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POSTWAR: ART BETWEEN THE PACIFIC AND THE ATLANTIC 1945–1965

COMMITMENT TO HUMILITY

Ekaterina Degot

Russia's October Revolution of 1917 may have announced itself to the world with a blare of brand-new abstract geometrical shapes, but it was in figurative images with a classical pedigree that the new society recognized itself, and it would maintain this commitment to realism as its main visual and epistemological tool until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1991, and beyond. Discussions in the early 1930s canonized the formula "Socialist realism," even if the radical left-wing scene preferred "proletarian realism," "dialectical-materialist realism," and other terms.[1] In any case, "realism" marked the difference from the previous dominant tendency in Russian art. Futurism, insofar as it was deemed that the future anticipated by the Futurists, had now become everyday. "Socialist" was meant to demarcate this new realism from bourgeois nineteenth-century realism, thought to have betrayed itself and started the descent into modernist formalism—the main adversary of Socialist Realism for many years to come.

By the 1930s, the Soviet avant-garde had grown dissatisfied with modernist art, which they saw as translating social alienation into its symbolic representation through flatness and fragmentation. Instead, Communist artists gravitated toward holistic, synthetic forms that defied social alienation rather than mimicking it. The radical left shifted toward various forms of documentary, photomontage, and film (a tendency they called "factography"), but also toward politically engaged figurative painting. In its violent rejection of autonomous art, seen as a comfortable bourgeois institution, this postabstract propagandistic realism set out to be destructive rather than descriptive.

The new institutional system stood almost unchanged from the 1930s to the early 1990s. In an unprecedented challenge to earlier patterns of individual production, division of labor, and the market, the new art positioned itself as an element of the new, noncapitalist public sphere. Artworks were ideally to be produced collectively (or at least, more realistically, through advance collective discussions among producers) and were intended for a mass audience that, also ideally, would engage with them through political debate. In the total absence of a private market, production would rely on state commissions, which in turn were distributed through artists' unions and cooperatives. Murals, public sculptures, illustrated books, film, and photography allowed access to the masses, but easel painting was also integrated into this system through a vital emphasis on distribution through the media: publishing houses issued art magazines and postcards by the millions of copies, constituting the staple of the Soviet art system alongside traditional museums. To some extent, originals kept in museums were seen as master copies for further reproductions, whether mechanical or, more often than not, manual.

During the Stalinist period—that is, until 1953—the initial egalitarian impulse of this system was violently repressed. Debates within artists' unions, once to some extent democratic, stopped. A politically servile artistic bureaucracy emerged, negotiating enormous fees that made its members extremely well off in comparison to an average worker or an artist in the provinces. No independent art criticism was possible, corrections to dominant aesthetic paradigms were imposed by party decree, and the stakes were high: an attack on an artist in the central press would almost certainly lead to expulsion from the artists' union, a loss of commissions, exclusion from teaching positions, and ultimately a kind of social death.

TRIUMPHALIST DECOLONIZATION

Immediately after World War II (which in the Soviet Union was given the deeply felt name the "Great Patriotic War"), in party decrees and in the public sphere, the rhetorics of class struggle and internationalism disappeared and resistance to the bourgeois order received a cultural interpretation. The Soviet victory over Nazism (Japanese imperialism was too far away from Moscow to be acknowledged), achieved through Joseph Stalin's tactical reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Church, among other things, was seen as a victory over Western colonial dominance. (To some extent this may have been justified, since Hitler's policies in Eastern Europe were implicitly colonial.) The cultural war on the West became intense after 1946, when campaigns against so-called "rootless cosmopolitanism" and "kowtowing to the West" were declared. In 1948, an aggressive press campaign ostracized dozens of theorists and critics, almost exclusively of Jewish descent. Basically, internationalism and modernism were stigmatized as Jewish.

Victors over the West took classical Western art as booty both literally and metaphorically. Vasiliy Yakovlev's *Portrait of Georgy Zhukov* (1946; plate 172), a neoacademic tour de force, shows Marshal Georgy Zhukov, a Russian commander during the battle for Berlin, riding on a mighty white stallion. He triumphs not just over Nazi Germany and German culture—both swastika banners and medieval churches are shown falling behind him—but over the whole European tradition of neo-baroque portraiture, which Yakovlev proudly appropriates and tames just as Zhukov tames his horse. (Besides being a painter, Yakovlev ran the restoration department of Moscow's Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, where he specialized in restoring paintings by Rubens. Secular painting was imposed on Russia in the eighteenth century by Peter the Great; some 200 years later, in a triumphalist justification of ancient self-colonization, Yakovlev was claiming the right to the Western style because the West had now betrayed its true "westernness," having embraced modernism.

In a different but related dynamic, this antiinternationalist decolonization was accompanied by colonization of the Soviet Union's own margins, called "national republics" in an assumption that Russia was not one. The artists of the non-Russian republics were expected to represent their region's life in a style bearing no resemblance to its traditional art, since the decorative qualities of traditional arts were

seen as a kind of formalism. In 1947, the Ilya Repin Leningrad Institute for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture set up a "studio of nationalities" to prepare young artists from outside the European tradition for the vicissitudes of drawing from nature. Semyon Chuikov's *Doch' Sovetskoi Kirgizii* (Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia, 1948; fig. 1), for example, was praised as a successful example of the cultural awakening not just of a girl from the steppes, who prioritized study over tending sheep, but of Kirgiz national realist painting, a previously unknown genre. The republics were forced to embrace a high culture represented by a generic realist visual language interpreted as the national Russian style. Russian culture, understanding itself as supranational, was spread abroad, too: in the 1950s, the painter Konstantin Maksimov was sent to China to teach the methods of realist art there.

REALISM OF THE POSSIBLE

Soviet realist aesthetics were heavily influenced by Vladimir Lenin's famous essay "Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution" (1908), in which Lenin praised Tolstoy as a "genius who has ... drawn incomparable pictures of Russian life."[2] This pictorial metaphor brought the narrative and the visual into a dialectical embrace that later critics had in mind when they tended to evaluate each art through the criteria of the other. A realist text had to be as vivid as a painting, while a realist painting, without losing its sensuous credibility, had to encompass the whole range of reality, the fullness of its connections and relations, past and future—something that only a novel could perhaps have at least hoped to offer.

