

Getty Research Journal

NUMBER 12 • 2020

Published by the Getty Research Institute



Getty Research Journal

Number 12 · 2020

Gail Feigenbaum, *Editor*

Lauren Gendler, *Managing Editor*

Getty Research Journal Editorial Board

Scott C. Allan, Maristella Casciato, Anne-Lise Desmas, Gail Feigenbaum, Tom Learner, Mary Miller, Rebecca Peabody, Andrew Perchuk, Richard Rand, Kim Richter, David Saunders, and Alexa Sekyra

Mary Christian, Lauren Gendler, Natalie Haddad, Lisa Marietta, Timothy Wardell, *Manuscript Editors*

Michelle Deemer, *Production Coordinator*

Jim Drobka, *Designer*

Diane Franco, *Typesetter*

Getty Research Journal

The *Getty Research Journal* features the work of art historians, museum curators, and conservators around the world as part of the Getty's mission to promote the presentation, conservation, and interpretation of the world's artistic legacy. Articles present original scholarship related to the Getty's collections, initiatives, and research.

Information for Scholars

To submit a manuscript, please visit
<http://www.editorialmanager.com/grj/>.
General inquiries may be sent to
GRJ@getty.edu.

Subscriptions

The *Getty Research Journal* is published by the Getty Research Institute and distributed by the University of Chicago Press. For subscription information, please contact subscriptions@press.uchicago.edu.

© 2020 J. Paul Getty Trust

Published by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Getty Publications
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90049-1682
www.getty.edu/publications
Printed by Southern California Graphics,
Culver City, California

Cover

René Magritte (Belgian, 1898–1967). *Not to Be Reproduced* (detail), 1937, oil on canvas, 81.5 × 65.5 cm. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Photographer: Studio Tromp, Rotterdam. © 2019 C. Herscovici / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

ISSN: 1944-8740

ISBN: 978-1-60606-650-8

Contents

- 1 The Studio of Guido Reni from 1620 to 1630:
Formulating Compositions
Aoife Brady
- 29 Reading an “Album” from Qajar Iran
Sandra S. Williams
- 49 Corbusian Monumentality: The Legacy of the Konak
from Vernacular System to Modernist Monument
Alexandre Saden and Hande Sever
- 73 Elective Affinities—René Magritte as the Guest of
His Patron Edward James in London: The Artist’s Letters
and Postcards to His Wife, 12 February–19 March 1937
Hubertus Gafner
- 127 E. L. T. Mesens: Art Collector and Dealer
Caterina Caputo
- 151 The “Eternal Mystery of the Picture Plane”:
Leo Steinberg’s Unfinished Study on Titian
Giorgio Tagliaferro
-

SHORTER NOTICES

- 195 An Urartian Belt in the J. Paul Getty Museum
and the Origins of the Parthian Shot
Alexis M. Belis and Henry P. Colburn

- 205 A Voyage from Florence to Rome in April 1616:
Giulio Parigi's Sketchbook and Archival Documents
Elisa Spataro
- 219 Water, Air, Light: The Materialities of Plague Photography
in Colonial Bombay, 1896–97
Shivani Sud
- 231 Albert Renger-Patzsch's Scrapbooks
Pepper Stetler
- 241 Lev Nusberg to Harald Szeemann, 1970–76:
Notes on Convergent Ambitions and Shared Practices
Matteo Bertelé

Lev Nusberg to Harald Szeemann, 1970–76: Notes on Convergent Ambitions and Shared Practices

Matteo Bertelé

The Harald Szeemann papers in the special collections of the Getty Research Institute provide an extensive overview of the broad international network of personal and institutional contacts established by Swiss curator Harald Szeemann (1933–2005) throughout his exhibition activity spanning almost half a century (1957–2005). The list of Szeemann's correspondents, mostly held in the project files, indicates only a small percentage of the artists and art professionals from Socialist Europe, let alone from the Soviet Union. An exception is represented by a modest but noteworthy correspondence with Russian artist Lev Nusberg (b. 1937), the initiator, leader, and main promoter of the kinetic-art group Dvizhenie (Movement), founded in 1962 at the height of the cultural détente triggered by the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev after Stalin's death. Dvizhenie was composed of a variable number of artists whose core was represented by Mikhail Dorokhov, Francisco Infante, Anatolii Krivchikov, Nusberg, Viacheslav Shcherbakov, and Viktor Stepanov. The artist collective was conspicuous for its participation of women, including Rimma Zanevskaia and, later, Galina Bitt, Tat'iana Bystrova, Galina Goloveiko, and Natal'ia Prokuratova.¹

Between April and August 1970, Nusberg sent three letters to Szeemann. From December 1973 to January 1976, he sent extensive documentation of the activities of Dvizhenie, whose correspondence has been preserved mostly as carbon copies. Nusberg's first letter is a reply to Szeemann's invitation to a Paris documentary exhibition devoted to his previous experience as director of the Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland, a position from which Szeemann had recently resigned.² Still residing in the Soviet Union, Nusberg could not attend the show but nevertheless expressed his interest in Szeemann's endeavor as the curator of groundbreaking exhibitions, such as *When Attitudes Become Form*, held in Bern in the spring of 1969. The resonance of this group show had overcome political boundaries and reached the Soviet Union, where it received a review in the cultural newspaper *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, which traditionally covered selected art events from the West, mostly—as in this case—with a vilifying tone. Szeemann's request for a translation of the article is symptomatic of his desire for a worldwide response to the exhibition, as well as of his interest in the remote Soviet art world, where Dvizhenie emerged in the sixties as a key player.³

Getty Research Journal, no. 12 (2020): 241–55 © 2020 Matteo Bertelé

Nusberg's letters are written in the first person plural, thus speaking on behalf of the whole group, while describing ongoing projects, such as "a show with kinetic lights for the city (a real and concrete commission!)," and "an artificial cybernetic environment (conventionally called the anti-world) for macrostructures (macropolis) for the years 2010–2020."⁴ The latter project must have sounded captivating to Szeemann, who invited Nusberg to the forthcoming documenta 5, to be held in 1972 in Kassel, where he had been recently appointed secretary general. The group's visionary blueprints fit into one of the main planned sections of the exhibition, devoted, in Szeemann's words, to "the structures and the ways of life of the future perceived by the artists and the scientists."⁵ Accordingly, he forwarded Nusberg's programmatic letter to the documenta headquarters in Kassel, professing his intention to visit the artist in Moscow.

