including China, India, and Brazil.³⁹ While Nölke and his research group did not consider the Russian case as a state capitalist society, I suggest that Russia shares a number of fundamental features of a state capitalist model among EMDs. Based on my own research of Russian finance, I have suggested a definition of state capitalism as an economic

35 Massimo Florio, “Economists, Privatization in Russia and the Waning of the ‘Washington Consensus’,” *Review of International Political Economy* 9:2 (2002), pp. 374–415; Peter Rutland, “Neoliberalism and the Russian Transition,” *Review of International Political Economy* 20:2 (2013), pp. 332–362.

36 Tobias Rupperecht, “Formula Pinochet: Chilean Lessons for Russian Liberal Reformers during the Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 51:1 (2016), pp. 165–186.

37 Richard Sakwa, “Political Leadership,” in Darrell Slider and Stephen K. Wegren, eds., *Putin’s Russia*, 8th ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), pp. 39–60.

38 Yuko Adachi, “Dynamics of State-Business Relations and the Evolution of Capitalism in Russia in an Age of Globalization,” in Toshiaki Hirai, ed., *Capitalism and the World Economy: The Light and Shadow of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 254–277; Anna Mishura and Svetlana Ageeva, “Financialisation and the Authoritarian State: The Case of Russia,” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 46:5 (2022), pp. 1109–1140; Nadia Vanteeva and Charles Hickson, “Gerschenkron Revisited: The New Corporate Russia,” *Journal of Economic Issues* 49:4 (2015), pp. 978–1007.

39 Nölke, ten Brink, Claar, and May, *State-Permeated Capitalism in Large Emerging Economies*.

system where the state owns key assets and controls main financial flows, while state-owned business entities behave like quasi-independent market players with a primary purpose of profit maximisation.⁴⁰

The above-mentioned classification of capitalist societies has a direct relevance for the fate of the Russian contemporary art market helping to explain its systemic failure. Historically, contemporary art as a cultural phenomenon arose in the LMEs of the Anglo-Saxon world. The privately owned gallery, where the reputations of artists are created and transformed into tradability of the art objects they produce, became a central element of the value creation chains for this art. Embracing a DME regime in the post-communist world was about import and imitation of institutional solutions and practices of LMEs, and the contemporary art market was no exception. The next three sections will focus on how Russia followed this path by connecting the evolution of its contemporary art market to transformation of Russian capitalist society after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

3. THE TURBULENT 1990s: FREEDOM FOR ART WITHOUT MONEY OR STABILITY

From the 1930s, official art life in the Soviet Union was put under the control of the state-party apparatus and was effectively restricted to practices of socialist realism. The Artists' Union of the USSR was the main organisation that controlled and provided access to the profession and financing of artists. However, this did not mean that contemporary art and associated trading with art objects were totally absent. The nascent phase of the market, named by its participants Dip Art, or diplomatic art, arose in the years that followed the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow (1957) during Khrushchev's Thaw period. A very limited number of Soviet underground artists were discovered by foreigners, mainly diplomats, who started to buy paintings, paying in foreign cash or by consumer durables. Under the Soviet economy of shortage, it was very easy to convert imported goods into rouble cash, so this limited number of tradeable artists was doing well financially. In the Brezhnev years of the 1970s, the number of contemporary (underground) artists who were able to sell their art increased. Semi-legal apartment exhibitions became renowned as a cultural phenomenon, but more in the sense of cementing the Moscow-based community of underground artists than in commercial terms. The Painting Section at the City Committee of Graphic Artists in Moscow became a meeting point for commercial life. It was an officially endorsed organisation for alternative artists who were not members of the Artists' Union of the USSR. The share of domestic buyers rose and started to dominate on the demand side. The buyers included party bureaucrats from the Central Committee of the Communist Party who officially persecuted this

40 Ilja Viktorov and Alexander Abramov, "The Rise of Collateral-Based Finance under State Capitalism in Russia," *Post-Communist Economies* 34:1 (2022), pp. 15–51.

art but, in reality, could buy it for personal consumption. Demonstration of a contemporary art object in a private apartment signalled the more sophisticated taste of the person who possessed it.⁴¹

The real commercial boom for Soviet underground art, which can be, for all reasons, characterised as Soviet contemporary art, took place during the perestroika period of the late 1980s. Such artists as Ilya Kabakov and Erik Bulatov gained attention and were invited to organise exhibitions at leading art spaces in the West. Quite quickly, they successfully converted this popularity into the market value of the art objects they produced. In 1988, Sotheby's arranged its renowned and, in terms of financial outcome, highly successful auction of contemporary Soviet art in Moscow surrounded by the fleur of luxury and exclusivity. This was one of the first true global events in Soviet Moscow before the USSR's collapse, with foreign guests such as prominent art dealers, politicians, and world celebrities invited. The leading international auction house used this auction, still memorable in Moscow's art community, to establish contacts with the ruling Soviet elite.⁴² A handful of Soviet underground artists had a quick taste of what at that time appeared as huge money.⁴³ However, the foreign interest that boosted demand for Russian art became as short-lived as perestroika itself. Those few artists who caught the wind moved immediately to the US and Western Europe, including Kabakov, Bulatov, and Grisha Bruskin, the stars of the Sotheby's auction. Although the moment of discovery of contemporary artists in Russia by the international public was promising, the mundane reality for artists who stayed in Russia after 1991 became difficult. They quickly faced a period of instability and lack of financial support in the 1990s.

After 1991, Russia attempted to import and install institutional solutions and practices originating in the West or, to be more specific, in the Anglo-Saxon countries. This applied to politics and, in particular, to economic life, including privatisation and reforms in corporate governance,⁴⁴ lifting barriers to foreign trade and cross-border capital flows,⁴⁵ central bank policy,⁴⁶ and financial

41 Interview with Igor Dudinsky, art critic, artist, journalist, and member of Moscow's artistic bohemian life between the 1950s and 2010s, 19 October 2018, Moscow. See also Anna Florkovskaya, *Malaya Gruzinskaya*, 28: *Zhivopisnaya sektsiya Moskovskogo ob'edinennogo komiteta hudozhnikov-grafikov*, 1976–1988 (Moscow: Pamyatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2009).

42 Andrew Solomon, *Far and Away: Reporting from the Brink of Change: Seven Continents, Twenty-Five Years* (New York: Scribner, 2016), pp. 49–64.

43 Elizaveta Ermakova (27 June 2020), "Sotheby's 1988 Auction: A Turning Point for Unofficial Moscow Artists," <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/sothebys-1988-auction-moscow/> (accessed on November 3, 2022).