One new genre promised just that: "thematic painting," a political statement embedded in a visual narrative. A paradigmatic example is Fyodor Shurpin's *Utro nashei rodiny* (Morning of our Motherland, 1946–48; plate 173), a portrait of Stalin significantly never positioned as a portrait of Stalin: it claimed a higher ambition. The narrative here, however, is minimalist to say the least: there is almost nothing to be seen but the indirect glow of the sun and the figure of Stalin. Yet the viewer is asked to imagine a magnificent future. In 1946, in a country devastated by the recent war, to ask for that sort of imagination was to ask for the superlative public-spirited exertion that in the Soviet Union would come to be called shock work. One can, and probably should, dismiss this painting for its utter glorification of the tyrant, but it also marks an important shift in Soviet realism from the actual to the potential. A later Soviet dictionary of aesthetics would argue that "artistic reflection is high aesthetic selectiveness, orientation to the possible and the probable."[3] For Soviet critics, realism had to represent not so much the current reality as hopes for a better one; this sort of realism "presupposes possibility beyond already existing reality," as Ernst Bloch put it, describing the "warm movement in Marxism."[4]

The haunting of the real by the possible also challenges the normative idea of quality. If the audience had to discern a Communism yet to come in a still imperfect reality, why would it not "foresee" painting itself in its different state—better, stronger, closer to the ideal, as if created by one of the classic humanist painters, realists *avant la lettre*, whom Soviet painters and art historians idolized during the entire Soviet period. If, through their painterly style, artists expressed the ambition to be a Rembrandt or a Velázquez, a Zurbarán or a Chardin (and many did), they were showing themselves at their best not just in an aesthetic but in an ethical sense. And since they knew they were not Velázquez after all, they also demonstrated humility. The viewer might then give them the benefit of the doubt—Bloch's "principle of hope"—by looking at what the painting might have been, might still become, rather than at what it was and at the limitations it had.

The theory of Socialist Realism as an epistemological tool was based on Lenin's theory of reflection, which stated the correlation between objective reality and cognition, but in both directions: according to Lenin, cognition mirrors reality in an active, transformative way, bringing out the best of it (and that, one can deduce, works better than cognition per se, only possible through a process of necessarily limited approximations).[5] Slavoj Žižek is right to see Lenin's theory as implicitly idealistic, since the very idea of mirroring divides objective reality and consciousness.[6] *Marxism and Questions of Linguistics,* signed by Stalin (but not necessarily written by him) and published in 1950, goes still farther, proclaiming the relative independence of society's superstructure from its base—something that was never contested, even during the years of de-Stalinization, and became the most important ideological platform for arts seeking the ideal.

THE POWER OF TRUTH

On March 5, 1953, Stalin died; in February 1956, the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union condemned his "cult of personality" and called for a "return to Leninist norms of party life." That opened the short period of "socialism with a human face," which ended in 1968 when an even more humanly faced socialism in Prague was crushed by Soviet tanks.

The party's greeting to the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Artists, in 1957, called for works providing "a feeling of genuine aesthetic pleasure and joy for millions, which enrich their spiritual world, which ennoble and elevate man."[7] The assumption that "rich" and "noble" were positive qualities was rather unexpected. In the same way, the autonomy of art was partly rehabilitated, insofar as artists gained it de facto. Artists' unions now controlled media distribution and museum acquisitions, and by the 1960s, at least in Moscow and Leningrad, had turned into a relatively privileged caste of professionals isolated from the rest of society. For the artists of the "austere style" of the early 1960s, as well as for the first generation of conceptualists later in the decade, this autonomy enabled a self-reflexive process: both groups were reflecting on the choices made in the 1920s, the figurative turn in the first place.

Fig. 1. Semyon Chuikov. *Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia.* 1948. Oil on canvas, 120 x 95 cm.
The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

"Austere style" *(surovyj stil)* was a term invented by critics to describe the work of young artists of the time (Pavel Nikonov, Viktor Popkov, Tahir Salahov and others) who developed a sober and monumental visual language and linked the sensuous to the political.[8] Their protagonists—everyday heroes, workers, almost exclusively

Fig. 2. Geliy Korzhev. *Homer.* 1960.
Oil on canvas, 290 x 140 cm.
State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

male—are represented as anti-Stalinist political subjects who do not just follow orders but are architects of their own destiny, who combine physical strength with independent minds, and whose labor on behalf of society allows them time for their own intellectual development. In contrast to the mythomaniac art of the Stalinist period, artists of the "austere style" insisted on truthfulness. That did not mean more credible representation, i.e., less idealization, but rather a more rhetorical presence of Communist ideals in everyday life. This is what is at stake in Popkov's *Builders of Bratsk Hydro-Electric Power Station* (1960–61; plate 17), which stages an artificial, theatrical mise-en-scène. This limelight composition is rooted in a Brechtian alienation effect and the breaking of the fourth wall, but also, digging deeper, in the famous Hegelian idea that "the essence reveals itself," which remained central to Soviet realism.

The artists of the austere style were supported by the critic Nina Dmitrieva, who herself was influenced by Mikhail Lifshitz, the main Marxist theorist of realism. Lifshitz, who in the 1930s had worked closely with György Lukacs and published an important anthology of early Marxist literature on the role of art, was committed to the idea of real-

Fig. 3. Geliy Korzhev. *Raising the Banner.* 1960. Oil on canvas, 156 x 290 cm.
State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

ism as a cognitive tool and sensuous instrument in the search for truth. Truthfulness for Lifshitz was the representation of what, after Hegel, he called *veritas rei*—the truth of things, the best in them, their ideal projection. The very fact of revealing something in sensuous form was already considered aesthetic, but the highest form of this revelation would be the revelation of the universal inside and through the unique.

The idea of the hard ascension, physical as well as spiritual, toward the ideal, the universal, toward something that transcends even the notion of class, is at the core of Geliy Korzhev's iconic triptych *Communists* (1957–60). In the central panel a worker raises a heavy flag that has fallen from the hands of a dead comrade (fig. 3); to the right, *The Internationale*, two brave horn-players raise their instruments and defy death in a battle in the Russian Civil War (fig. 4). In the lefthand panel, *Homer*, we see what all this was for: in a studio after the war, two former soldiers copy, meticulously and modestly, a bust of Homer, elevating themselves above their own background and past to the universalist and classless level of the humanist culture of European antiquity (fig. 2). This ennoblement and elevation is achieved, notably, through mimetic copying, an activity a dedicated realist like Korzhev identified with. And it was precisely this copying that, for him, opened the door to the immensity of the "absolute truth" that transcends any categorization, be it epistemological or sociological.