This promising collaboration occurred in a pivotal year in the life and career of both men. After resigning from his position in Bern, Szeemann launched himself as an independent curator, a profession he had to invent from scratch. By 1970, Dvizhenie had achieved acknowledgment on two levels: in the Soviet Union as a team of exhibition and stage designers who obtained important State commissions for public events, such as the installation of kinetic machines and street decorations for the mass celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution held in Leningrad in 1967, and in Western Europe as the programmatic faction of the unofficial "New art from Moscow," exhibited in several group shows held in private galleries and museums.⁶

For the 1972 documenta, Szeemann planned a comparative overview—the first of its kind held on the initiative of a Western enterprise—of Socialist realism from the Soviet Union and that of China, as a key chapter of his "inquiry into reality" (*Befragung der Realität*, the name of the exhibition), thus taking into account not only the fine arts but also advertising, political propaganda, science fiction, and utopian architecture, intended as contemporary world images (*Bildwelten heute*, the subtitle of the show). Szeemann's purpose was to break with the tradition of displaying the latest Western art trends; he strove for a thematic exhibition in a broad transnational perspective. This opening of Soviet art was initially welcomed by State institutions, such as the Soviet Embassy in Bonn and the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, which compiled a preliminary list of artworks to send to Kassel. In this extended context, Dvizhenie's projects could have played a significant role in Szeemann's intention to embrace utopian architecture.⁷ At the same time, he intended to expand the scope of his inquiry to include the underground Soviet art scene, for which purpose he asked Heinrich Böll, Nobel prize recipient the following year and "good connoisseur of the Moscow art scene," for contacts with non-officially recognized artists.⁸

Despite the two-year negotiations between Moscow and Kassel, the Soviet Embassy in Bonn ultimately withdrew State participation in March 1972, just three months before the opening of documenta.⁹ The reason for such an abrupt retreat can be traced to politically inopportune timing, namely the forthcoming ratification of the Basic Treaty with the German Democratic Republic, a delicate stage in the *Ostpolitik* process of

appeasement with the Eastern neighbors of the Federal Republic of Germany.¹⁰ Given the lack of institutional support from Moscow, it became evident that there were no suitable conditions for the group's contribution. A second impediment—reported by Szeemann without mentioning progress in his advocacy for Nusberg's cause in Kassel—was financial issues, which drastically affected the scope of his original curatorial undertakings.¹¹

Nusberg was not new to Kassel, as his name appears among the exhibitors at the previous documenta (1968), as well as at the following one, in 1977. In both occasions, his name was credited; Dvizhenie's contribution was relegated to his accompanying biography, in accordance with a common practice in the Western media, where most of the group's texts and projects were published under the authorship of its leader.¹² In 1968, the artist refused to lend his drawings (at the time held in a private collection in Czechoslovakia), which, nevertheless, given the short-term cancellation, were reproduced in the catalog with no caption.¹³ It is likely that the artist did not wish to expose himself by participating in an international art exhibition that, as the Soviet declination would prove in 1972, was regarded with suspicion in Moscow. As a result, Nusberg de facto took part in documenta only in 1977, upon his emigration to Western Europe, with three drawings displayed in the section "From Construction to Conception."

Communication between the two correspondents was affected by a language barrier: at the time, Nusberg wrote in Russian, an idiom not accessible to Szeemann, whose mother tongue was German, although he was fluent in French, English, and Italian. As a consequence, translations were required on both sides: Szeemann read Nusberg's letters in German translation and replied in French, a language that in Moscow, especially in the artistic milieu, was more widely spoken. Through this process, relevant words or even whole sentences were misunderstood or intentionally omitted by the translators. A significant case is represented by the frequent mistranslation of a recurrent keyword in Nusberg's statements: "iskusstvennyi," erroneously rendered as "artistic" ("künstlerisch") instead of "artificial" ("künstlich"). This misinterpretation is not irrelevant, given that the group's main activity consisted in designing, fabricating, and staging environments conceived as public spaces devoid of artistic ambition, as described by Nusberg in his syncopated syntax:

[It is about] creating kinetic conditions for a deeper, comprehensive, and immediate communication between people, for an expression of revelation, for its ideal and moral impact on men (on Humankind), awakening in the people a creative attitude toward themselves (first and foremost!), toward the others, toward the World; revealing to them a world of fantasy, dreams and faith.¹⁴

A working draft by the German translator of Nusberg's second letter, dated 21 June 1970, shows rigorous work on the Russian text, where keywords are highlighted and isolated from the densely written and barely legible Cyrillic handwriting, in order to find a more accurate and thoughtful translation (fig. 1). Some expressions are treated as realia, hence not translated but simply transliterated into Latin alphabet; this practice also

МОСКВА 21.6.70

Дорогой Harald Szeemann!

Сегодня полно полно, как Вы мне написали — я получил Ваше письмо несколько дней назад! Швейцария уже слишком высоко находится, но у Бога и похорош (я не сомневаюсь в этом) письма идут так быстро.....