44 Andrew Barnes, *Owning Russia: The Struggle over Factories, Farms, and Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

45 Florio, "Economists, Privatization in Russia, and the Waning of the 'Washington Consensus'."

46 Juliet Johnson, *Priests of Prosperity: How Central Bankers Transformed the Postcommunist World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

markets.⁴⁷ In general, all kinds of deregulation, liberalisation, and the refusal of the state to provide funding for public goods, including culture and education, were implemented by most of the Russian governments under President Yeltsin's administration. Instead, the emerging private sector and the Russian new rich were supposed to provide market-based solutions and funding that would compensate for the retreat of the state. The practical outcome of these policies was barely positive. In macroeconomic terms, these reforms produced a very fragile regime that resulted in a deep economic downturn, deindustrialisation, and degradation of the productive sectors of the economy, mass poverty, and the 1998 financial crisis.⁴⁸ When the state institutions could not perform their basic functions, Russia experienced a rise in criminal activity in the economy and politics.⁴⁹

The institutional evolution of the contemporary art market shared the general developments in Russia. The contemporary art scene in 1990s Moscow, where artistic life remained concentrated, was vibrant, reflecting and reacting to the contradictory transformation of Russian society. There was no lack of interesting artists and newly discovered names, such as Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov, Oleg Kulik, the AES Group, and Anatoly Osmolovsky.⁵⁰ However, the harsh reality put serious limits on artists' possibility of surviving economically.

Similarly to other institutional arrangements of the 1990s reforms in Russia, which were copied from the Anglo-Saxon world, the gallery system did not work as it was initially expected. Ideally, the market was supposed to supersede the retreat of the state from cultural life, but, in reality, the nascent gallery system failed to provide sufficient funding for artistic activities, except for very few artists, such as Dubossarsky and Vinogradov. The main problem lay in the non-existing demand for contemporary art. The old Soviet well-educated intelligentsia that possessed the ability to appreciate contemporary art was ruined financially during President Yeltsin's economic reforms. The new rich, which in the 1990s consisted to a great degree of shadow personalities with connections to the corrupted state apparatus or outright criminals, remained mainly uninterested in new cultural practices. Notwithstanding this fact, the system of galleries arose in 1990s Moscow. A cluster of such galleries could be found on Yakimanka Street, named the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), which was founded in 1990. The CAC was the only example of a private and municipal (City of Moscow's) co-initiative, when local authorities provided the space and minimal funds while the rest of the activities were financed by private galleries located in the CAC's premises. These included XP Gallery, founded by Elena Selina and Sergei Khripun in 1990,

47 Ilja Viktorov, "The State, Informal Networks and Financial Market Regulation in Post-Soviet Russia, 1990–2008," *Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 42:1 (2015), pp. 5–38.

48 Piroška M. Nagy, *The Meltdown of the Russian State: The Deformation and Collapse of the State in Russia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2000).

49 Vadim Volkov, *Silovoe predprinimatel'stvo, XXI vek: Ekonomiko-sotsiologicheskoe issledovanie* (St Petersburg: European University, 2020).

50 Fowle, "Moscow Art Life"; Herrala, *Art of Transition*.

and the Aidan founded by Aidan Salakhova, also an active artist who exhibited her own art in other galleries. In terms of organisational structure, this system was a chaotic mess, since individual artists were able to cooperate with several galleries at the same time, depending on ongoing projects and the availability of funding. As for the rest of the economy in 1990s Russia, short-sightedness and permanent instability remained at the core of activities. It was important for an artist to use available exhibition space because galleries closed and disappeared as quickly as they opened. All galleries had to rely on additional activities, usually not related to art, such as the antique business, sale of furnishings, or renting the space for commercial purposes.⁵¹

Marat Guelman's gallery founded in 1990 was the most famous actor on this gallery scene. This fame, however, was of rather dubious origin. Like other gallerists, Guelman was not able to run his gallery commercially but kept it alive alongside other activities. For a general public interested in politics, he appeared as a "political technologist" who served those in power in the Kremlin and the government.⁵² In these circles, Guelman received an ironic nickname, "the Gallerist". Similar to his deeds in the political sphere, Guelman's reputation and actions in the art world were surrounded by scandals and controversy, more often created with a purpose rather than coincidentally. An art critic, who preferred to remain anonymous, told me that the influence of Guelman in the market scene could be summarised as follows:

He had [access to] some shadow money, some shadow structures supported him, he tackled certain political tasks. . . . Because he met with necessary people in necessary spaces and does not disdain to use any means . . . Guelman never did something just for pleasure. If somebody from above gave an order to Guelman, some power structure said, "You need to do this, and the price for this will be this. Here is the money for this purpose," he used this money.⁵³

At the same time, considering the deep economic crisis and collapse of the state that Russia underwent in the 1990s, Guelman's prominent presence in the art market was not coincidental. Only a person with a manipulative strategy, a mediator between those in power and the underworld, a trickster⁵⁴ could provide

51 Diaconov, "Twenty Years Is Not Much Compared to Eternity"; Fowle, "Moscow Art Life."

52 Political technologists in post-Soviet countries denote PR and election campaign managers who manipulate public opinion. The importance of such manipulative techniques gradually decreased in Russia under Putin's presidencies when the ruling elites preferred to rely on pure administrative control during election campaigns making those rather a formal procedure of approval rather than a form of political competition. Centralisation of governance when local authorities and governors were put under strong control of the federal centre also played an important role in the decline of political technology as it existed in the 1990s and early 2000s.

53 Interview with an art critic, 17 October 2018, Moscow.

54 Mark Lipovetsky, *Charms of the Cynical Reason: The Trickster's and Transformations in Soviet and post-Soviet Culture* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011).

a kind of long-term continuity, which seemed to be impossible amid the chaotic mess of the turbulent 1990s. Artists of diverse backgrounds, styles, and ideological stances, who would later be transformed into big brands of Russian contemporary art, cooperated with Guelman and exposed their works at his gallery. These names included, among others, Oleg Kulik, Yuri Shabelnikov, Aleksei Belyaev-Gintovt, Avdei Ter-Oganyan, Anatoly Osmolovsky, Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe, AES+F, the Blue Noses Group, etc.