The category of the general—*vseobschchee*, a term that can also be translated as "universal," "overall," "generic" in the sense of going beyond divisions, or "common" in relation to property—was extremely important for Soviet Marxists (Lifshits, Evald Iljenkov) as well as for literary and art criticism. The general is the abstract that has overcome

Fig. 4. Geliy Korzhev. *The Internationale.* 1957–58. Oil on canvas, 285 x 128 cm. State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg

its abstractness, the concrete that is deeply reflected in its concreteness, the realistic that is more than just representation, the proper and unique that opens up toward a higher level of generalization. It is high culture and philosophical thinking that have freed themselves from their historical limitations and joined the common, classless future. The contemporary theorist Keti Chukhrov points out that in Soviet aesthetics, "art, even though it might exist within the harsh conditions of class society or might be produced by the bourgeoisie, exists and realizes itself as art regardless of this class society, albeit under its influence. According to this standpoint, shared by many Soviet aestheticians, all art must be potentially proto-communist."[9]

Only through a specific Soviet attitude to copying and reproduction, however, could this potential be fulfilled. In the bourgeois institution of art, the classical heritage is instrumentalized as the mechanism of the production of elites, but what Korzhev assumes, in his own work as well as in antique sculptures, is not a unique object for individual consumption, rare, expensive, and hard to find, but a potential for immediate mass reproduction, reaching millions. The "true" character of these reproductions, however, directly correlates with the degree of realism of the original. Abstract painting is easily reproducible, but this reproduction has no value; the truth of the reproduction can only be guaranteed by the memory of the "primal scene" of an artist copying from nature.

1 See Matthew Cullerne Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 140–41.

2 The essay is available online at www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/sep/11.htm (accessed May 2016).

3 *Estetika. Slovar'* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoe literatury, 1989), p. 246.

4 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 1954–59, excerpted in Richard Noble, ed., *Utopias, Documents of Contemporary Art* (London: Whitechapel Gallery, and Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2009), p. 44.

5 Vladimir Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, 1915.

6 Slavoj Žižek, "Afterword: Lenin's Choice," in Lenin, *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings from February to October 1917*, ed. Žižek (London: Verso, 2002).

7 *Iskusstvo* no. 4 (1957): 3.

8 The translation "severe style" is common, but has a punitive note absent from the original Russian term, which rather stresses asceticism.

9 Keti Chukhrov, "Classical Art and Human Resignation in Soviet Marxism," in Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan, eds., *Sweet Sixties: Specters and Spirits of a Parallel Avant-Garde* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014).

EXCHANGEABLE REALISM

Anneka Lenssen

One September evening in 1959, a large crowd filled Cairo's el-Gomhoreya Square in protest against the recently announced French plan to conduct nuclear-weapons testing in the Algerian Sahara. Their group contained many students from the decolonizing nations of the Third World, present in Cairo to attend an Afro-Asian Youth Conference. Delegations of young Somalis, Indonesians, and others had gone to the square holding signs reading "No to de Gaulle" and "No to nuclear bombs in Africa."[1] There they heard both students and Egyptian government officials deliver speeches denouncing imperialism from a central stage decorated with the image of a mushroom cloud exploding over the African continent and flanked by a doubled "No!" in English and in Arabic. The event's National Union organizers had succeeded in staging a photogenic rally. The Egyptian magazine *al-Musawwar* printed a stunning full-spread image showing the protesters facing off against the motifs of industrial warfare, thereby conceptually linking the cause of Algeria's active struggle for independence from France to the collective fate of the Arab countries, the African continent, and the entirety of the colonized world (fig. 1).[2]

The Afro-Asian liberation struggle so pictured would have real historic consequences. And yet, like any show of solidarity, its images also worked to sustain a number of simulations, including, in this case, promotion of the moral authority of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Egypt had already claimed military leadership of the Arab bloc, a position of influence that, as of February 1958, included a complete but ultimately temporary political union with Syria as the United Arab Republic (UAR).[3] By also taking a lead in Afro-Asian solidarity, the critical geopolitical entity inaugurated at the Bandung Conference in 1955, Egypt claimed still greater bargaining power.[4] All this played out as Nasser pursued increasingly repressive security measures at home, carrying out mass arrests of Communist Party members, including Egyptian artist Inji Efflatoun (in Cairo) and Syrian artist Nazir Nabaa (in Damascus).

To interpret artistic realism in the United Arab Republic, or in another of the Arab countries pledged to the antiimperialist cause in 1959, is to negotiate the paradoxes of an international system of self-representation that turned upon matters of moral fortitude and human goodness, often in tension with actual policies or experiences. Many Arab art critics called for an art that engaged reality, but the works of art they prized typically drew their authority not from conformity to observable appearances but rather from the authenticity of the artist's intentions and capacities.[5] As the young Syrian artist Ghazi al-Khaldi put it in March 1959, it was impossible to separate the artist from his production, for both emerged from the same experience of life.[6] To al-Khaldi, a painting or other art object would need to be evaluated in an organic continuum with social and physical forces, which made an artist's sovereign expression less important than his or her demonstration of humanity.[7]

Fig. 1. "La! Ya Di-jawl" (No! Oh, De Gaulle).
Editorial feature in the Egyptian magazine *al-Musawwar*, September 11, 1959

These realist expectations would increasingly find sustenance in a developing circuitry of government exchange programs that kept artists and artworks mobile across the Second and Third Worlds, thereby demonstrating the universal exchangeability of the cause. Syrian artists, for example, began to study in the Eastern bloc in addition to the Italian academies they had once preferred, with Elias Zayyat going to Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1956 and Abdul Manan Shamma to Moscow in 1958. In 1959, the Moroccan artist Farid Belkahia, who had been studying in Paris, left for Prague, where he hoped to observe a Communist approach to culture and where he was able to mix with left-wing writers and artists passing through on their way to Beijing or Moscow.[8] That same year, Egypt sent Hamed Owais—a consummate painter of the worker and of populist causes—to Poland to stage two exhibitions, and the Moroccan artist Ahmed Cherkaoui undertook a year's study in Warsaw beginning the following year. Exchanges of collective exhibitions proliferated at the same time. Poster art by Eastern European designers became a fixture in the National Museum of Damascus, with Syria returning the favor with touring exhibitions of painting, sculpture, and folk arts. In Baghdad, an exhibition of watercolors, woodcuts, and antique masterpieces sent from Beijing impressed students with its technical virtuosity.[9]

Given the diversity and volume of these artistic exchanges, it is instructive to consider the nature of the training offered to those who took fellowships abroad. Notably, the positive character of the realist paradigm hinged upon the cultivation of recognized skill, typically via the highly structured environment of a national academy. From the memoirs of Iraqi artist Rafa al-Nasiri, for example, we learn that the Chinese exhibit in Baghdad motivated him to pursue a four-year fellowship at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, where he immersed himself in a refined tradition of master printmaking.[10] His time at the academy, 1959–63, coincided with the extreme hardships of the Great Leap Forward, but his recollections focus on the estimable skill of instructors such as Li Hua and his own student work attends to the quotidian and the wholesome. His woodcut *Chinese Girls* (1961), for example, depicts two figures lacing ice skates, preparing to enjoy Kunming Lake in the wintertime (fig. 2).