прочитал (gesehen)

Я с большим удовольствием прочел Ваше спокойно-серьёзное и ясное письмо.

ПРИДАЁТЕ (zusammen) Gedanken

Точность?

А особенно меня озадачило то, что Вы придаёте чрезвычайно важное значение проблеме "человек и Гомеостат" (т.е. все тот искусственно созданный мир на планете Земля человеком за время своей истории и развития Киббернетики --), особенно их взаимодружеского, и тем более в... Будущем!

ВРЕМЯ (Zeit)

*

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНАЯ (Zentralität)

Для нас это центральная проблема, все, что мы делаем (как в общественном, так и в индивидуальном, лабораторном духе) неизбежно или тесно связано с ней, т.к. динамическое обозначение Буржуазии (примерно 30-40 лет) неуклонно приобретает, и кризис, значительно быстрее, чем это представляли большинство людей (особенно в Европе) то, что происходит НАСТОЯЩЕЕ-СЕГОДНЯ

Система (System)

Большинство (Mehrheit)

изменяется внутренне гораздо интенсивнее, чем это заметно внешне). Один из главных и актуальных вопросов заключается, во-первых, в том, зависит

ИНТЕНСИВНОСТЬ (intensiver)

в смысле (im Sinne)

ли сегодня не определяются, каковы целенаправленно влияние на скорость, интенсивность и характер изменения процесса в развитии Гомеостата.

ЭТО (es ist) (das)

Вопросы (Fragen) (иногда) (иногда) (иногда)

Цель этого (Einfluss) влияние (т.е. передовой группой людей, авангарда) заключена в том, зависит сохранить психологически неустойчивую дисциплину между человеком и тем миром, в котором он

РАЗВИТИЕ (Entwicklung)

сегодня (Heute)

живёт. характеристический (charakteristisch) отличительный (abgrenzung) в котором (in welcher) дисциплина (Disziplin)

РАЗВИТИЕ (Entwicklung)

ЭТО (es ist) (das)

ДИСТАНЦИЯ (Distanz)

в котором (in welcher)

Fig. 1. Translator's working draft of Lev Nusberg's letter to Harald Szeemann, Moscow, 21 June 1970. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, project files, general correspondence, box 273, folder 2.

includes neologisms coined by Nusberg, such as *gomeostat*, used to refer to “the artificial world created by men on Earth in the history of Humankind and civilization,” and which, as the translator reported in a postscript, “can’t be translated in German.”¹⁵

Despite geopolitical and language barriers, the correspondence reveals a confluence of aspirations within the multifaceted artistic and curatorial practices of both Nusberg and Szeemann. A first field of convergence is provided by a shared commitment to the legacy of the Russian and early Soviet avant-garde, which in the sixties began to circulate, through differentiated channels, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In Bern in 1964, Szeemann had dedicated an exhibition to Kasimir Malevich and Wassily Kandinsky, both celebrated—together with Marcel Duchamp, the third star of the group show—as the “pioneers of contemporary art,” creators of gestures that “have nothing to do with ‘art’” as they “lay down demarcation points on the fringes where art ends.”¹⁶ On another side, the dreams and aspirations of Russian modernist culture, its cosmic language and utopian message were programmatically embraced and pursued by the Movement group, starting with the *Manifesto of Russian Kineticists*, undersigned in Moscow in 1966:

We are pioneers.

We unite the WORLD to KINETICISM.

TODAY’S man is torn apart, sick. ‘Man, are you not tired of destruction?’

TODAY’s child is already the cosmic generation.

The stars have come nearer. Then let ART draw people together through the breath of the stars!¹⁷

Dvizhenie’s futurological rhetoric and messianic attitude had been influenced by the artistic and theoretical production of El Lissitzky, Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, and Vladimir Tatlin, whose works were kept away from the public eye but were still accessible to a restricted audience in private apartments, such as in the legendary collection of George Costakis, which members of the group repeatedly visited. This practice of pilgrimage and aggregation within domestic walls and in exclusive, secluded circles has been described by art critic Viktor Tupitsyn as the nucleus of a specific Russian “communal (post) modernism.”¹⁸

Nusberg regarded his role as a descendant of the Russian avant-garde as an intrinsic aspect of his oeuvre. An example is represented by a three-page leporello album assembled on elementary suprematist forms, now held in the artist files in the Szeemann archive (figs. 2, 3). A cross and a circle, most likely made of wool or polyamide, are inscribed in the square format of the album and applied as a tactile collage while two triangles are rendered in the central page as a photomontage, featuring the “extra-terrestrial symbols” painted on a rock in 1973 and partially concealed by a pop-up geometric pattern.¹⁹ The back cover reveals the nature of the object as a greeting card, addressed to Szeemann in January 1976 for the winter festivities (fig. 4).