Great expectations existed for corporate collections, which would increase the marketisation of contemporary art. Yet very few emerging banks or large corporations opted to form such collections in the 1990s. In those cases they did, the expert community recruited for this purpose attempted to apply up-to-date global market practices in terms of valuation methods, networking, display, critique, and catalogue printing. The company RINAKO and Inkombank formed the first famous corporate collections of contemporary art. However, short-termism prevented any continuity of these activities as well. Newly born companies became bankrupt and disappeared as quickly as they arose while collections were sold out. On the positive side, some future big names of the 2000s and 2010s among curators and art administrators acquired invaluable experience in this process of formation of corporate collections, including Olga Sviblova and Marina Loshak.⁵⁵

In the 1990s, the museum scene became highly unstable as well, with small underfinanced museums that opened and closed. In 1992, the Federal Ministry of Culture opened the first National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA), but as other state cultural institutions did, it survived under very humble conditions, both organisationally and financially. In 1996, the Moscow City Government opened the Moscow House of Photography that would in the future become one of the leading Russian contemporary art museums. From the very beginning, it has been headed by Sviblova, a legendary curator and art manager in the Russia multimedia art world.⁵⁶ In 1999, the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (MMOMA) was opened, also supported by the Moscow City Government and headed by Zurab Tsereteli. In spite of promotion of Tsereteli's own art, this venue gradually won some credibility, not least because of the museum policy defined later, in the 2010s, by his grandson Vasily Tsereteli. The MMOMA confirmed a pattern well familiar in the cultural life of post-Soviet Russia. To create continuity and stable financial flows, a venue needs a powerful patron that protects its existence. It is the activities of an entrusted leadership and staff who manage this venue that can potentially transform it into a durable cultural asset.

To sum up, artistic and gallery life in 1990s' Moscow resembled more a disorganised world of bohemia rather than a professional art community. Due to financial reasons, this community was isolated from intensive international contacts but also from the rest of Russia, where artists and art professionals simply

55 Andrei Kovalev, "Installing the 1990s," p. 42.

56 Ginanne Brownell (28 May 2010), "Russia's Photo Impresario," <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/29/arts/29iht-rartolga.html> (accessed on November 4, 2022).

could not afford to travel inside the country. Not surprisingly, the emergence of any credible contemporary art market never happened in the 1990s and was delayed until the next decades. This outcome was against the global tendency towards professionalisation of art, or what Anton Vidokle defined as “a vast proliferation of so-called artistic practices that treat art as a profession,”⁵⁷ although art in its essence is not a profession. In Western “developed” economies, professionalisation of art coincided with the decline of bohemia as a creative space, which traditionally had a great significance in the history of art, and was accompanied by the process of de-skilling of contemporary art and segregation of visual art from other fields of art.⁵⁸ Professionalisation of art went hand in hand with its marketisation and monetisation of artists’ labour while precarious survival in the marketplace superseded dependency on patronage.⁵⁹ This is also what the “liberal” decade of the 1990s promised to the Russian artistic community but was never able to deliver.

4. THE 2000S: MARKETISATION OF ART IN THE “FAT YEARS”

After a quick recovery after the 1998 financial crisis and an increased inflow of hydrocarbon export income, the Russian economy experienced a relatively long period of steady growth in the 2000s. This decade would later be named the “fat years” in comparison with the poor 1990s and economic stagnation that followed after the 2008 global financial crisis. The ruling elites in Russia seemed bound to create what they promised as an LME. In reality, this was an attempt to create a DME based on rather shaky ground when inflows of high oil income would support economic growth. Therefore, Russia was included in the world economy at the lowest technological level of global productive chains, as a supplier of raw materials. The Russian contemporary art market was no exception from the common tendency of increased wealth; availability of money created short-lived domestic demand for art objects. A new figure of a typical buyer arose for the first time. A successful businessperson in his (rarely her) 30s or 40s who would not be against catching the wind and following the newest trends of cultural life. This part of the Russian newly born business elite was oriented towards a cosmopolitan life style, being an integrated part of a liberalised global economy. In February 2012, while conducting my fieldwork as part of my studies of financial markets in Russia, I attended a meeting at an office of such a businessman. Several pieces of contemporary art with connotations of War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, of which the owner was very proud, were displayed in his office. The period of the “fat years” should not be confined by the 2008–09 global crisis. In 2010–11, there was

57 Anton Vidokle (14 March 2013), “Art without Market, Art without Education: Political Economy of Art,” http://worker01.e-flux.com/pdf/article_8964745.pdf (accessed on 3 November 2022), p. 6.

58 Vidokle, “Art without Market, Art without Education.”

59 Clyde R. Taylor, *The Mask of Art: Breaking the Aesthetic Contract—Film and Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 9.

a short recovery based on increased oil prices that gave hopes for a return of prosperity. Politically, Western-friendly president Dmitry Medvedev supported a number of prominent system liberals who advocated Russia's closer integration into the global economy. Structural changes that made the transition towards state capitalism irreversible took place in 2012. Economic stagnation started in Russia this year and has been continuing ever since. In 2012, Vladimir Putin returned to presidency amid street protests in Moscow, and the political environment became different as well.

From the perspective of art, the decade experienced a number of contradictory tendencies.⁶⁰ The first was so-called Moscow glamour, which manifested the long-awaited realisation of the desire to consume and experience a cosmopolitan lifestyle.⁶¹ This embodied the victory of neoliberal globalisation that at that time finally reached the Moscow art scene. Some of the artists of the 1990s, including such names as Kulik, AES+F, Vinogradov, and Dubossarsky used fully this opportunity for commercial gain creating eye-catching spectacular art objects and installations, a kind of "neo-baroque", which exploited this tendency and sold well. On the other hand, there were art movements of the so-called New Left, including the art group Radek, which focused on criticism of the emerging bourgeois capitalist culture, including excessive over-consumption, glamour, and everyday life of office workers. These "non-spectacular" art installations and actions could not bring about large commercial profits within the system they criticised. Another tendency characteristic of the 2000s was the creation of large, sometimes monumental, art objects in the countryside and urban public spaces signalling the spread of land art practices in Russia.⁶² The latter was more difficult to materialise in terms of market returns but artists could use the opportunity of state budgetary allocations, where it was possible, such as happened with Nikolai Polisskii's installation "Perm Gates" in 2011.

Economically, these favourable years created the illusion that the contemporary art market had a bright future in Russia, which would follow the path of China that saw a rapid expansion of its domestic art market in the 1990s and 2000s. Even those art objects that could hardly be characterised in terms of high artistic quality were possible to sell.⁶³ The old surviving Moscow-based galleries of the 1990s could finally see economic returns. Yesterday's rebels were transformed into the new bourgeoisie of the 2000s' art scene, even though very few galleries

60 Artgid (25 June 2018), "Kruglyi stol: 'Iskusstvo 2000-kh' v Novoi Tretyakovke," <https://artguide.com/posts/1531> (accessed on October 12, 2022); Tretyakov Gallery (2018), "Iskusstvo nulevykh: Vystavka," <https://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/exhibitions/iskusstvo-2000-kh/> (accessed on December 8, 2020).

