

Post-Soviet Visions: Image and Identity in the New Eastern Europe

Masha Demianova | Grigor Devejiev | Turkina Faso | Jędrzej Franek | Dima Komarov | Paulina Korobkiewicz | Michal Korta | Hassan Kurbanbaev | David Meskhi | Pavel Milyakov | Armen Parsadanov | Patrick Bienert and Max von Gumpenberg | Ieva Raudsepa | Genia Volkov



Investigating the new wave of creativity emerging from Eastern Europe 25 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, *Post-Soviet Visions* gives voice to a generation whose upbringing has been shaped by the colliding worlds of communism and capitalism. As the homogenising force of globalisation dissolves the physical and ideological boundaries of East and West, the exhibition features work by 14 photographers born in the 1980s and early 1990s hailing from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Architectural photographer Jędrzej Franek examines the concrete tower blocks and apartment complexes ubiquitous across the Eastern Bloc in his Polish hometown, Poznań. Bathed in the pastel hues of dusk, Franek captures the unburied skeletons of an authoritarian past with curiosity and tenderness. His fresh perspective finds beauty and intrigue in their geometric certainty and bizarre uniformity - an elegy for the overbearing utilitarianism of a utopian housing project destined to fail. Integrating cityscapes with human narratives, filmmaker David Meskhi documents a group of skateboarding millennials amidst abandoned buildings in Tbilisi, Georgia. As radical and liberal attitudes clash with a residual conservatism, Meskhi illuminates the pressures faced by youth today and the growing pains of a recently independent country still navigating the complexities of economic and social transition.

Meanwhile, Moscow-based Masha Demianova photographs her contemporaries with a compelling, cinematic eeriness reminiscent of film noir. Transmitting a sense of honesty and purity, her portraits channel a vehemently female gaze. Depicted in lakes, forests, and shadowy rooms, each subject exudes self-possession and individuality to challenge the prevailing representations of female sexuality and desire in Russia. Seen through the eyes of burgeoning counter-cultures and creative communities, *Post-Soviet Visions* presents us with a dynamic vision of the New East.

Text by Verity Seward

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