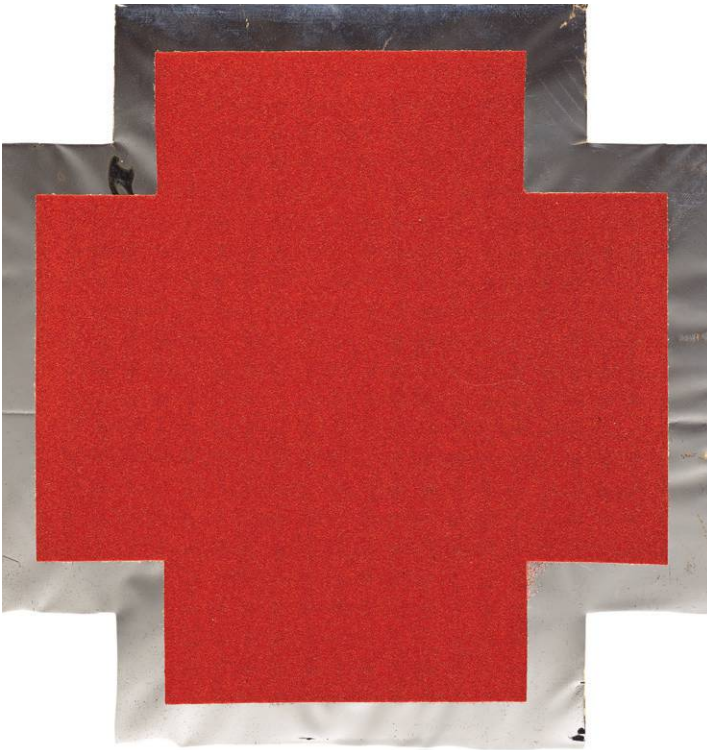


Fig. 2. Lev Nusberg (Russian, b. 1937). *Kineticist Leporello Album*, front cover, 1976, mixed media on paper. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, artist files, box 1961, folder 17.

Fig. 3. Lev Nusberg (Russian, b. 1937). *Kineticist Leporello Album*, center pages, 1976, mixed media on paper. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, artist files, box 1961, folder 17.



Fig. 4. Lev Nusberg (Russian, b. 1937). *Kineticist Leporello Album*, back cover (“Dvizhenie for Harald Szeeman [sic], Moscow, 1976”), 1976, mixed media on paper. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, artist files, box 1961, folder 17.

A second example of such a domestication of the suprematist imagery, readapted to Nusberg’s personal trademark, can be found in a book acquired by art collector Jean Brown and now in the library of the Getty Research Institute. It is the artist book *Concept 2 (Serious Jokes)*, issued by Nusberg and his assistant, Galina Goloveiko, in New York in November 1981 (fig. 5). The title recalls the playful performances staged by the Movement group, such as the *Kinetic Games*, held in Crimea in 1972–73. Conceived in the epistolary genre, as announced in the subtitle *From the Ineditations [sic] Letters of K. S. Malevitch (1878–1935) to L. V. Nussberg (1937–1998)*, the book opens with an ubiquitous photographic portrait of Malevich, followed by four typewritten letters addressed to Nusberg postmortem or, as he specified, “from the future.” In the first one, dated two weeks after his death (27 May 1935), Malevich entrusts Nusberg with the responsibility to revive the cubo-futurist opera *Victory over the Sun* (1913), written by Aleksei Kruchenykh, composed by Mikhail Matiushin, and designed by Malevich himself, who, as is well known, sketched for the first time on that occasion a black square as a stage decoration. In the following missives, spanning over a year, Malevich delivers to Nusberg architecture sketches, with

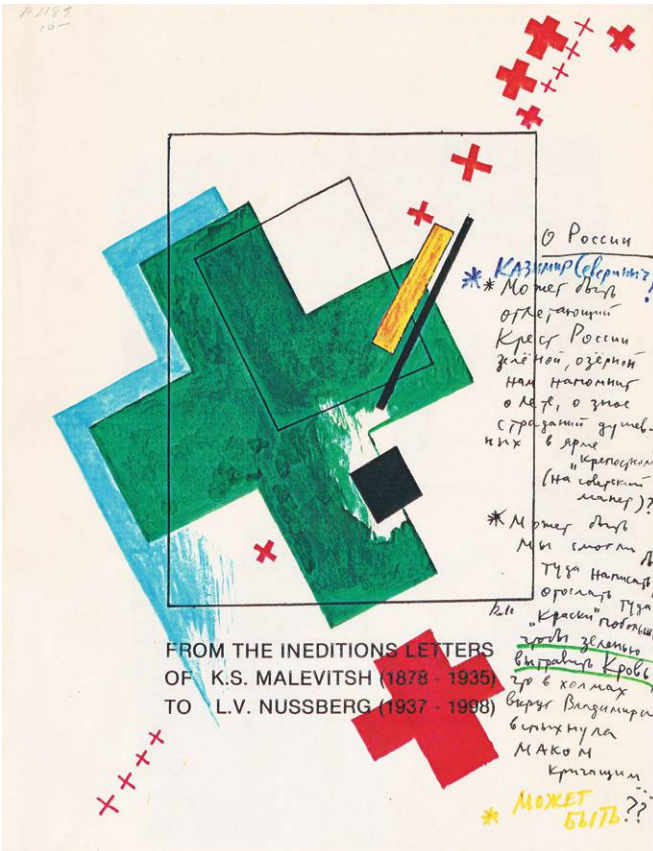


Fig. 5. Lev Nusberg and Galina Goloveiko, *Concept 2 (Serious Joke): From the Ineditations [sic] Letters of K. S. Malevitch (1878–1935) to L. V. Nussberg (1937–1998)* (New York, 1981). Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute.

the imperative request to accomplish them in the “real world,” and to follow his instructions for futurological undertakings that Malevich was not able to achieve in his lifetime. In this, he reiterates some of the most cited slogans from his own repertoire, such as “it is absolutely necessary to tear apart the encirclement of the horizon.”²⁰ At the beginning of each letter, Malevich refers to the last unpublished reply of Nusberg, whose opinions, including his complaints about the present-day art world and the rivalry between artists, are reported through Malevich. By means of narrative devices, such as Malevich’s postmortem testament and visual references, such as the overlapping of suprematist and kinetic imageries, Nusberg is legitimized as the repository of Malevich inheritance and the facilitator of his utopic assignments.

