Foreword

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Winston Churchill's emotive metaphor of the 'Iron Curtain' directed attention towards divisions, concealment and blocking. Falling across Europe, it seemed to represent the curtain call for cultural flow and interaction. Curtains do not only conceal and divide, however; they may also serve to frame, reveal and dramatise, as on the stage or in baroque portraiture, thereby giving new meaning and significance to what they present. Recent accounts have begun to question the imagined materiality of the curtain. Some have proposed, in place of iron, a 'permeable membrane' or net curtain evoking the voyeuristic fascination with the other. Others have attended to movements through and the parting or raising of that curtain.[1] The present volume, too, based on papers presented at an international conference held in Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2012, focuses on artistic exchanges both across and behind the curtain. Thereby it invites us to consider not only what the Cold War prevented or suppressed but also what it produced. Indeed, the editors propose that the Cold War even exercised beneficial effects on cultural production, which was given new importance by political competition and the demands of cultural diplomacy. 'Cold War era cultural diplomacy enabled novel types of

[1] György Péteri, 'Nylon Curtain: Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe', *Slavonica* 10, no. 2 (2004): 113–23; Michael David-Fox, 'The Iron Curtain as Semipermeable Membrane: Origins and Demise of the Stalinist Superiority Complex', in Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer, eds, *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s–1960s* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 14–39; Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

interaction that either had not existed before or that were brought to the centre by the Cold War.'[2]

The reorientation towards connections – to which this volume contributes – is more than a superficial shift in scholarly fashion.[3] While a focus on disconnection and prevention undoubtedly produced much worthwhile knowledge, it also marginalised or foreclosed important questions concerning, for example, the nature and mechanisms of interaction and exchange, or the specific agencies involved, the effects on receivers. Serving as a framing device reorganising the world, what new centralities and marginalities, cores and peripheries did the Iron Curtain produce? What new cultural forms and identities, connections, crossings, communities and collaborations did the Cold War engender? Other recent studies have begun to explore the symbiotic nature of the identities that emerged and the ways that Cold War culture was coproduced in dialogue across the systemic divide.[4] The products of the Cold War include the new cultural relations and forms of collaboration and community within the bloc, discussed here by Susan Costanzo and others.[5] Thus they begin to address the lacuna

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[2] Introduction to this volume, p. xx.

[3] Vladislav Zubok, 'Introduction', in Babiracki and Zimmer, *Cold War Crossings*, 1 of 1–13, with reference to Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds, *Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vols 1–3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[4] György Péteri, ed., *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 2010); Susan E. Reid, 'The Soviet Pavilion at Brussels '58: Convergence, Conversion, Critical Assimilation, or Transculturation?', *Cold War International History Project* Working Paper No. 62 (2010). While another recent volume emphasises division in its title, its contributing authors critically reassess Cold War binaries (Mihelj) and include accounts of cultural diplomacy and coproduction of Cold War Culture (Siefert): Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith and Joes Segal, eds, *Divided Dreamworlds: The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012). See also Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk and Thomas Lindenberger, eds, *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives in Eastern and Western European Societies* (New York: Berghahn, 2012).

[5] See also Jérôme Bazin, Pascal Dubourg Glatigny and Piotr Piotrowski, eds, *Art Beyond Borders: Artistic Exchanges in Communist Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2015).

noted by Austin Jersild: 'scholars of Central and Eastern Europe routinely emphasise the importance of borderlands, frontiers, migration, and other aspects of the transnational history of this region, but less attention has been devoted to the community that explicitly and perpetually proclaimed itself to be dedicated to "internationalism"'.[6]