61 Jonson, *Art and Protest in Putin's Russia*; Goscilo and Strukov, *Celebrity and Glamour in Contemporary Russia*.

62 Grigory Revzin (21 July 2008), "Nikolay Polissky and Russian Architecture," <https://archi.ru/en/7312/nikolay-polissky-and-russian-architecture> (accessed on November 4, 2022).

63 Interview with Igor Dudinsky, 19 October 2018.

became fully profitable in the 2000s. At the same time, the financial income was distributed very unevenly. Those artists who started their careers in the 1980s and 1990s and who were well positioned at the centre of established local networks of galleries, the few available museums, and state-owned institutions were able to use the newly opened market opportunities. On the other hand, a considerable number of non-established artists and art professionals were exposed to a very precarious existence. In 2010 and 2011, the famous Internet portal Polit.ru launched a project “Labour conditions of creative workers”, which consisted of interviews with art market professionals such as artists, curators, and art critics under 35. The interviewees witnessed a situation of difficult economic survival, the lack of market returns on their art, and the absence of financial support from the state.⁶⁴ Moreover, the 2000s’ prosperity was mainly restricted to Moscow and was not shared by the rest of the country. One of the provincial curators of the 2000s, who started her career in Yekaterinburg, remembered:

In recent times, there has been lots of reflections regarding the fat 2000s: about these crazy possibilities of the 2000s, incredible wealth, freedom, and lots of money in the art of the 2000s. I listen to this as if it was a different world, a story that is completely unfamiliar to me. . . . I remember when in 2005 I was invited to lead a regional branch of the National Centre for Contemporary Arts [NCCA]. Before this, I had a talk with a press service of one of the industrial plants. . . . In the NCCA, I had a wage of 3,000 roubles, while accepting a job offer as a PR specialist at the plant would give me 30,000 roubles. Of course, this posed a choice of the greatest challenge for me . . . between an existence in poverty and this [high] wage.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the continued relative economic backwardness of the Russian province, the 2000s witnessed a resumed inflow of artists from other regions to Moscow and St Petersburg, re-creating the context of the national art scene. Improved financial resources made possible personal contacts between regional artists, some of whom were able to practice their art in large cities outside Moscow, and the capital. This improvement represented a great contrast with the 1990s and resembled the 1980s.⁶⁶ In addition, the decade started professionalisation of artists and art workers and increased exchange with the European and American art scene. A considerable number of young Russian artists could reside in Europe for longer periods and receive an art education according to Western standards.

There were important changes in terms of market infrastructure that increasingly followed global trends. Throughout the decade, a number of important museum spaces emerged. In 2010, the Moscow House of Photography,

64 Evgeniya Abramova (30 September 2012), “Usloviya truda tvorcheskikh rabotnikov: Itogi proekta,” <https://polit.ru/article/2012/09/30/altvorrabotnyki/> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

65 Interview with Alisa Prudnikova, Director of Regional Development of the NCCA and Commissioner and Artistic Director, Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art, 18 October 2018, Moscow.

66 Artgid (2018), “Kruglyi stol: ‘Iskusstvo 2000-kh’ v Novoi Tretyakovke.”

now transformed into the Multimedia Art Museum, moved into its newly renovated premises in central Moscow, becoming a truly international player capable of hosting top-quality exhibitions. In 2008, the privately owned Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture was founded by Darya Zhukova and her husband, oligarch Roman Abramovich. However, the 2000s was not generally a decade where museums played any prominent role in the creation of symbolic and market value for contemporary art. Art spaces and art centres as meeting points between artists, art professionals, and the public were more present on the scene. In 2007, Vinzavod, a gallery district in Moscow, was opened, and it became the most important event of the decade for the contemporary art industry in the city, with most of the major commercial galleries moving into its premises. The non-commercial Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art started in 2005. The main commercial event, the Art Moscow International Fair, was held between 1996 and 2014 on an annual basis, although most art sales continued to happen in the galleries or by contacts, in a grey zone.

At first glance, during the 2000s, institutionalisation of contemporary art in Russia showed the successful implantation of international practices. However, professionalisation of the art market did not happen. Notwithstanding the presence of money inflows in the 2000s, the economic environment remained unfriendly towards both fostering new artistic talent and the long-term development of art businesses in Russia. As in the 1990s, short-termism continued to make an impact on the organisation and administration of economic activities in the cultural sphere. New galleries arose in large numbers and closed as quickly as they appeared. Compared to other emerging markets such as India, the initial institutional and financial thresholds to enter the art market were low while there was a lack of mechanisms that would promote continuity for contemporary art dealers, including access to capital, support of the state, and reliance on business dynasties with their social networks.⁶⁷ Moreover, relations between artists and galleries were not without conflicts. One of the participating artists in Polit.ru's survey characterised these relations as unmodern and "feudal." Galleries behaved towards the artists they patronised as "feudalists" based on the creation of personalised relations and abuse of this mutual trust. As a common practice, artists needed to grant galleries their works as a form of payment for participation in exhibitions. A great moment of corruption was also present in these relations. An artwork could "disappear" after an exhibition, reappearing later in a gallerist's collection. Artists had no choice but to follow these informal rules and keep silent about such abusive practices.⁶⁸

67 Komarova and Velthuis, "Local Contexts as Activation Mechanisms of Market Development."

68 Nikolai Oleinikov (25 April 2010), "Hudozhnikom i aktivistom nado byt' na 100-protsentnoi zanyatosti," <https://polit.ru/article/2010/04/25/kchud250410/> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

5. THE 2010s: CONTEMPORARY ART UNDER RUSSIAN STATE CAPITALISM

The 2010s started with increased political activism. Selected forms of contemporary art, in the first place public actions and performances, were used as a part of social protests associated with what is generally viewed as liberal opposition. The reason for the unrest was a transition of presidential power from Dmitry Medvedev to Vladimir Putin in the spring of 2012 and clashes between key elite groups on this issue.⁶⁹ Some of these elite networks opposed Putin's return to the presidency and mobilised parts of the politically active population in the capital and other large cities. Considerable organisational and financial resources were invested in planning spectacular public actions targeted against Putin and his ruling party United Russia. The White Ring action of an automobile race along the Garden Ring (January 2012) and the March Against Scoundrels on 13 January 2013 (both in Moscow) exemplified how contemporary art practices could enter political life. Directors of these actions were professionals from the art and PR world whose identities remained unknown.⁷⁰ PR advisors of the ruling power became equally creative, involving public actions performed by the president himself, such as his flight with Siberian cranes in September 2012.⁷¹ The Immortal Regiment, which was introduced in Russian cities in 2012, gained support from the president and was gradually transformed into an annual mass action to signify unity between the ruling power and the population. These conservative political practices have had clear implications to the contemporary art world as well.⁷²