This half-serious, half-joking appropriation must be contextualized within the framework of the general appraisal of Malevich as the spiritual father of the Soviet neo-avant-garde. For example, the main *tamizdat* (self-published underground editions printed abroad) journal of Russian unofficial art, *A-Ya*, printed in Paris from 1979 to 1986 in a bilingual (Russian/English) edition, reported extensively on Malevich through

reprints of his texts, exhibition reviews, and the critical reception of his work presented in the West, as well as in the section “Legacies,” dedicated to the afterlife of the early twentieth-century avant-garde in contemporary art practice.²¹

Another factor connects the work of the early Soviet avant-garde with Nusberg’s undertakings, that is, their conceptual formats: this is true for Tatlin’s unaccomplished *Monument to the Third International* and for the so-called paper architecture from the twenties and thirties, as well as for many of the installations envisaged by the Movement group, at least those conceived outside State sponsorship. An enduring project in this manner was the *Artificial Bio-Kinetic Environment* (IBKS in Russian), an ongoing project endowed with psychological attributes that was finally realized in 1980 by Nusberg as a five-meter panorama in a private gallery in West Berlin.²²

A further shared interest between Szeemann and Nusberg is their striving for a synthesis of the arts—for the total work of art—wherein Russia’s historical contribution plays a key role. By the end of the seventies, Szeemann began to elaborate the concept for an exhibition of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art), realized four years later at the Kunsthhaus in Zurich.²³ His preliminary chronology for the show was articulated through several sections and personalities, including a chapter devoted to the work of composer Aleksandr Skryabin, a master of synesthesia, followed by “the first stirrings of modern art” represented by Kandinsky, and a final section devoted to the “exhibition as total medium,” focusing on the display designed by El Lissitzky for the International Press Exhibition in Cologne in 1928.²⁴ At the same moment, activities of the Movement collective emerged as an assimilation and adaptation of an array of sources, including the legacies of two allegedly irreconcilable masters, Malevich and Tatlin.²⁵ Despite these noble intentions, the work of Dvizhenie was regarded, especially in the highbrow circles of the Soviet intelligentsia of the Khrushchev Thaw period, as “tech fun” endowed with questionable artistic values within the framework of the “other art,” still dominated by traditional media such as painting and sculpture.²⁶ However, it was precisely this extra-artistic value of the group’s work that provided the opportunity to display their projects beyond traditional art venues such as museums and exhibitions, and instead on the premises of research institutions such as the Central House of Architects and the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy in Moscow, where they created interior spaces and outdoor installations. Such exposure was due not to any intentional concept but rather to the situation that abstract and geometric forms were only tolerated (and even encouraged) by State authorities as functional aspects of applied fields, such as science and technology. As a consequence, Dvizhenie’s kinetic projects, even if conceived by its members as exclusive installations, fit the State-promoted policy of propagating and popularizing national achievements in fields such as the space race, cybernetics, atomic power, and modern communications.²⁷

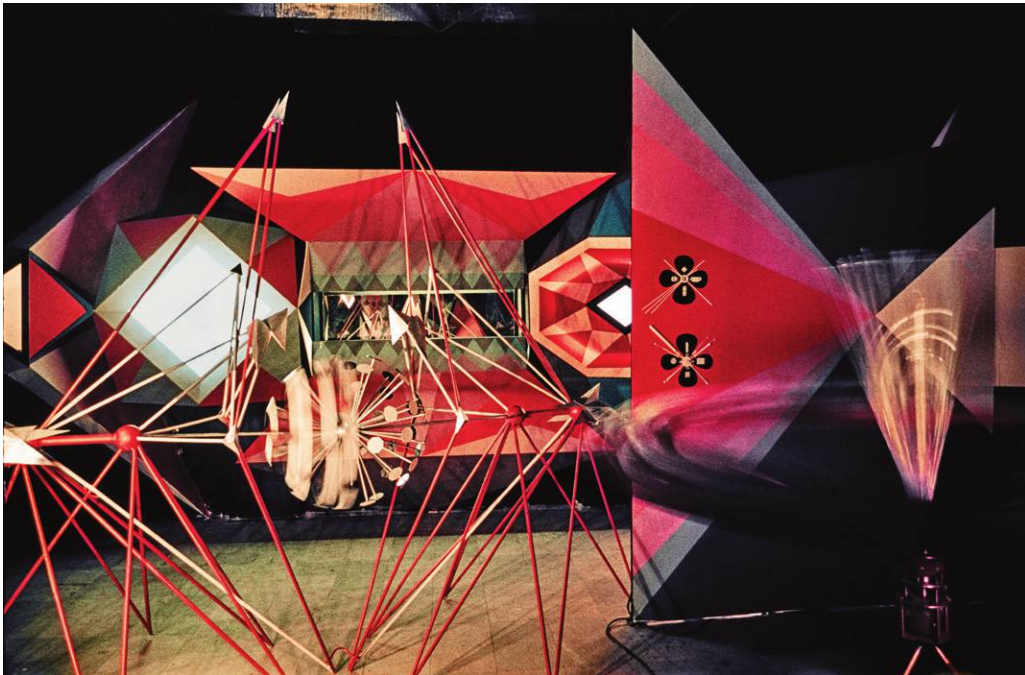
In his first letter to Szeemann, Nusberg extensively reported on an ongoing project devoted to the leisure of humankind living in cities of the third millennium:

There will be no longer separate theatres and museums, cinemas and concert halls [...] Men will work 3–4 hours and sleep 6–8 hours a day, so that they will need to be somehow entertained for the 12–14 hours left, and this, moreover, every day!!! Since the “city” will be cut 80–100 meters off the Earth (the lower floors), we can build on the ground (and underground) a sort of artificial (but absolutely real in its life) world—anti-world.²⁸