From the progress reports submitted for Egyptian students, who also went to Beijing, it is possible to glean further detail about intended outcomes. Heba Enayat and Tomader Turki (a married couple) attended the Central Academy in 1957–62, completing sequences of training—one year of "national painting," twenty-six months of woodcut, thirty-four months in studio workrooms, and nine months of study tours in the countryside—that resulted in the ability to, among other skills, depict different Chinese minorities, render figures, landscape, flowers, and birds in national styles, and print woodcuts in both the Western and the Chinese manner.[11] The final year of degree study included individual work and an exhibition, but even these fell under a single, shared framework of evaluation. Enayat and Turki earned nearly identical commendations, having each "succeeded in extracting something nutritive from Chinese traditional art" and having applied it to their own creative work.[12] The sheer iterability of these exchanges gave them an ideological power. Within this circuit of ongoing and collective effort, Egyptian, Iraqi, and Chinese artists alike might take "something nutritive from Chinese traditional art." Artists worked synthetically, acting as sensitive instruments for conveying the vitality of cultural inheritance.

Back in Cairo, the College of Fine Arts was admitting increasing numbers of students from other Arab states, including a large contingent from Syria, which did not yet have its own degree-granting art school. The curriculum, in accordance with the populist emphases of Nasser's government, brought field observation of Egypt-in-construction to the fore, sending art students to depict the Aswan High Dam

Fig. 2. Rafa Al-Nasiri. *Chinese Girls*. 1961. Woodcut print, 15 × 20 cm. Courtesy Rafa Nasiri Studio

project (it would be launched officially in 1960, with the help of Soviet financial credits, expertise, and equipment) and to produce portraits of members of the urban proletariat.[13] The Syrian contingent included al-Khaldi, who in 1959 wrote a charming article on life in Cairo to be published back home in *al-Jundi,* the cultural magazine of the Syrian military.[14] Al-Khaldi's essay is particularly concerned with conveying the esprit de corps between himself and his roommates, fellow Syrians Burhan Karkutli and Hisham Zamriq, and provides detailed accounts of each one's routines and personality quirks. Zamriq, we learn, awoke at sunrise, took a cigarette and coffee, and went to the college to paint, then returned at noon to prepare a meal and nap, followed by work at home on still life or portrait exercises and nights devoted to listening to classical music. Karkutli, by contrast, preferred to fill his days conversing with the neighborhood children.

So anchored in the dailiness of artistic life, al-Khaldi's article helps to point to one other crucial aspect of the realism produced by this international circuitry of studentship, which is that it needed to continue moving and undergoing exchange. Neither Cairo nor Damascus could contain the work that these artists hoped to do. Al-Khaldi tells his

Fig. 3. Hamed Owais. *At the Aswan Dam.* 1965.
Oil on canvas, 99 × 85 cm. State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow

readers how he and Zamriq daydreamed about escaping aristocratic Cairo and going to Mexico to study its school of "humanist realism."[15] They had come to imagine a future world order in which a youthful artist needed only his or her talent to flourish, not permission or financing from the authorities. Al-Khaldi's article even concludes with a glimpse of that very future, reporting that Karkutli had just left Egypt for Spain, where he would try to use his humanity as currency. Carrying no money, the Syrian artist instead held a sign announcing, "I am an Arab student continuing my study at my own expense. I paint pictures for five piasters."[16]

If these young Syrian artists hoped to find ways to mobilize themselves and their work more directly, then others in the system would continue to pursue the calm realism of observation rooted in shared humanity. Owais is the exemplary figure in this regard. Nearly twenty years older than the College of Fine Arts students, he had been formed by the upward-mobility discourses of the 1930s and '40s and had then come into professional prominence after the 1952 revolution as a visual interpreter of a strong and populist Egypt.[17] His oeuvre includes grand visions of Nasser in his role as a great leader, as in the well-known 1957 painting *Nasser and the Nationalization of the Canal*, which places the president in the center of the lucrative Suez trade nexuses he had reclaimed for Egyptian control, buttressing him with a sea of expectant though not yet exultant citizens (plate 191). But Owais's revolution was almost always an anticipatory rather than a finished one; his subjects appear wary, and even consumed by the precarity of their lives. In *Peasant Family* (1959), for example, we see both father and mother scowl with anxiety—an emotion Owais recognized as universal to any working family—on their move toward an unknown future. Even paintings ostensibly devoted to solidarity, such as *We—The People* (1960), cast the faces of the participant types—urbanized builder, agricultural worker, and peasant mother—in gray shadow, as if to foreclose the possibility of an allegorical reading.[18]

Because Owais maintained such a principled commitment to the quality of immediacy in his pictures, his occasional deviance from this norm becomes all the more compelling as his testimony shifts to the larger system of exchange. Consider, for example, his 1965 painting of the Aswan High Dam, now in the collection of the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow (fig. 3). Tucked into a riveted contraption high above the newly created Lake Nasser reservoir, men work on the construction of transmission towers and power grids. Here Owais depicted a vertiginous space of labor, bringing together several perspectival modes, from a bird's-eye view of the barges to an assembly of cascading pipes and braces. And, unusually for him, he opted to denote his human actors by means of abstract geometry, giving the two hard hats the perfect circular shape of cogs. Presumably, Owais intended to convey the awesome power of human and nonhuman collaboration in the painting, linking flesh to steel and water to electricity. Yet in using this schematic shorthand, he also left the immediacy of his realism behind, signaling submission to industrial power.