An analysis of the interconnectedness between contemporary art and politics in Russia is beyond the scope of this study. It has been presented in previous research.⁷³ What is more important for the contemporary art market is that the alliance between a part of the contemporary art community and the liberal opposition played a negative role in terms of access to financial resources for contemporary artists. Elite groups that supported the protests lost the political struggle. As a consequence, many potential buyers of contemporary art either lost their businesses or opted for emigration, which had both economic and political reasons. The decline in demand and the decreased number of buyers and collectors

69 Ilja Viktorov, "The Legacy of Tandemocracy: Russia's Political Elite during Putin's Third Presidency: Interview with the Sociologist Olga Kryshchanovskaya," *Baltic Worlds* 7:2 (2014), pp. 14–21; Andrei Yakovlev, "What is Russia Trying to Defend?" *Russian Journal of Economics* 2:2 (2016), pp. 146–161.

70 Artgid (2018), "Kruglyi stol: 'Iskusstvo 2000-kh' v Novoi Tretyakovke."

71 *The Guardian* (6 September 2012), "Vladimir Putin Leads Endangered Cranes on Migration Route in Hang Glider," <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/06/vladimir-putin-cranes-hang-glider> (accessed on 4 November 2020).

72 Maria Engström, "Telluro-Cosmic Imperial Utopia and Contemporary Russian Art," in Mikhail Suslov and Per-Arne Bodin, eds., *The Post-Soviet Politics of Utopia: Language, Fiction, and Fantasy in Modern Russia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), pp. 61–80.

73 Jonson, *Art and Protest in Putin's Russia*.

in Russia were named by Guelman and his colleagues as the reason to close two of the “big three” galleries in 2012, the Guelman Gallery and Aidan Gallery. The third one, the XL Gallery, switched to non-commercial activities, which made it eligible to apply for state grants.⁷⁴ Guelman himself moved to Montenegro, where he opened an art residence (closed in 2017) and organised the cultural forum SlovoNovo in Budva in 2018 and 2019. The latter was frequented by intellectual circles and artists who belonged to the Russian liberal opposition.⁷⁵

In combination with the economic stagnation that followed in 2012 and Western sanctions introduced after the 2014 Crimean crisis, the Russian economy moved towards a new political economic regime that can be characterised as state capitalism. This process has been accompanied by de-globalisation of Russia, which embraced Russian countersanctions, increased political tensions with the West, and weakened the position of domestic elite groups oriented towards the inclusion of Russia into the global (Western) political, economic, financial, and cultural context. It also limited the rise and survival of the domestic bourgeoisie based on private business activity. This transition had a dramatic consequence for the fate of the contemporary art market in Russia.⁷⁶ In the 2010s, financial flows were gradually locked inside state-controlled financial institutions and corporations.⁷⁷ Decision-making regarding the allocation of financial resources was concentrated inside these institutions and quasi-market business entities, which were increasingly governed by *siloviki* recruited by Putin and his close associates.⁷⁸ As a rule, these decision-makers share a more conservative view regarding what the visual arts are, with a focus on realistic traditions of either pre-revolutionary Russia with connections to the Orthodox Church or artistic practices of the Soviet legacy. Alternative art forms, or what this article defines as contemporary art, are not given priority by most state agencies and corporations in terms of financing.⁷⁹ Connotations of contemporary art practices with the West and the liberal opposition could barely help artists and institutions in the field because this part of political life in Russia has been in systemic retreat after 2012.

The story of a never-created new museum of contemporary art is quite illustrative. An extension of the NCCA, it would be transformed into one of

74 Alena Lapina and Milena Orlova (18 November 2012), “Ustali trgovat’,” <http://www.theartnewspaper.ru/posts/3901/> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

75 Dmitrii Petrov (10 October 2019), “I snova – SlovoNovo: Vtoroi forum russkoi kul’tury v Evrope proshyol v Chernogorii,” <https://yandex.ru/turbo/novayagazeta.ru/s/articles/2019/10/10/82302-i-snova-slovonovo> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

76 Valentin Diaconov, “Emerging Art Center: Moscow,” in John Zarobell, ed., *Art and the Global Economy* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), pp. 90–96.

77 Mishura and Ageeva, “Financialisation and the Authoritarian State”; Viktorov and Abramov, “The Rise of Collateral-Based Finance under State Capitalism in Russia.”

78 The definition of *siloviki* or “people of power” includes representatives of security services and the military who hold positions inside the Russian bureaucratic apparatus and business.

79 Interview with Larisa Grinberg, curator, NCCA, 21 March 2019, Moscow.

the largest museums of its kind in the world, including large exhibition spaces, educational and academic centres, and an archive. In 2014, the Russian state held an international competition won by the acclaimed Irish architectural firm Heneghan Peng, with a project of a remarkable 17-storied building that was planned to be erected in the Khodynka Field in Moscow. In November 2014, Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin and the Russian minister of culture Vladimir Medinskii laid the first stone making a symbolic start of the construction. However, this did not help to finish the project. When the ultimate decision to allocate funding of 16 billion roubles for this museum would be taken in 2018, the state authorities abandoned the idea and the financing was withdrawn. This was an obvious demonstration that contemporary art did not belong to the priority issues of Russia's cultural policy.⁸⁰ To compare, in 2020, the state and affiliated charities invested at least 6 billion roubles, and probably much more, to create the enormous Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces outside Moscow. Built in an eclectic neo-Byzantine style, this khaki-green building differs from previous religious projects in terms of uniting monumentality with the glorification of the Russian military, Orthodox Christianity, patriotism, and the nation's imperial past including its Soviet period. For completely different reasons, the cathedral is viewed as controversial by the liberal opposition and some conservative Orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, the erection of this monumental building decorated richly with mosaics became the main cultural event in Russia in 2020.⁸¹

Artistic practices of the 2010s did not bring about optimism in terms of making Russian contemporary art attractive to private collectors. Besides politicisation of art, which also played a rather counterproductive role in its marketisation, another tendency became apparent. In the recent decade, artists moved towards production of what the art critic and curator Valentin Diaconov characterised as “the new boring” (*novoe skuchnoe*).⁸² A new younger generation of Russian artists such as Aleks Buldakov, Anastasiya Potemkina, Alexandra Sukhareva, and Arsenii Zhilyaev, many of whom also received training at European art schools, and notably at the Valand School of Fine Art in Gothenburg in Sweden, started to adapt their works to art practices in the West. Although this movement was ideologically a reaction to the marketisation of art and glamour of the 2000s, art objects of “the new boring” lacked connections to the local Russian context and were very similar to their Western counterparts.