This volume contributes to this historiographical reorientation in at least four important respects. First, it treats the Cold War in terms of a transnational history and recognises that the bloc was more than the sum of its constitutive national histories, a geopolitical concept or a military alliance.[7] Second, the chapters presented here contribute to the 'cultural' turn in research on the Cold War. Given the specific character of this confrontation – its 'coldness' – resulting from the displacement from the military sphere to cultural and economic ones in the shadow of the atom, it is perhaps surprising that culture wars have not been more central to mainstream studies all along.[8] There were, of course, important early studies such as Frederick Barghoorn's *The Soviet Cultural Offensive* of 1960.[9] Already in the 1970s, exposures of the ways that Abstract Expressionism had been implicated in the CIA's ideological warfare in Europe East and West by being operationalised during the 1950s to promote the US ideology of 'freedomism' played an important part in challenging the myth of modernist art's aesthetic disinterestedness.[10] While a number of recent studies

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[6] Austin Jersild, 'The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger: "Catch Up and Surpass" in the Transnational Socialist Bloc, 1950–1960', *Journal of American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (2011): 109–10 of 109–32.

[7] Ibid. A recent essay argues that the transnational history of the Second World has been largely overlooked: 'it also came about through formal and informal interactions, coercive and voluntary transfers and circulations enabled by communist parties and centralised economies'. Elidor Mëhilli, 'Socialist Encounters' in Babiracki and Zimmer, *Cold War Crossings*, 109 of 107–33.

[8] David Crowley and Jane Pavitt, eds, *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970* (London: V&A, 2008).

[9] Frederick Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[10] Eva Cockroft, 'Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War', 1974; Max Kozloff, American Painting during the Cold War' and other essays anthologised in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical*

have attended to the role of popular culture, the media and consumer culture in the Cold War, [11] the chapters in this volume focus on the realm of 'high' culture and cultural encounters, specifically those involving the USSR. As the case of Abstract Expressionism illustrates, the prestige of high culture and its apparent transcendence of partisan politics gave it a special place in western cultural diplomacy. Classical music, theatre, ballet, fine art (although not abstraction) – the media addressed here – also held a central place in the Soviet Union's enlightenment project at home, as well as its in its self-projection abroad as the saviour of European civilisation. [12]

Barghoorn's account of the 'Soviet cultural offensive' is of interest because he was both a participant witness and – as US advisor on the Soviet Union – an agent of Cold War cultural diplomacy. Indeed, many of the western scholars whose work has shaped our understanding of Soviet history were themselves shaped by the formative experience of participating in West–East cultural diplomacy: through student exchanges, involvement as guides at the American Exhibition in Moscow in 1959 or through exchanges of scholars and

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Debate, 2nd edn (London: Routledge 2000; first published 1985). See also Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 2000); Marilyn S. Kushner, 'Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959: Domestic Politics and Cultural Diplomacy', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 6–26.

[11] E.g. on fashion, Eha Komissarov and Berit Teeäär, eds, *Fashion and the Cold War* (*Mood ja Kuulm Soda*) (Tallinn: KUMU, 2012); on tourism, Anne Gorsuch, *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[12] On the continued commitment to high culture and enlightenment in the age of mass media see Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire that Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011). On architecture and fine art see Catherine Cooke, 'Modernity and Realism', and Susan E. Reid, 'Toward a New (Socialist) Realism', in Rosalind P. Blakesley and Susan E. Reid, eds, *Russian Art and the West: A Century of Dialogue in Painting, Architecture, and the Decorative Arts* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 172–94; 217–39.

participation in international conferences.[13] Further research is needed on the part that such encounters played both in their personal and intellectual biographies and in the historiography of the Cold War.