These grandiose plans, envisaged by Nusberg as tangible blueprints for cities of the future, strongly mesmerized Szeemann, as the curator repeatedly stated in his replies to his interlocutor. At the same time, they found a precedent in Szeemann’s curatorial practice, such as the exhibition *Science Fiction*, organized at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1967 as a compendium of visions of the future, structured through thematic sections showcasing “a vast body of material drawn from the fields of sociology, technology, science, art, caricature, journalism, and literature.”²⁹

This interplay between visual arts and sciences—fictional or factual—animated the diverse art production of the Movement group, which, at different stages, included experts from disciplines such as applied arts, engineering, and telecommunications. All these diverse productions were supervised by Nusberg to such an extent that he identified himself with the collective at large, and acted not only as its founder, leader, and promoter but also as its curator and archivist. After his emigration, he put together

Fig. 6. Color slide of Dvizhenie’s exhibition design as labyrinth at *Elektronika-70*, Moscow, 1970, sent to Harald Szeemann on an unknown date. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, artist files, box 1973, folder 1b.



fragments of his “exiled archive,” which he had previously transferred abroad to art professionals and institutions.³⁰

Nusberg’s multiple roles must have seemed familiar to Szeemann, who, in accordance with his new activity as freelance curator, in 1969 elaborated the *Agentur für geistige Gastarbeit* (Agency for spiritual guest labor), a sort of “conceptual frame” in which he positioned himself and his professional skills, including documentation of his work.³¹ This convergence of competencies, at the intersection between art and life, creativity and management, and authorship and curatorship, was what generated the reciprocal empathy between the two correspondents. Szeemann epitomized his *Wahlverwandschaft* (elective affinity) in a heartfelt statement addressed to Nusberg: “This is basically what we would all like, this unity where everything is possible and where our surroundings and our aspirations merge, while making possible other solutions. This is perhaps why we are *still* making ‘art’ and ‘exhibitions,’ to bring forms and life together.”³² As a consequence, the shared notion of “making exhibitions” as a comprehensive “totalizing” practice is essential, where the exhibition was intended not necessarily as an artistic form(at) but as a “total medium.”³³ On the basis of Szeemann’s enthusiastic replies, the collective visions drafted in Nusberg’s letters must have captivated the Swiss curator as an incarnation of what he had originally branded, in a dedicated section at *documenta 5*, as an “individual mythology.”

Following Nusberg’s absence at the 1972 *documenta*, the two correspondents remained sporadically in contact. In 1974, the artist sent Szeemann a set of typewritten material in French with slides and photos of installations, environments, and performances, documenting in an exhaustive form and accessible language a selection of Dvizhenie’s projects, similar sets of which can be found in other private and public archives across Europe (fig. 6).³⁴

By the mid-seventies, Szeemann announced, in his last reply to Nusberg, a new season in the art world: “Here, in Europe, the great movement toward the arts has stopped for a while and we are all trying, more or less isolated, to start from scratch on more individualistic bases” (fig. 7).³⁵ Accordingly, Szeemann oriented his curatorial practice toward biographical and introspective projects; in the same letter, he attached an invitation to the exhibition *Grandfather: A Pioneer Like Us*, which was to open in February 1974 in his old apartment in Bern as an homage to his grandfather’s life and business.³⁶

The papers presented from the Getty Research Institute shed light on Nusberg’s attempt to integrate the endeavors of the Movement group into a transnational art community. At the same time, they testify to Szeemann’s farsightedness and advocacy for artists residing outside the accustomed Eurocentric artistic sphere, despite his proverbial preference to interact in person with artist colleagues. The brief but intense correspondence represents a significant transfer of ideas and a common ground for cross-border collaboration, corroborating the porosity of the Iron Curtain. Even though no actual “cultural encounter” occurred (such as Nusberg or Soviet artists officially participating in the 1972 *documenta*), the two correspondents were able to establish a dialogue based on shared interests and ambitions through alternative routes of exchange, independent

Berne, 24-1-74

Cher Lev Nusberg,

Merci de vos vœux pour 74. Je vous souhaite également les meilleures choses pour l'année prochaine et une bonne continuation de votre travail.

Cela fait un bout de temps qu'on ne s'est plus écrit. Cela tient au fait que pour documenta j'ai été très occupé et après j'étais sans travail jusqu'à maintenant. En ce moment je quitte mon appartement pour aller habiter un endroit moins cher. Je vous donne la nouvelle adresse:

Gurtenpark 4
CH-3008 Bern / Switzerland
Tel. 22 69 81

Quels sont les projets de votre groupe. Est-ce que vous êtes toujours occupé à faire des réflexions et modèles de cités et d'une société de loisirs? Ce que vous m'avez écrit à ce sujet était très intéressant. Ici en Europe le grand mouvement vers les arts s'est un peu arrêté et nous cherchons tous plus ou moins isolés à recommencer à être sur des bases plus individualistes.

Je vous joins l'invitation pour une exposition dédiée à mon grand-père que j'organise dans mon ancien appartement.

Avec mes meilleures salutations

HARALD SZEEMANN

Fig. 7. Letter from Harald Szeemann to Lev Nusberg, Bern, 24 January 1974. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2011.M.30, artist files, box 1493, folder 12.

of the dominant channels of the official State-promoted culture.³⁷ The dreamworlds of the East and West were not effectively divided but, on the contrary, were permeated by intertwinements of personalities and their ideals across the physically divided continent of Europe.³⁸

Matteo Bertelé is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Università Ca' Foscari, Venice.