80 Svetlana Yankina (18 September 2018), “ROSIZO-GTsSI lishilsya obeshannogo zdaniya na Khodynke,” <http://www.theartnewspaper.ru/posts/6070/> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

81 Shaun Walker (20 October 2020), “Angels and Artillery: A Cathedral to Russia's New National Identity,” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/20/orthodox-cathedral-of-the-armed-force-russian-national-identity-military-disneyland> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

82 Valentin Diaconov (25 June 2010), “Novye skuchnye,” *Kommersant Weekend*, p. 22; Valentin Diaconov (13 January 2017), “Novoe iskusstvo nulevykh i desyatych godov,” video presentation, Kazan, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqcfGtVjDLo&t=2899s> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

Against this background, a remarkable discussion between one of the star artists of the 1990s and 2000s Vladimir Dubossarsky and Russian oligarch Petr Aven took place in 2017. To begin with, Aven, who collects Russian art of the early 20th century, claimed that Russian contemporary art is secondary to the Western version and, therefore, uninteresting to collectors.⁸³ Dubossarsky replied in his video address by accusing Russian collectors that their refusal to buy the art of their contemporaries impeded the development of today's art in Russia. Because of this praxis, Russian artists remain unknown and have limited financial and organisational possibilities for development. Dubossarsky put the famous pre-revolutionary collectors Pavel Tretyakov and Ivan Morozov as examples. Tretyakov not only bought at that time contemporary Russian art but also befriended artists, built up an artistic network of his own, and created an environment where Russian art of the late 19th century could thrive and evolve into new forms. This activity brought Tretyakov his fame and left his name in history. The Russian new rich have undertaken nothing like this. They either bought something occasionally in the hope of re-selling art objects for a profit with a horizon of five years or collected "dead" art from the past.⁸⁴ In his reply to Dubossarsky, Aven claimed that "people collect what they want to collect" and that "the very idea of pointing out what to collect or not does not have the right to exist." To Aven, Russian contemporary art is not interesting, and "the past is often more alive than the present." During the last 15 years, "none of those [contemporary Russian artists] has become an important artist" comparable to their foreign peers, such as German Neo Rauch or Chinese Ai Weiwei.⁸⁵

The argument of Aven could be accepted if the overall tendency towards ignorance of Russian domestic contemporary art in particular and Russian culture in general has not been demonstrated by the majority of the new wealthy class. Oligarchs outsourced the bulk of their economic and financial activities abroad, which is often named in Russia an offshore economy. In a similar vein, they supported primarily cultural practices that emanated from the West. Most oligarchs, including Aven, stored entire or part of their art collections abroad, in geographical spaces like London, Switzerland, or the French Riviera. Even in those rare cases when support was provided for contemporary art, it dealt mainly with the demonstration and adoption of Western artistic practices in Russia. The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, financed by Roman Abramovich and his ex-wife Darya Zhukova, became an excellent art space in Moscow, yet it has

83 Petr Aven (14 June 2017), "Tvorcheskaya vstrecha s Petrom Avenom at FrolovGalleryArtClub," video presentation, Moscow, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r21OnijfF24&t=3s> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

84 Vladimir Dubossarsky (2017), video address to Petr Aven, not dated, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbXqtuphjs8> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

85 Petr Aven (4 August 2017), "Otvét hudožniku Vladimiru Dubossarskomu," <https://www.bmwclub.ru/threads/kniga-petra-avena-vremja-berezovskogo.1205212/page-5> (accessed on 26 December 2020).

targeted exclusively the importing of foreign art of global acclaim and hence has had a very loose connection to the domestic art scene.⁸⁶ Within the DME political economic regime, not only do money, technology, and business practices emanate from core capitalist economies in the West but foreign artistic practices and artists are also put in a superior position towards “inferior” domestic actors.

Similarly, to explain the unfulfilled promises of the Russian contemporary art market, one of the leading artists of the 1990s Anatoly Osmolovsky started a Facebook discussion on the role played by Russian galleries in this systemic failure.⁸⁷ Due to his exceptional position inside the Russian art system, Marat Guelman became the main target of the criticism. Some prominent artists, Guelman himself, and other gallerists joined the discussion that continued in 2016 and 2017. Osmolovsky’s main argument was that Guelman as a gallerist failed to create a self-sustainable gallery system that would put artists at the centre of the creation of commercial value. Such a system would also cultivate the long-standing interest of private collectors in contemporary art. A long-term business strategy that Guelman should have been but never was capable of developing would deal with the creation of artistic brands increasing the commercial value of Russian contemporary art as a whole. In reality, what Guelman created was a loose, fluid network where he positioned himself at the centre while artists were exploited by Guelman as a part of his manipulative strategies. Guelman wanted primarily to increase his own value as an art dealer and political technologist. According to Osmolovsky, none of the large Russian galleries was capable of developing a well-thought-out strategy to promote their artists. Their commercial survival depended rather on trading the works of many artists at low prices with collectors instead of making committed long-term investments in a selected number of the most talented names. As a result, both artists and galleries lost their presumable collectors. Moreover, Guelman’s ill-fated connections with the Russian power and personification of contemporary art with his name undermined the credibility of contemporary art in the eyes of those in power, making it difficult for artists to access state financing in the 2010s.

Apparently, Guelman should not be blamed alone for the miserable commercial existence of Russian contemporary art. Above all, an art market cannot develop in an unfriendly institutional and cultural environment that is characteristic of Russia’s post-Soviet capitalism throughout the three decades of its existence. Contemporary art does not stand alone for its unhappy condition but shares this destiny with other cultural spheres such as literature, music, cinema, or design, where Russia’s contribution to world culture has been limited after the fall of communism. The lack of sustainable financing for culture and artists is an obvious, though probably not the only, explanation for this outcome.

⁸⁶ Interview with Igor Dudinsky, 19 October 2018.

⁸⁷ I am grateful to Anna Kharkina who provided me with information about this discussion. Transcripts of the discussion from Osmolovsky’s and Guelman’s Facebook accounts are kept in the author’s archive.

