

PRESS RELEASE

Modernist Frontiers – Then and now

Avantgarde Kommunikation mbH is pleased to announce that its EXPO 2017 cooperation partner Garage will host the international architectural conference at EXPO 2017 | 22 – 23 July

(Munich/Astana, 19 July 2017) On the occasion of the EXPO 2017 in Kazakhstan, this weekend the two-day international conference will take place at the Astana Contemporary Art Center. Initiated by Garage, the conference has been called to provide a context for discussion on Almaty’s modernist architecture (1960s–1980s), presenting it to the international expert community and launching a conservation campaign for this extremely important part of the former Kazakh capital’s architectural history. The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow and the Parisian museum Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais are cooperation partners of the international creative agency Avantgarde, which was commissioned with execution and overall coordination for the Astana Contemporary Art Center (ACAC).

In an effort to bring together different points of view and create an interdisciplinary environment for the study of modernist architecture in Almaty, researchers from a range of countries and different academic communities will speak at the conference. It will present various views on both the history of postwar modernist architecture and on contemporary problems in the restoration of such architecture and its adaptation to new functions.

The program

The first day of the conference, “The Regional Specifics of Soviet Modernism,” will set the historical and theoretical context for the discussion of Soviet architectural heritage in the former republics of the USSR. The first session will contrast shared aspects of Soviet heritage with regionally unique traits in the architecture of the former Soviet republics. Due to uniform standards, and a common technical and industrial base, Soviet design pre-set certain parallels in the architectural production of the various republics. The regions’ relationship with the “center” within the Soviet bloc will be critically examined through investigation of mechanisms of distribution and the mobility of architecture, demonstrating that this process involved multiple “centers”.

The 1997 transfer of the capital of Kazakhstan from Almaty to Astana saved the Soviet capital from reconstruction and has resulted in the preservation of Soviet architecture in a good state of repair. However, the ideological and functional changes of the two decades following independence have influenced attitudes towards the Soviet urban environment in both aesthetic and functional ways. The second session, “Architecture of the 1960s-1980s and the Post-Soviet Transformation,” will consider Soviet architecture in the light of these changes. In addition to the view of Soviet modernism as an artefact of a bygone historical stratum, an alternative approach will be offered in the context of the continuous process of development that has been underway throughout the post-Soviet period, which has determined the logic of urban development to the present day, within the current situation of accelerated urbanization.

The second day of the conference, “Almaty: The Modernist Capital of Kazakhstan,” is dedicated to the history of the capital of Soviet Kazakhstan. Approaches to the historicization of the city’s architectural heritage will be proposed. Papers will cover the local mechanisms through which modernist design was adapted, the role of those figures who directly influenced this process, and the formation of the local architectural school. The final session, “Conservation of Postwar Soviet Architecture,” will touch upon a number of practical issues in dealing with the Soviet legacy today: reconstruction of architectural monuments from the 1960s and approaches to their preservation through conservation or adaptation to new functions.

Besides initiating a dialogue with local experts and architects, the conference will launch a project to further study and preserve Soviet architectural heritage in Kazakhstan. A round-table on the architectural heritage of Almaty will discuss the criteria for evaluating this architecture and mechanisms for its preservation.

The conference is part of a major research program conducted by the Institute of Modernism and devoted to modernist architecture initiated by Garage. Over the course of a year, historians Anna Bronovitskaya and Nikolay Malinin, supported by architects from Archcode, looked for and studied modernist buildings in the city. Their presentation of the project is complemented with photographs of modernist buildings by Yury Palmin. Preserved, destroyed or reconstructed, residential and administrative buildings in the photos will show what Kazakhstan's former capital looks like today. The exhibition Soviet modernist architecture: Almaty will be in Astana Contemporary Art Center till September 10. The research project will finish with the release of the second volume of the guidebook on modernist architecture as part of Garage's publishing program for 2018.

Initiators, curators, participants, supporters

Initiator of the conference: Anton Belov

Conference curators: Anna Bronovitskaya, Nikolai Yerofeyev

Main academic partner: Institute of Modernism (Moscow)

Conference participants:

Karen Balyan, Anna Bronovitskaya, Boris Chukovich, Owen Hatherley, Manuel Herz, Nikolai Lyzlov, Nikolai Malinin, Sergei Martemyanov, Anel Moldakmetova, Yuri Palmin, Nari Shelekpayev, Nariman Skakov, Lukash Stanek

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art would like to thank the *Archcode* for its assistance in preparing the conference.

About GARAGE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art is a place for people, art, and ideas to create history. Through an extensive program of exhibitions, events, education, research, and publishing, the institution reflects on current developments in Russian and international culture, creating opportunities for public dialogue, as well as the production of new work and ideas in Moscow. At the center of all these activities is the Museum's collection, which is the first archive in the country related to the development of Russian contemporary art from the 1950s through the present. Founded in 2008 by Dasha Zhukova and Roman Abramovich, Garage is the first philanthropic organization in Russia to create a comprehensive public mandate for contemporary art and culture. Open seven days a week, it was initially housed in the renowned Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage in Moscow, designed by the Constructivist architect [Konstantin Melnikov](#). In 2012 Garage relocated to a temporary pavilion in Gorky Park, specifically commissioned from award-winning architect Shigeru Ban. A year later, a purpose-built Education Center was opened next to the Pavilion. On June 12, 2015, Garage welcomed visitors to its first permanent home. Designed by Rem Koolhaas and his OMA studio, this groundbreaking preservation project transformed the famous Vremena Goda (Seasons of the Year) Soviet Modernist restaurant, built in 1968 in Gorky Park, into a contemporary museum.

Garage is a non-profit project of The IRIS Foundation.

About Avantgarde

Avantgarde is an international creative agency, founded in Munich in 1985. According to its claim “Creating Fans” over 500 employees in ten international offices develop integrated brand experiences that create excitement and spark conversations around the world. Apart from its headquarters in Munich, the agency operates offices in Berlin, Dresden and Cologne, as well as Dubai, London, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, Vienna and Zurich.

#Avantgarde / CREATING FANS

Visit www.avantgarde.de for more information.

Press contact:

Avantgarde

Ulrich Köhler

M +49 (0)174 3137809

Mail ulrich.koehler@avantgarde.de

KERN COMMUNICATIONS

Birgit Kern-Harasymiw

M +49 (0)176 242 59586

Mail kern@kern-com.com

Captions Avantgarde | Expo-2017-7- Modernist Frontiers – Then and now

01 Architectural conference at EXPO 2017 – Television Studios and Equipment Complex

185 Zheltoksan Street, Almaty

Architects: A. Korzhempo, N. Ezau, V. Panin; Engineers: S. Kalamkarov, B. Ismailov, A. Fedorchuk

1983

© Garage | Photo credit: Yuri Palmin

02 Architectural conference at EXPO 2017 – Kazakhstan Hotel

52 Dostyk Avenue, Almaty

Architects: L. Ukhobotov, Y. Ratushny, A. Anchugov, B. Kashtanov; Engineers: A. Deyev, N. Matviets, T.

Zhunusov, A. Tatygulov; Artists: M. Kenbayev, N. Tsvichinsky

1978

© Garage | Photo credit: Yuri Palmin

03 Architectural conference at EXPO 2017 – Aul Housing Estate

278–284 Tole Bi Street, Almaty

Architects: B. Voronin, L. Andreyeva, Y. Ratushny, V. Lepeshov, V. Vi; Engineers: S. Matveyev, G. Klochkovskaya,

V. Zinshteyn, S. Kaynarbayeva, A. Zaikovskaya

1986–2002

© Garage | Photo credit: Yuri Palmin