While state bureaucracies and quasi-autonomous cultural organisations took an important role in initiating, funding and facilitating Cold War exchanges, the third main way in which the chapters here participate in recent historiographical shifts is that the volume zooms in on the micro-agency and experience of the individuals who participated in the cultural initiatives, whether as professionals or as amateurs – or, we might add, as audiences. Both 'camps' in the Cold War recognised the importance of getting intellectuals, artists, cultural practitioners and other specialists on board. As Frances Stonor Saunders showed in her book *Who Paid the Piper*, United States Information Agency (USIA) front organisations cultivated individuals who enjoyed respect for their personal cultural achievements.[14] The Soviet-sponsored Congresses of Intellectuals for Peace – of which the first was held in Wroclaw at the start of the Cold War in 1948 – brought together prominent left-leaning cultural figures from the West, such as Pablo Picasso, with their counterparts from the East.[15] Notable among the latter was Soviet writer Ilya Ehrenburg, a prominent peace champion and informal cultural diplomat for the Soviet Union who had lived in Paris as a young man in the 1910s and established strong contacts with the avant-garde while there, including Picasso.[16]

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[13] Richmond, *Cultural Exchange*, 47–64; on the US guides at ANEM see Susan E. Reid, 'Who Will Beat Whom? Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 4 (2008): 855–904. Architectural historian Catherine Cooke recalls the impact of the Soviet pavilion on her when she visited the Brussels World Fair in 1958: Cooke, 'Modernity and Realism'.

[14] Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*

[15] Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, 'Modernism between Peace and Freedom: Picasso and Others at the Congress of Intellectuals in Wroclaw, 1948', in Crowley and Pavitt, *Cold War Modern*, 33–42.

[16] Joshua Rubenstein, 'Ilya Ehrenburg: Between East and West', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 44–65; Ilya Ehrenburg, *People and Life: Memoirs of 1891–1917*, translated by Anna Bostock and Yvonne Kapp (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1961) 205–7.

Ehrenburg continued to act as a cultural ambassador during the Stalin period. Under Khrushchev he not only authored the novel that gave the period its name, *The Thaw* (1954), but also took an active role in promoting acceptance of modern western art in the Soviet Union, publicly expressing the hope that 'the spirit of genuine cultural co-operation and honest competition' would countervail the climate of Cold War.[17] Ehrenburg played a key role in the organisation of a major Picasso retrospective, which opened in autumn 1956 first in Moscow and then in Leningrad.[18] Although the Soviet bureaucracy in charge of cultural exchange, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), handled organisational matters, the exhibition would not have happened without Ehrenburg's commitment. Picasso also participated actively in determining how his oeuvre would be seen in the USSR, selecting works from his personal collection to be included in the retrospective.[19]

As in the case of the American Abstract Expressionist artists above, the ways in which individuals saw their role in cultural exchange and encounters – and the benefits they expected to derive – did not necessarily coincide with what state-sponsoring agencies envisaged.[20] A major contribution of this volume is that it explores the complexities of the relationships between the individual culture bearers and the state whose policies they wittingly or unwittingly executed. For artists and other professionals, cultural exchange represented an opportunity for professional advancement: both to gain international recognition and to access the information they needed to be at the top of their profession. For

[17] Ilya Ehrenburg, 'Mysli pod novyi god', *Ogonek*, no. 1 (1 January 1959): 9–10.

[18] Igor Golomshtok and Andrei Siniavskii, *Pikasso* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960); Reid, 'Toward a New (Socialist) Realism', 221–4; Eleonory Gilburd, 'Picasso in Thaw Culture', *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47, no. 1–2 (2006): 61–108.

[19] Gilburd, 'Picasso', 73–4.

[20] Picasso may have engaged with the exhibition as an opportunity to receive the blessing of the mother of communist parties. Gertje R. Utley, *Picasso: The Communist Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 150–52.

Soviet fashion designers, for example, the chance to travel, to meet their western counterparts at home or to study western collections and practices provided vital opportunities to learn and to match themselves against international standards.[21] Similarly, for architects and the professionals in the newly emerging field of Soviet industrial design, international exchanges and congresses of organisations such as the International Union of Architects (IUA), the International Association of Art Critics (AICA) or the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) not only enabled individual professional advancement, but also promoted the development of the profession.[22]

Further research would be illuminating, for example, on the personal links formed under the auspices of these international, trans-curtain bodies, and on the role of individual patrons and art collectors, amongst whom Norton Dodge is perhaps the best known.[23] The attention to the role and experience of individuals has implications for research sources, requiring the use not only of official planning documents and reports filed in state archives, and of published press reviews, but also of biography, autobiography, memoirs, letters and diaries in personal collections, and memories elicited through oral history.