This is not to suggest that Owais had lost faith in the necessity of national development (indeed, in this work he would seem to be interested in conveying a technological sublime). Rather, it is to note that the ostensible subject of Owais's painting—a triumphant model of state-led development—had begun to slip from grace. As Owais well knew, the same art students who had formed their political consciousness in the heyday of Afro-Asian solidarity had, by 1965, grown impatient with the bureaucracy that once had promised to liberate them. Before the end of the decade, many would come to seek immediacy in direct action, embracing the "new man" heroism of guerrilla resistance and embedding their work in armed struggle.[19]

1 "Lal Ya Di-jawl," *al-Musawwar*, September 11, 1959.
2 Ibid.
3 I thank Nalini Sairsingh and Allison Gordon for their assistance in tracking imagery of Afro-Asian solidarity produced in the UAR, 1958–61.
4 For discussion of how Bandung articulated a "critical geopolitical entity" see Anthony Gardner and Charles Green, "Biennials of the South on the Edges of the Global," *Third Text* 4, no. 123 (July 2013): 446.
5 See Clare Davies, "Arts Writing in 20th-Century Egypt: Methodology, Continuity, and Change," *ARTMargins* 2, no. 2 (June 2013): 19–42.
6 Ghazi al-Khaldi, "Sanna Kamila fi al-Qahira min Rassamayn min al-Aqlim al-Suri," *al-Jundi*, March 31, 1959, p. 34. On similar qualities in literary realism see Fredric Jameson, "A Note on Literary Realism in Conclusion," in Matthew Beaumont, ed., *Adventures in Realism* (London: Blackwell, 2007), p. 261.
7 I explore this organic mode of nationalist aesthetics in greater detail in my forthcoming book *Being Mobilized*, a study of painting and populist politics in Syria and the Arab East, 1930–67.
8 See Kenza Sefrioui, *La revue Souffles, 1966–1973. Espoirs de révolution culturelle au Maroc* (Casablanca: Éditions du Sirocco, 2012), p. 339.
9 See *Rafa Nasiri: 50 Years of Printmaking*, ed. Vincenza Russo (Milan: Skira, 2013), p. 25.
10 Ibid.
11 Egyptian National Archives (Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya), Delegations file, 4031-103334.
12 Ibid.
13 See *Khaldi: 50 Years of Painting, 1950–2000* (Paris: Union of Plastic Artists/Unesco, 2000), and *Nazeer Nabaa: An Eye on the World ... An Eye on the Soul* (Damascus: Tajalliyat Gallery, 2009).
14 Al-Khaldi, "Sanna Kamila fi al-Qahira."
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid. Burhan Karkutli would go from Spain to Morocco, where he lived for several years, working as a graphic designer for the Union nationale des étudiants du Maroc, among other activist groups.
17 On pedagogical attitudes before 1952 see Dina A. Ramadan, "Cultivating Taste, Creating the Modern Subject: Sawt el-Fannan and Art Criticism in 1950s Egypt," *MESA Bulletin* 42, no. 1/2 (Summer/Winter 2008): 26–31, and Patrick Kane, "Egyptian Art Institutions and Art Education from 1908 to 1951," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 43–68.
18 The painting is reproduced in Galina Lassikova, *Contemporary Painting and Graphic Works of Arab Countries in the Collection of the Moscow State Museum of Oriental Art: Catalogue* (Moscow, 2007), p. 30.
19 On this subsequent phase see Kristin Ross, "New Men," in *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1994), pp. 155–96; Anneka Lenssen, "The Plasticity of the Syrian Avant-Garde," *ARTMargins* 2, no. 2 (June 2013): 43–70; and Davies, "Decolonizing Culture: Third World, Moroccan, and Arab Art in Souffles/Anfas, 1966–1972," *Essays of the Forum Transregionale Studien* (February 2015).

REALISM AS INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Nikolas Drosos and Romy Golan

Vasiliy Yakovlev's *Portrait of Georgy Zhukov* (1946; plate 172) and Andrzej Wróblewski's *Rozstrzelanie z Gestapowcem* (Executed Man, Execution with a Gestapo Man, 1949; plate 10) represent the split aftermath of the war. The Soviet marshal is depicted on horseback against the ruins of conquered Berlin, replete with crushed Nazi emblems and an apocalyptic sky, in an infinite citation of equestrian portraits, from Jacques-Louis David back to the Romans. Against this public display of triumph, Wróblewski's private picture is a flashback to 1939, when, as a boy in Wilno, Poland (today Vilnius, Lithuania), the artist had his life turned upside down by a double invasion—first by the Nazis, then by the Soviet army, within one month. The Nazis' summary executions of civilians gave way to more violence when the country was soon "liberated" by the Red Army. Wróblewski shows a young man the upper half of whose body is capsized and trapped inside the lower half, a *cadavre exquis* of Poland's wounded body politic. Between him and the viewer is a Nazi executioner in jodhpurs, seen from the back. *Rozstrzelanie z Gestapowcem* ghosts one brand of realism—one strangely akin to Magritte's "realist Surrealism"—inside another one: Soviet Socialist Realism as it was being solidified and exported to the Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe. There had in fact been a previous ghosting: a few months earlier, Wróblewski had painted an abstract image on the recto of the canvas.[1]

In the Soviet Union, the first years after the war were marked by the final triumph of Socialist Realism. Known as *zhdanovshchina* after its architect, Andrei Zhdanov, a prominent member of the Politburo and founder of Cominform (the organization created in 1947 to coordinate among international Communist parties), this was the culmination of a process formally begun in 1934 at the First Congress of Soviet Writers, in which Zhdanov had been a protagonist. Contrasted with naturalism, which was seen as a disinterested and therefore ideologically suspect form of mimesis, Socialist Realism in essence involved an affirmative aesthetic judgment. It involved clearly defined criteria codified by several, often interchangeable and overlapping terms: *narodnost'*, for example, a "people-ness" that conveyed nationally and ethnically specific forms as well as "popular" artistic sensibilities. Others were *typichnost'* (the focus on typical situations in order to supersede the depiction of superficial phenomena and explore essential truths) and *ideinost'* (ideological content), or more specifically *klassovost'* (class consciousness). Most consequential, even among fellow travelers beyond the Iron Curtain, was *partiinost'* (party-mindedness), a key Leninist principle that stipulated partisanship as an antidote to the objectivity that the bourgeoisie claimed to employ to mask its interests. If art was to be realist, it had to take a firm political stance. Dutifully following such prescriptions, Dimitrii Mochal'skii's *Vozvrashchenie z demonstratsii (Oni videli Stalina)* (Return from the Demonstration [They've Seen Stalin], 1949; fig. 1) manages to transform even a saccharine genre painting of cheerful children into a clear political statement.