However, Osmolovsky and his colleagues made a point regarding the lack of a systemic solution for the commercial promotion of artists. Today, in a developed contemporary art market, an ambitious artist should follow a career path within an existing rationally organised market infrastructure. Such a path should not rest only on artistic talent or the creation of personal networks, which is not enough to be accepted into the elite of the art world and to succeed financially. An artist should also be a scholar, an art theorist, and a philosopher to explain his work to the public, professional community, art dealers, and collectors. For that purpose, they should acquire a university degree at a prominent international institution, such as a top British art school, and, at a later career stage, to teach at such an institution. They should also write academic art-related texts. When such conditions of validation are met, an artist can gradually reach acclaimed exhibitions and increase the market value of their art. In Russia, an artistic career is still built on intuition and belief in artistic creativity alone. A Russian artist might be a self-proclaimed postmodernist just because it is fashionable, but, in reality, never reads even basic works of postmodernist philosophers such as Jean Baudrillard or Jean-François Lyotard. As a result, a true hierarchy of the contemporary art market that would validate artistic talent and distinguish elite artists from middle-talent and mediocre artists has not emerged. Therefore, prices of artists' works are not set according to their position within a hierarchy, which remains to be developed in the future.⁸⁸

It should come as no surprise that members of the Russian artistic community share a common narrative of a permanent "crisis" of the contemporary art market, as described by Komarova.⁸⁹ However, the existence of this narrative does not mean that the market is non-existent. There is a market infrastructure, and thousands of Russian artists manage to survive, albeit not with the same financial success as their peers in China have been able to enjoy.⁹⁰ Instead of the closed Art Moscow, Russia received a new contemporary art fair, Cosmospow, founded in 2010 by art dealer and collector Margarita Pushkina, which has gained in popularity over the years, even during the COVID pandemic in 2020.⁹¹ However, the contemporary art market remains non-transparent in Russia, with much of the sales made in a

88 Interview with Igor Dudinsky, 19 October 2018. I am grateful to the late Igor Dudinsky regarding this point on the lack of an artistic and market hierarchy in Russia.

89 Komarova, "Ups and Downs of Art Commerce."

90 Yana Zhilyaeva (25 June 2020), "K nam idut te, komu ran'she bylo ne do iskusstva," interview with Vladimir Ovcharenko, founder of Vladei auction house, <https://www.forbes.ru/forbeslife/403751-k-nam-idut-te-komu-ranshe-bylo-ne-do-iskusstva-glava-aukcionnogo-doma-vladey-o> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

91 Polina Kozlova (8 September 2017), "Kto-to dolshen zanimat'sya prodazhami, poka hudozniki tvoryat," interview with Cosmospow's founder Margarita Pushkina, <https://www.buro247.ru/culture/arts/8-sep-2017-margarita-pushkina-interview.html> (accessed on October 12, 2022).

grey zone, through unreported sales in galleries or in private.⁹² This means that any statistics regarding the market, such as sale volumes, are not comprehensive, making it difficult to apply quantitative methods for its study. The first attempt at such estimation was made as late as 2017 by the project InArt. According to reported auction and gallery sales, including from foreign venues, the total volume of the market was 20.3 million euros. For 2019, the corresponding volume was reported to be 23 million euros. In reality, the volume of this market is much larger due to the presence of sales in a grey zone. InArt has also developed two ratings of the most acclaimed contemporary artists in Russia, where the pricing of their works is one of the indicators that impact their position in the rating. The first is a general rating, while the other rates young artists under 35. In the first rating, we find a list of familiar top Russian artists who made their careers in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, the AES+F Group, Olga Chernyshova, Vladimir Dubossarsky, and Grisha Bruskin.⁹³ From 2013, Russia received its primary auction house with a specialisation in contemporary art, Vladei.⁹⁴

The 2010s have been characterised by a number of important tendencies in terms of the formation of an institutional framework that supports the existence of contemporary art and can indirectly lead to a revival of its market. Unlike in previous years, in the 2010s, museums became a central element for the validation of artistic quality. This applied to both specialised and established classic art museums. In 2014, the privately owned Garage changed its official status from a centre into a museum of contemporary art. This institution has gained an international reputation, but its contribution to fostering the domestic contemporary art community has been limited so far. The museum has focused more on organising exhibitions of established foreign stars rather than on the promotion of local artists. Garage's more promising initiative includes its extensive publishing activities of cutting-edge literature in the field. It also provides art residences for Russian artists, a popular facility that is still not very common in the country.⁹⁵ In St Petersburg, the gallery Erarta was established in 2010, making it the largest museum in Russia specialising exclusively in domestic contemporary art. In December 2021, the V-A-C Foundation of one of Russia's richest tycoons, Leonid Mikhelson, opened a spectacular contemporary art centre in the former hydropower station GES-2 in downtown Moscow. The event was requested by the Russian president and Moscow's mayor. The facilities are standard, including exhibition spaces, cafés, a library, a bookstore, and art residences. Until recently,

92 Laure Debouttiere (14 February 2019), "The Russian Art Market Today: Current Situation, Practices and Perspectives," interview with Anton Belov, <https://sculpture-network.org/en/magazine/Russian-art-market-today> (accessed on 4 November 2020).

93 Irina Sedykh, *Rossiiskii rynek predmetov iskusstva* (Moscow: Higher School of Economics, 2018).

94 Zhilyaeva, "K nam idut te, komu ran'she bylo ne do iskusstva."

95 Debouttiere, "The Russian Art Market Today."

this foundation was quite invisible in Russia, but now it is planning to expand its activities. Even established fine arts museums such as the State Hermitage, the Tretyakov Gallery, and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts have been increasingly engaged in organising exhibitions of contemporary art expanding collections and developing expertise in the field.

Another tendency deals with investments in higher education in contemporary art and, in particular, in related professions such as curators, critics, teachers, and art managers. New institutions arose, such as Osmolovsky's art school Baza while established educational institutes, such as the Higher School of Economics and the Russian State University for the Humanities, opened new educational programmes. Professionalisation of artistic practices and infrastructure is gradually being introduced in Russia.