Notes Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the French, German, and Russian are by the author. The names of the translators of Nusberg's and Szeemann's letters remain unknown, as they are not clearly identified in the archival materials. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 750682. The article reflects only the author's view and the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

1. In 1968 Infante left the group to found ARGO four years later, while Viacheslav Koleichuk, who had initially participated in some projects and public events, founded the group Mir in 1968. An extensive history of the artist collective has still to be written, as it is complicated by the tumultuous inner politics among its former members, who today barely agree on basic issues such as a shared chronology or their individual contributions to the common cause. For a balanced account on their "shared interests and rival histories," see Jane Sharp, "The Personal Visions and Public Spaces of the Movement Group (Dvizhenie)," in *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970*, ed. David Crowley and Jane Pavitt, exh. cat. (London: V&A Publishing, 2008), 233–41.

2. $8\frac{1}{2}$ *Documentation 1961–1969*, exh. cat. (Paris: Editions Claude Givaudan, 1970). The title refers to the duration, in years, of Szeemann's position as director of the Kunsthalle Bern.

3. The article repeatedly refers to the "artists" and their "achievements" (reported in quotes, as if to take a critical distance) promoted by Szeemann, as examples of vacuous "practice" dictated by the logic of private sponsorship—in this case, tobacco company Philip Morris—with the result to turn the "absolute artistic freedom into an advertisement for cigarettes producers": L. Filippov, "Iskusstvo vo vlasti biznesa: sigarety i 'estety,'" *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 16 April 1969, 8. See also the French translation of the article provided by the Soviet Embassy in Bern: *L'art au pouvoir du business: Cigarettes et 'esthètes'*, Harald Szeemann papers, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (GRI), 2011.M.30, box 289, folder 1.

4. "Светокинетического спектакля для города (вполне реальный и конкретный заказ!); "Искусственной кибернетической среды (условно названа-антимир) для макроструктур (макрополь) ≈ 2010-2020 г. р.!!!" Lev Nusberg to Harald Szeemann, Moscow, 17 April 1970, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.

5. "Les structures et modes de vie du demain perçues par les artistes et scientifiques." Szeemann to Nusberg, Bern, 21 May 1970, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.

6. One of the earliest comprehensive exhibitions was organized in 1970 in Lugano, in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino, where Szeemann settled in the mid-seventies. See *Nuove correnti a Mosca: Rassegna di 58 artisti della giovane avanguardia*, exh. cat. (Lugano: Museo di Belle Arti, 1970).

7. Szeemann to the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, 18 May 1971, cited in Gisela Schirmer, *DDR und documenta: Kunst im deutsch-deutschen Widerspruch* (Berlin: Reimer, 2005), 53.

8. Szeemann to Heinrich Böll, 10 February 1971, cited in *Wiedervorlage d5: Eine Befragung des Archivs zur documenta 1972*, ed. Roland Nachtigäller, Friedhelm Scharf, and Karin Stengel (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001), doc. 58, 120.

9. *Documenta 5: Befragung der Realität: Bildwelten heute*, exh. cat. (Kassel: documenta GmbH, 1972), section 14.
10. A further reason for the cancellation was given by the fact that Socialist realism was planned to be displayed in a section devoted to “trivial art,” together with political propaganda, advertisement, and religious folk art, a fact that Soviet authorities could not accept under any circumstance. Schirmer, *DDR und documenta*, 55.
11. Szeemann to Nusberg, Kassel, 15 November 1970, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.
12. Among the earliest articles, see Lev Nusberg, “Alcune mie riflessioni,” *Marcatre*, no. 23/25 (1966): 205–8; Lev Nusberg, “What Is Kinetism?,” *Form*, no. 4 (15 April 1967): 19–22; and Lev Nusberg, “Ein Brief aus Moskau,” *Das Kunstwerk*, no. 12 (February 1968): 38–40. This personal appropriation by Nusberg is one of the main reasons for the current disputes among the former members of the Movement group (see note 1).
13. Jürgen Harten, *Tagebuch des Sekretariats*, in 4. *documenta*, exh. cat. (Bad Godesberg: Inter Nationes, 1968), xxi.
14. “Создавая кинетические условия для более глубокого всестороннего непосредственного общения между людьми, выражения откровения, и идейного и нравственного воздействия на человека (на человечество) пробуждая в людях творческое отношение к себе (в первую очередь!), к другим, к Миру; открывая им мир фантазии, мечты и веры.” Nusberg to Szeemann, Moscow, 21 June 1970, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.
15. “Тот искусственно созданный Мир на планете Земля Человеком за время своей истории и развития Цивилизации.” Nusberg to Szeemann, Moscow, 21 June 1970. See also the translator’s memo signed “Felix” attached to the letter.
16. Harald Szeemann, “Zur Ausstellung,” in *Marcel Duchamp, Wassily Kandinsky, Kasimir Malevitch; Josef Albers; Tom Doyle*, exh. cat. (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1964).
17. Lev Nusberg, “Manifesto of Russian Kineticists” (1966), cited in Igor Golomstok and Alexander Glezer, *Soviet Art in Exile* (New York: Random House, 1977), 164.
18. Viktor Tupitsyn, *The Museological Unconscious: Communal (Post)modernism in Russia*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).
19. See *Lew Nussberg und die Gruppe Bewegung, Moskau 1962–1977*, exh. cat. (Bochum: Das Museum, 1978), 191, and more specifically the copy held at the Getty Research Institute, with additional handwritten notes and commentaries by Nusberg.
20. Kasimir Malevich to Nusberg, Moscow, June 1936, in Lev Nusberg and Galina Goloveiko, *Concept 2 (Serious Joke): From the Ineditions [sic] Letters of K. S. Malevitch (1878–1935) to L. V. Nussberg (1937–1998)* (New York, 1981), n.p. The quoted sentence is an adapted excerpt from Malevich’s manifesto *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Painterly Realism*, 1915.
21. See Matthew Frost, “Malevich in Dallas: Journey into Non-objectivity,” *A-Ya*, no. 2 (1980): 59; Igor Golomstock, “The Malevich Complex,” and Kazimir Malevich, “To the Innovators of the Whole World,” *A-Ya*, no. 3 (1981): 41–44, 45–49; and Boris Groys, “Moscow Artists on K. Malevich,” Erik Bula-tov, “Malevich’s Relationship to Space,” Oleg Vassilyev, “A Portrait of the Age,” and Ilya Kabakov, “Not Everyone Will Be Taken into the Future,” *A-Ya*, no. 5 (1983): 25, 26–31, 32–33, 34–35. The 1981 issue of *A-Ya* featured an overview of the Jean Brown Collection, at the time located at the Tyngham Institute in Massachusetts. The main aim of the article, written by Russian émigré artists Rimma and Valery Gerlovin, is to introduce Russian art professionals and readers to the American collector. Jean Brown had recently manifested her interests in acquiring works of Soviet conceptual art, which, to her astonishment, presented analogies to core pieces in her collection of Western art, such as the Fluxus projects. Rimma and Valery Gerlovin, “Jean Brown and Her Collection,” *A-Ya*, no. 3 (1981): 55–57.