Fyodor Shurpin's *Ytro nashei Rodiny* (Morning of our Motherland, 1946–48; plate 173) combines the traditional academic genres of landscape and portraiture into an ideologically unequivocal image. The war is over and an aged Joseph Stalin has removed his khaki military overcoat and contemplates the vastness of the Soviet empire. Punctuated by transmission towers, the landscape alludes to Lenin's famous dictum that "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country." The same trope of vastness appears in *Young America* (1950; plate 185), by Andrew Wyeth, who stated in an interview that it represents "the vastness of America and American history."[2] The Soviets and their allies did not own realism; Wyeth's brand, although increasingly marginalized by the triumph of abstraction at the time, had a native pedigree in the American Regionalist school of the 1930s, whose populism can be seen as a home-bred *narodnost'*. Shurpin's celebration of electrification, though, contrasts sharply with Wyeth's pastoral mood. The ubiquitous cars on the new American highways are banished from Wyeth's painting in favor of a singular bike, whereas the Soviet landscape exaggerates

Fig. 1. Dimitri Mochalski. *Vozvrashchenie z demonstratsii (Oni videli Stalina)* (Return from the demonstration [They've seen Stalin]). 1949. Oil on canvas, 69 x 131 cm. The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

a mechanization that was actually still lagging. Belonging to parallel universes, these paintings share an affirmative, triumphant approach to reality, fittingly for the superpowers, arguably the only ones to emerge truly victorious from the war.

CULTURE WARRIORS AND FELLOW TRAVELERS

The death of Zhdanov, in 1948, fell in the same timeframe as the establishment of the people's republics of Eastern Europe in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, as well as of the People's Republic of China. This initiated a Soviet cultural *rayonnement* and the exportation of a mature, highly crystallized Socialist Realism to this newly formed bloc. A spectacular case of technical transfer took place when the quintessentially Western medium of

oil painting was eagerly adopted by Mao's party officials. As they well understood, no medium could better deliver both the pictorial evidentiary detail necessary for what Roland Barthes called the "reality effect" and the aura necessary to sanction a rewriting of China's history.[3] Konstantin Maksimov's *Warrior of the Chinese Revolution* (1955) is a token of this artistic exchange. Maksimov was a respected Soviet academician whom the Chinese government beckoned to teach the pictorial formulas of Socialist Realism in their country. Since he assumed an active role in the spread of Socialist Realism beyond Soviet borders, his painting can be read as the self-portrait of an artist enlisted in the cultural wars of the time.

While China aimed to be more Zhdanovist than the Zhdanovists, in France and Italy, the two Western nations with the largest Communist parties, realism was one option among many, and the term served more as a marker of political engagement than as a strict stylistic category. If the Soviets purged all signs of "formalism," holding the horizon of reference to sanctioned nineteenth-century precursors such as Ilya Repin, the French and the Italians were open to a modicum of stylization, namely the "Picasso-isms" inherited from the Spanish artist's immensely influential *Guernica* (1937). Operating within capitalist societies, Western Communist artists swapped the affirmative Soviet model for a critical stance toward life in the West, focusing on scenes of class struggle.[4] Boris Taslitzky's *Riposte*, dating from 1951 and shown at the Paris *Salon d'Automne* the same year, depicts a riot in 1949 when police unleashed dogs on dock workers near Marseille who had refused to load arms on ships bound for France's neocolonial war in Indochina (plate 182).

The United States had its own contingent of fellow travelers. As Alice Neel, considered by many a pioneer of Socialist Realism in American painting, declared in 1951, "I am against abstract and non-objective art because such art shows a hatred of human beings. East Harlem is like a battlefield of humanism, and I am on the side of the people here, and they inspire my paintings."[5] The dandyish pose struck by the young Georgie Arce in his portrait by Neel is but a thin veneer over the violent life of teenagers of color in Spanish Harlem.

PAINTINGS IN CIRCULATION

Until the mid-1950s, Soviet paintings barely circulated outside the Communist bloc, leading André Breton to ask in 1952, "Why is contemporary Russian painting being hidden from us?"[6] Yet this was also a time of increasing traffic of realist paintings across the Iron Curtain. In a one-way pilgrimage that aimed at Moscow but did not reach it before the end of the decade, Western Communist painters exhibited systematically in the Soviet satellite countries of Eastern Europe.[7] This is how paintings from André Fougeron's cycle "*Pays des mines,*" his 1951 tribute to the striking coal miners of northeast France, are to be found today in collections in Olomouc, Warsaw, and Bucharest (fig. 2). Similarly, Renato Guttuso's marching peasants in *Occupazione delle terre incolte in Sicilia* (Occupation of Uncultivated Land in Sicily, 1949–50), a denunciation of the perennially impoverished condition of Italy's South, ended up in the Akademie der Künste in East Berlin.[8]

Fig. 2. André Fougeron. *Terres cruelles* from "Pays des mines" series. 1951. Oil on canvas, 170 × 250 cm. Muzeum umění Olomouc (Olomouc Museum of Art)

Against these ideological alignments, the Polish artist Wojciech Fangor's *Postaci* (Figures, 1950; plate 178) occupies a more ambiguous territory. Unlike Soviet counterparts that never quite depict the capitalist other, this painting internalizes the binary logic of the Cold War, playing out the East/West confrontation both in clothing and in different pictorial modes of realism: the affirmative Soviet and the critical and in this case almost parodic Western. The result is a tongue-in-cheek picture that strikingly breaks with orthodox realism, staging an unlikely encounter between a proletarian couple and a smartly dressed Western woman. The couple are construction workers standing in front of a monumental building typical of Stalinist Poland; she wears a little summer dress decorated with words such as "Wall Street," "London," and "Coca-Cola," as well as the spectacular sunglasses made famous by Peggy Guggenheim, who emerged as the doyenne of American and European abstraction at the 1948 *Venice Biennale.*

The year 1950, when *Postaci* was painted, was in fact the only year during the postwar period when Poland did not participate in the *Biennale.* It was also the year of a backlash against the victory of abstraction at the previous *Biennale:* what attracted critics' attention this time was the Mexican Pavilion, which featured realist works by Diego

Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, the *tres grandes* of Mexican muralism. With works like Siqueiros's *Madre campesina* (Peasant Mother, 1929), *El Sollozo* (The Sob, 1939), and *Cain en los Estados Unidos* (Cain in the United States, 1947; plate 164), politically engaged realism gained center stage. As Rivera boasted back home, "It is in an important victory over art purism in a place that had been until now the shrine of this tendency."[9] Emboldened by their success, Guttuso's *envoi* to the following, 1952 *Biennale* was a huge history painting, *La battaglia di Ponte dell'Ammiraglio* (The battle of Ponte Ammiraglio, 1951–52) depicting scores of red-shirted Garibaldini disembarking in Palermo in 1860 to spearhead the Italian Risorgimento.[10]