In addition to considering individual agents of cultural exchange, an understanding of Cold War transnational cultural interactions within and between the blocs requires consideration of the effects on reception and audiences, both as individuals and as collective

[21] Larissa Zakharova, 'Dior in Moscow: A Taste for Luxury in Soviet Fashion under Khrushchev', in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, eds, *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 95–120.

[22] On Soviet architects and the IUA see Cooke, 'Modernity and Realism'; Alexandra Köhring, 'The Congress of the International Architects' Union in Moscow (1958)', in Bazin et al., *Art Beyond Borders in Communist Europe*. On Soviet design and the ICSID see Dmitry Azrikan, 'VNIITE, Dinosaur of Totalitarianism or Plato's Academy of Design?' *Design Issues* 15, no. 3 (1999), 63–5 of 45–77. The USSR joined the ICSID in 1965. Yuri Soloviev, *Moia zhizn' v dizaine* (Moscow: Soyuz dizainerov Rossii, 2004), 137; Tom Cubbin, personal communication 27 February 2012.

[23] Norton T. Dodge, 'Notes on Collection', in *Nonconformist Art: The Soviet Experience, 1956-86* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1995), 12: John McFee, *The Ransom of Russian Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994).

'publics'. The focus of this volume on 'high' culture is premised on the recognition that cultural diplomacy courted different target audiences, addressing them in differentiated ways. In this period, the growing middle classes took on new importance as the audience the Soviet Union sought to persuade. As the editors note, the Soviet Union no longer sought primarily to influence foreign communists with the aim of spreading communism, but to use achievements in culture to enhance the Soviet Union's image among the western chattering classes.[24] Teachers, academics, critics, journalists and other professional opinion makers were wooed not least because they occupied influential positions in society and could be used to 'cascade' the message further.[25]

How the foreign public was imagined had effects on the way the Cold War adversaries presented themselves. And this, in turn, exercised effects not only on the receivers but also on the senders of the message. For example, at Expo '58 in Brussels, Soviet planners came to understand that the task of representing the Soviet Union to the West European viewer, in direct competition with the USA, required them to engage with western modes of mass entertainment and tourism. Such experiences recast the exhibition designers' conception of their own practice and Soviet self-presentation abroad.[26] Self-representations, shaped by the internalised image of the Other, could also exercise effects on domestic cultural practices. The international success of the Czechoslovak pavilion at the same Brussels World Fair in 1958, celebrated back home in Czechoslovakia, engendered an enthusiastic embrace of an organic modernist style of design that came to be known as the Brussels Style. Referencing an

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[24] Conclusion to this volume.

[25] The Soviet organisers at Brussels '58, for example, deliberated over *which* viewer they should prioritise – middle-class professionals and specialists or ordinary lay viewers and the working class. Reid, 'The Soviet Pavilion at Brussels'; (State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), f. 9470, op. 1, d. 22, ll. 34–45 [l. 39]; GARF f. 9470, op. 1, d. 21, l. 128, ll. 166–8, 207–8.

[26] Reid, 'The Soviet Pavilion at Brussels'.

ideal urbane modern lifestyle, it had extended impact on everyday life, visual culture and design.[27]

This should remind us that it was not only people who crossed borders but also artefacts, technologies and practices. Along with the remembered experiences of performances and exhibitions that formed part of Cold War cultural diplomacy, and the new friendships and communities that resulted from human encounters, these had lasting consequences for cultural production on both sides of the 'iron curtain' and beyond.

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[27] Daniela Kramerova, *The Brussels Dream: The Czechoslovak Presence at Expo 58 in Brussels and the Lifestyle of the Early 1960s* (Prague: Arbor Vitae societas, 2008).