22. Lew Nussberg / *Gruppe Bewegung: Utopische Phantasien*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Petersen Galerie, 1980).
23. *Tendency toward the Gesamtkunstwerk: European Utopias since 1800* (Kunsthau Zurich, 1983) is the third chapter of a trilogy of exhibitions, the first two being *The Bachelor Machines* (Kunsthalle Bern, 1975) and *Monte Verità: The Breasts of Truth* (Ascona, different locations, 1978).
24. Harald Szeemann, "Tendency toward the Gesamtkunstwerk," 1979–1980, trans. Jonathan Blower, in *Harald Szeemann: Selected Writings*, ed. Doris Chon, Glenn Phillips, and Pietro Rigolo (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2018), 134–38.
25. Vasilii Rakitin, "'Dvizhenie': Mimo konstruktivizma k novoi dekorativnosti," in *Drugoe Iskusstvo: Moskva, 1956–76; K khronike khudozhestvennoii zhizni*, ed. Leonid Talochkin and Irina Alpatova (Moscow: Galereia Moskovskaia Kolleksiia, SP "Interbuk," 1991), 5–14.
26. Galina Manevich, "Khudozhnik i vremiia, ili Moskovskoe 'podpol'e' 60-kh," in *Drugoe Iskusstvo*, 13–20.
27. David Crowley, "The Art of Cybernetic Communism," in *Utopian Reality: Reconstructing Culture in Revolutionary Russia and Beyond*, ed. Christina Lodder, Maria Kokkori, and Maria Mileeva (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 219–38.
28. "Уже не будут строить отдельно театров и музеев, кинотеатров и концертных зал [...]. Человек будет работать часа 3-4, спать будет 6-8 часов—итого 12-14 часов он должен чем-то заниматься, и причем ежедневно!!! Т. к. 'город' будет весь оторван от Земли на 80-100 м (первые, нижние этажи), то на земле (и под землей) можно соорудить своеобразный искусственный (но абсолютно реальный по своей жизни) 'мир'-антимир." Nusberg to Szeemann, Moscow, 17 April 1970, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.
29. *Science Fiction*, exh. cat. (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1967); and Harald Szeemann, "Jahresbericht der Kunsthalle Bern," 1967, in *Harald Szeemann: With by Through Because towards Despite; Catalogue of All Exhibitions 1957–2005*, ed. Tobia Bezzola and Roman Kurzmeyer (Vienna: Springer, 2007), 177.
30. Lev Nusberg in *Russkoe art zarubezh'e*, ed. Zinaida Starodubtseva and Aleksandra Obukhova (Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Tsentri Sovremennogo Iskusstva, 2010), 143–47.
31. Pietro Rigolo, *Immergersi nel luogo prescelto: Harald Szeemann a Locarno, 1978–2000* (Milan: Doppiozero, 2013), 111.
32. "C'est au fond ce que nous aimerions tous, cette unité où tout est possible et où ce qui nous environne et nos aspirations se confondent tout en rendant possibles d'autres solutions. C'est peut-être pour cela que nous faisons encore de l'art et des 'expositions,' pour rapprocher les formes et la vie." Szeemann to Nusberg, Bern, 10 January 1971, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 273, folder 2.
33. See Hans-Joachim Müller, *Harald Szeemann: Ausstellungsmacher* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2006).
34. Letters, photographs, slides, and artist books of the Movement group are held, among elsewhere, in the private archive of Enrico Crispolti in Rome and in the Historical Archives of Contemporary Arts at the Venice Biennale.
35. "Ici, en Europe, le grand mouvement vers les arts s'est un peu arrêté et nous cherchons tous plus ou moins isolés à recommencer à zéro sur des bases plus individualistes." Szeemann to Nusberg, Bern, 24 January 1974, Harald Szeemann papers, GRI, box 1493, folder 12.
36. *Grandfather: A Pioneer Like Us*, exh. cat. (Bern: Galerie Toni Gerber, 1974). Szeemann's old apartment in Bern was taken over on that occasion by gallerist Toni Gerber as his new venue.
37. Beáta Hock, "Managing Trans/Nationality: Cultural Actors within Imperial Structures," in *Globalizing East European Art Histories*, ed. B. Hock and Anu Allas (New York: Routledge, 2018), 46–47.
38. Peter Romijn, Giles Scott-Smith, and Joes Segal, eds., *Divided Dreamworlds? The Cultural Cold War in East and West* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).