Stalin's death in the spring of 1953 ushered in a moment of confusion. The negative attitudes toward abstraction in Stalin's time take on a tone of quasi-panic in Guttuso's *Boogie-Woogie* (1953; plate 181), his contribution to the 1954 *Biennale*. It depicts a group of teenagers dancing frenetically in front of Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942–43), its neoplasticist language of right angles and primary colors mimicked by their garishly colored, checkered clothes. Guttuso's visual pun demotes one of Mondrian's best-known works to the status of disco decoration. Ironically, in Venice it hung in the Giardini's Central Pavilion, just a few steps from the American Pavilion, which that year was acquired by New York's Museum of Modern Art, the proud owner of Mondrian's painting. (The Museum would retain ownership of the Pavilion until 1986.) And yet, in a curious mirror effect, a similar jousting between realism and abstraction unfolded in the American Pavilion itself that year, with the odd curatorial pairing of the Social Realist Ben Shahn with the Abstract Expressionist Willem de Kooning.[11]

Fig. 3. Fernand Léger. *Les Constructeurs*. 1951.
Oil on canvas, 160 × 200 cm. Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Meanwhile the Soviet Pavilion stood empty, as it had been since 1934, the year Socialist Realism was adopted as the Soviet Union's official style. Soviet art would not return to the *Biennale* until 1956, with an ambitious retrospective of about 160 works from three generations of artists. A few months earlier, Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of February 25 had denounced Stalin and his crimes in a closed-door session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The ensuing "Khruschev Thaw" brought a loosening of the strict formulas of Socialist Realism and an increased circulation of Soviet and Eastern European art in the West. In the 1956 *Biennale*, the Soviet Pavilion included many iconic works, such as Semyon Chuikov's *Doch' Sovetskoi Kirgizii* (Daughter of Soviet Kirgizia, 1948). An emblem of Socialist Realism's expansion into the various Soviet republics, as well as of the imperative for "national character" in art, the painting showed a Central Asian girl on her way to school. As such, and fittingly exhibited in the most international of art exhibitions, it symbolized both the global aspirations of the Soviet system and its purported respect for cultural difference. Envisioned as a method adaptable to all cultures, Socialist Realism was thus presented as always already global. The Pavilion's curator, German Nedoshivin, remarked, "We are inclined to consider our art as an initial stage on a long road turned toward the future. Now, in many countries, art passionately seeks to return to realism. Soviet Art also follows this road."[12] Lo and behold, the Soviets had now become fellow travelers! Yet arguably they had arrived in Venice too late, at the end of the political system that had sustained Socialist Realism, and against a growing network of realist works in which Siqueiros and Guttuso were central nodes, overshadowing their Soviet comrades.

While the fortunes of a global abstraction not necessarily aligned with the United States is now well documented, that of a global realism independent of Moscow's command remains elusive. A case in point is the Egyptian artist Hamed Owais, who exhibited in Venice in 1952, the year of Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egyptian Revolution. Owais's encounter with left-wing artists such as Guttuso and the Mexican muralists had taken place in Venice earlier on, and was formative for his socially engaged realism, already influenced by Egypt's Group of Modern Art.[13] His *Nasser and the Nationalization of the Canal* (1960; plate 191) depicts a foundational moment for the modern Egyptian state, and one that led to the Suez Crisis of 1956, a setback for France and Britain in the Middle East but a success for the Soviet Union and its relationship with Egypt. Exalting and affirmative in the Soviet mode and probably based on a photograph, the painting is nonetheless executed in the faux-naïf manner of Rivera's murals. Owais's work is an example of an increasingly global realist mode, this time committed to a nationalist and anticolonial cause.

With decolonization and the emergence of new states, realism's twin functions of affirmation and critique operated in an increasing variety of political contexts.

The long pictorial tradition of a victimized yet heroic peasantry continued to empower artists to voice a strong "*J'accuse!*" against regimes of political domination. The Portuguese artist Júlio Pomar thus painted the monumental female rice-pickers in *Etude para Ciclo do Arroz II* (Study for Rice Cycle II, 1953; plate 183) under the dictatorship of António Salazar, while Ismail Shammout's scenes of fleeing peasants in *Beginning of the Tragedy* and *A Sip of Water*, also of 1953, voiced the calamity of the unfulfilled national aspirations of the Palestinians (plates 286, 287).[14]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chuikov's prominent acknowledgment of the Kirghiz girl's race is significant within the Cold War context. In the early 1950s, Soviet propaganda often contrasted the rampant racial segregation in the United States with the equality afforded—in theory, at least—to all the races and nationalities of the Soviet Union.[15] In both cases access to education was crucial. In his *History of Negro Education in Morris County, Texas* (1955; plate 176) John Biggers adapts the idioms of Rivera and Thomas Hart Benton, which he had encountered while studying at the Hampton Institute, Virginia, in the 1940s, to produce a mural on the history of the first black school in the area.[16] Replete with portraits of contributors to the school's history, Biggers's realism is a thoroughly engaged one. This particular work was made a year after the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education, a key moment in the civil rights movement.

Almost a decade later, school desegregation in the South was still lagging. Norman Rockwell, hitherto known for saccharine illustrations of wholesome American life, faced the problem head-on in his first assignment for *Look* magazine, producing a foldout commemorating the tenth anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. *The Problem We All Live With* (1964) depicts Ruby Bridges, the first African American girl to be integrated into a white school in New Orleans, escorted there by U.S. marshals for her protection. Heavily reliant on John Steinbeck's detailed description of the incident in his *Travels with Charlie* (1962), Rockwell's meticulously rendered painting is a transcription of a textual realism into a pictorial one.[17]

DIVERGENT REALISMS

In the early 1960s the internal reforms of the Soviet system during the Thaw eventually led to the revision of high Socialist Realism into a new form of painting, alternatively called "severe" or "contemporary" style.[18] While still fitting the established prescriptions for realism, works such as Viktor Popkov's *Stroiteli Bratskoy GES* (The Builders of Bratsk Hydro-Electric Power Station, 1960; plate 175) and Tahir Salahov's *Remontniki* (Maintenance Workers, 1961) rejected the unfettered optimism of their predecessors in favor of a more somber, introverted reflection on labor. Standing on the construction site of a hydroelectric power station in Irkutsk or the oil rocks of Baku in Azerbaijan, these workers toiling on the periphery of the Soviet Empire come closer to non-Soviet forms of realism in other media, such as the depictions of the working class in Italian neorealist cinema during the preceding decades. *Arbeitpause* (Break, 1959; plate 177), by the East German Willi Sitte, further updates the representation of labor by shifting the focus to rest and leisure. His construction worker sits on scaffolding high in the sky, relaxed, legs crossed, a cigarette between his fingers, absorbed in a book. The lightheartedness of this painting may have owed a debt to Fernand Léger's series *Les Constructeurs* (Construction Workers; fig. 3), which had circulated east of the Iron Curtain in the previous years.[19]