The third important tendency deals with the spreading of contemporary art outside Moscow and St Petersburg. In 2009, the all-present Marat Guelman was a pioneer in this process when he was appointed as director of the newly created PERMM, Perm Museum of Contemporary Art. His contacts with key decision-makers in the region, whose ambitions were to transform this provincial city into Russia's capital of contemporary art, played a decisive role. As in previous years, Guelman's activities were followed by high controversy and scandals. Contemporary art objects were introduced from above, in a provocative and often offending manner, for the population of a rather poor region with no previous knowledge of contemporary art practices and without implications to the local context.⁹⁶ The situation improved after Guelman's departure; the museum survived and started gradually to be accepted and supported by the local community, albeit without such large budgets as it enjoyed under its first director. Since 2010, in nearby Yekaterinburg, another Russian million city with a rich industrial past, local young curators under the leadership of Alisa Prudnikova have been more successful than Guelman. With minimal funding, they managed to cultivate an environment of contemporary art deeply enrooted in the local community and historical conditions under the umbrella of the regularly held Ural Industrial Biennial of Contemporary Art. For this purpose, they used empty industrial locations and plants as temporary exhibition spaces. New appealing contemporary art centres have arisen in other Russian provincial cities, including Nizhniy Novgorod's Arsenal, Kazan's Smena, and Vladivostok's Zarya. Private foundations, not necessarily the state, have been the primary supporters of such initiatives. All these efforts of local art curators and artists have led to greater awareness of contemporary art practices in Russia and created interest among

96 Marina Abasheva and Vladimir Abashev, "Under the Sign of Nostalgia: The Cultural Revolution in Perm and Its Narrative Representations," in Otto Boele, Boris Noordenbos, and Ksenia Robbe, eds., *Post-Soviet Nostalgia: Confronting the Empire's Legacies* (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 157–182.

the younger population. This also resulted in an increase in local collectors who started to buy art from local artists, even though at a lower price level than in affluent Moscow.⁹⁷

6. CONCLUSIONS

The presented study witnesses a close interdependence between the evolution of Russia's contemporary art market and its domestic capitalism after 1991. Three distinctive phases have been identified. From the very beginning, proponents of Russia's capitalism attempted to imitate an LME as it historically arose in the Anglo-Saxon world. In reality, this could only mean an emergence of a DME regime with a national bourgeoisie acting as local compradors connected to financial flows and productive chains originating and controlled in CCEs in the West. However, the Russian elites failed to accomplish this task, and no well-functioning DME regime arose in this country, unlike what happened in countries of the Visegrád Group. The main problem of Russian contemporary art has been its close ideational and organisational association with the new comprador elites, which remained very unstable as a social stratum and which failed to keep control over political power. The fate of Marat Guelman, his gallery, and the network associated with him, which largely involved most Russian contemporary artists, is telling. In the end, these artists simply could not rely on stable domestic demand that would support the economic survival of such art practices in Russia. From the middle of the 2000s, and in particular during the 2010s, a new political economic regime of state capitalism arose. The decision-makers in this system are generally not interested in contemporary art, at least not to the degree that they are ready to assign considerable financial assets for its support.

A key answer to the question of how the contemporary art market in Russia can survive probably lies in the democratisation of this art, both in terms of the creation of interest in art among the broad population and a price level that should be affordable for the emerging Russian middle class. The miserable start of post-Soviet contemporary art in the 1990s was in part connected to the impoverishment of the old Soviet intelligentsia that at that time was the only social stratum capable of appreciating and buying this art. However, democratisation also means humble economic conditions for artists who cannot rely on high prices just because representatives of the middle class cannot pay much. The COVID-19 year of 2020 promised a very unfavourable outcome for Russian contemporary art, with all exhibitions and cultural and associated social events closed and interruption of international exchange. Surprisingly, the actual result became quite different. Instead of a deadlock, the Russian public's interest in art practices only rose. The sale volumes of the Cosmospow art fair and Vladei auction house increased. More importantly, the trading of art objects moved on the Internet and

⁹⁷ Interview with Alisa Prudnikova, 18 October 2018.

social media, enhancing direct contact between artists and consumers. To be able to sell, artists were forced to decrease substantially the price level of their art.⁹⁸ The future will demonstrate if this tendency of democratisation of art persists. Art does not necessarily need to exist as a complex, highly professionalised, and formalised industry consisting of galleries, auction houses, specialised museums, and interconnected infrastructure that creates an economic value of art exclusively for profit.⁹⁹ Neither should it exist as an integrated part of state capitalism where artists and the art community would desperately hope to gain access to large state-originated financial flows. Art creativity can be supported by alternative means, such as part-time jobs, as the alternative art community actually did during the late Soviet period of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In that respect, the survival of contemporary art and its evolution will probably depend more on the survival of the Russian middle class, which would be able to serve as a social base for practising artists and as mass buyers and consumers of their art, albeit at a lower price level.

The current war in Ukraine alters once again the preconditions for the contemporary art scene in Russia. So far, the tendency towards increased public interest in contemporary art has withstood both the COVID pandemic and the beginning of the war. For example, despite a massive emigration of Western-oriented artists and potential art consumers after February 2022, sale volumes and the number of visitors at the Cosmospow art fair increased once more in September 2022.¹⁰⁰ How is this tendency reconcilable with the main conclusion of the paper that developments of the contemporary art market are conditioned by a particular political economic regime? While Russian state capitalism does not look friendly towards contemporary art practices, it may support the expansion of the domestic middle class in a relatively isolated economy, in which there would be demand for contemporary art, albeit at a generally lower price level than would be the case under the now-unfeasible DME model. The increased militarisation of Russian society, however, does not promise the long-term survival of practices that were associated with contemporary art in Russia until the late 2010s. A specific symbiosis between contemporary art, its domestic market, and the resurgence

98 Alexander Bykovski (28 July 2020), "Beru ne glyadya: Kak feisbuk-gruppa 'Shar i krest' uronila rynek i spasla hudozhnikov v karantine," <https://www.forbes.ru/forbeslife/405923-beru-ne-glyadya-kak-feysbuk-gruppa-shar-i-krest-uronila-rynek-i-spasla-hudozhnikov> (accessed on 4 November 2022); Alexandra Hrisanfova (14 September 2020), "Investitsii v iskusstvo: Kak art-rynek pomenyalsya iz-za COVID-10," <https://quote.rbc.ru/news/article/5f5f8e349a7947f88816a6da> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

99 Vidokle, "Art without Market, Art without Education."

100 Anna Savitskaya (21 September 2022), "Itogi Cosmospow 2022: Tolpy posetitelei, prodazhi vo vremya montazha i kul'turnyi eskapizm," <https://www.theartnewspaper.ru/posts/20220921-geya/> (accessed on 4 November 2022).

of a militarised imperial “Kultura dva,”¹⁰¹ as has already materialised in the Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces discussed in the paper, may be another future alternative under Russia’s state capitalism.

101 Vladimir Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).