Chinese Communism, on the other hand, remained entrenched, resistant to the pressures of de-Stalinization. Quan Shanshi's *Unyielding Heroism* (1961), painted at the apex of the Sino-Soviet split, embodies China standing its ground. Shanshi had studied at the Repin Institute of Art in Leningrad. This work, executed in the painterly late Socialist Realist style, is one of the most famous among those selected by the party for display in the National Museum of China. In Jia Youfu's *Marching across the Snow-Covered Mount Minshan* (1965; plate 188) a Socialist Realist image of Mao leading his Long March is superimposed on a monochromatic mountain landscape, signaling a new direction in the 1960s, that of a fusion of traditional and Western techniques. While the medium and technique are Western, the flat bright colors and the graphic ornamental pattern of the mountain peaks aim to evoke Chinese New Year prints.

BEYOND THE FRAME

When Siqueiros completed *De Porfirismo a la Revolución* (From the Dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz to the Revolution, 1957–65; plate 186), his vast, undulating mural for the Castillo de Chapultepec in Mexico City, the mural had already been a "native" format for decades. Siqueiros heightened the drama by compressing his multifigure composition around a specific explosive historical event. The year is 1906, when Mexican workers went on strike to demand equal pay with American miners working alongside them at the Canadea Consolidated copper mines, a scene that typifies the exploitation of Mexico's natural resources by foreign powers during the Díaz regime.[20] Glorifying the anti-imperialism of the early years of the Mexican Revolution at a time of continuing neocolonial American involvement in Latin America, Siqueiros's mural has implications both specific and global. Simultaneously a style, a method, and a political stance, realism always carried an intrinsic mandate: to point to social and geopolitical realities beyond the frame. Its global ambition was unmatched in the postwar period.

1 See Éric de Chassey and Marta Dziewańska, eds., *Andrzej Wróblewski: Recto/Verso* (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2015).

2 Andrew Wyeth, quoted in "American Realist," *Time* 58, no. 3 (July 16, 1951): 72, 75, cited in Francine Weiss, "Kindred Spirits: Robert Frost and Andrew Wyeth," in David Cateforis, ed., *Rethinking Andrew Wyeth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), p. 145.

3 See Chang-Tai Hung, "Oil Paintings and Politics: Weaving a Heroic Tale of the Chinese Communist Revolution," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 4 (October 2007): 783–814, and *Mao's New World: Political Culture in the Early People's Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

4 See Jeannine Verdès Leroux, "L'art de parti. Le parti communiste français et ses peintres 1947–54," *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* 28 (June 1979): 33–55, Sarah Wilson, "'La Beauté Révolutionnaire'? Réalisme Socialiste and French Painting 1935–1954," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, no. 2 (October 1980): 61–69, Wilson, *Picasso/Marx and Socialist Realism in France* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), and Nicoletta Misler, *La via italiana al realismo. La politica culturale artistica del PCI dal 1944 al 1956* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1973).

5 Alice Neel, quoted in Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement, 1926–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 248.

6 André Breton, "Pourquoi nous cache-t-on la peinture russe contemporaine?" *Arts*, January 11, 1952.

7 See Antoine Baudin, "Why is Soviet Painting Hidden From Us?: Zhdanov Art and Its International Relations and Fallout, 1947–53," in Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Socialist Realism Without Shores* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 227–56.

8 See Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, "How the West Corroborated Socialist Realism in the East: Fougeron, Taslitzky, and Picasso in Warsaw," *Biuletyn Historii sztuki* 65, no. 2 (2003): 303–29, and "Remapping Socialist Realism: Renato Guttuso in Poland," in Jérôme Bazin, Pascal Dubourg Glatigny, and Piotr Piotrowski, eds., *Art Beyond Borders: Artistic Exchange in Communist Europe (1945–1989)* (Budapest: Central University Press, 2016), pp. 139–50.

9 Diego Rivera, quoted in *El Nacional*, June 18, 1950, and quoted here from Philip Stein, *Siqueiros: His Life and Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1994), p. 187.

10 See John Berger, "A Socialist Realist Painting at the *Biennale*," *The Burlington Magazine* 94, no. 595 (October 1952): 294, 296–97.

11 Francis K. Pohl, "An American in Venice: Ben Shahn and the United States Foreign Policy at the 1954 *Venice Biennale* or Portrait of the Artist as American Liberal," *Art History* 4, no. 1 (March 1981): 80–113.

12 German A. Nedoshivin, "U.R.S.S.," in *XXVIII Biennale di Venezia* (Venice: Alfieri Editore, 1956), pp. 508–9.

13 See Liliane Karnouk, *Contemporary Egyptian Art* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995).

14 See Júlio Pomar, Alexandre Pomar, and Natalia Vital, *Júlio Pomar. Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Différence, 2001), and Gannit Ankori, *Palestinian Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

15 In response to this pressure, the U.S. Pavilion at the 1958 *Brussels World Fair* contained an exhibit on civil rights *Unfinished Business*. See Michael L. Krenn, "Unfinished Business": Segregation and U.S. Diplomacy at the 1958 World's Fair," *Diplomatic History* 20, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 591–612.

16 See Ollie Jensen Theisen, *Walls That Speak: The Murals of John Thomas Biggers* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2010).

17 See Karal Ann Marling, *Norman Rockwell* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), and Maureen Hart Hennessey and Anne Knutson, eds., *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999).

18 See Matthew Bown and Matteo Lafranconi, eds., *Socialist Realisms: Soviet Painting 1920–1970* (Milan: Skira, 2012).

19 See Antoine Baudin, "Les Constructeurs de Fernand Léger. De la Place Smolensk à la Vallée de la Chevreuse, ou quelques tribulations d'un chantier pictural," *Matières* no. 2 (1998): 68–75, and Jérôme Bazin, "Le réalisme socialiste et ses modèles internationaux," *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire* 109 (January–March 2011): 73–87. A prominent painting in the series was donated to the Soviet Union in 1969 by Léger's widow, Nadia Khodasevich, and is now in the collection of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow.

20 See Mary K. Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).