

# WILL MOSCOW BECOME THE LORD OF THE RINGS?

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/abridged/



“Attention to the problems of a modern city is the main architectural topic of the year all over the world,” experts claim. How relevant is it for Russia where booming and aggressive construction by no means always benefits the distinctive historical image of its ancient cities? How does the contemporary Russian architecture fit into the world context? What are its successes, achievements, problems and faults? Irina Korobina, Director, Center of Contemporary Architecture (C:CA), summarizes the “year in architecture” for this newspaper).

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## EVENT

### Projections of Vanguard

In my view, significant in the architectural and cultural life of Russia were two exhibitions in the Shchusev Museum of Architecture on the creative work of two masters of architecture in the 20th century – Alvaro Siza (Portugal) and Oscar Niemeyer (Brazil). They were organized thanks to the support of Russian Avantgarde Foundation. Both exhibitions prove our involvement in the international architectural life. Best events of the year, as I see them, were also a number of exhibitions and architectural festivals held in Moscow, St.Petersburg and other Russian cities, in particular, the International Week of Architecture organized by ProArte Institute. It showed for the first time in great detail the contemporary work of St.Petersburg architects, lectures were read there by architects invited from Moscow, from other countries. Another event, undertaken with our support, was devoted to the contemporary Moscow architecture. It included the New Moscow 4 exposition, lectures by leading Moscow architects and the roundtable discussion on the issues of new construction in the environment already established historically. I believe those attempts to formulate civilized rules of architectural behavior and make them known to the broad public to be quite important for the present and the future of our cities. The traditionally officious Architecture festival in the Manezh Hall, the only one attracting people from all over Russia, was this year organized by a new team. This has positively affected its quality which still needs some improvement. The festival lacks an idea that would allow it to attain a new higher level. The result of Arch-Moscow 2007 exhibition was, in my view, negative, since it just affirmed the shift of that event to the commercial field. Thus, nobody in Moscow has managed to see the “Barcelona in Progress” project heralded as the main professional event of the festival. It was just impossible to find that significant and very useful exposition on the Barcelona renovation experience acclaimed the world over in the Red October factory premises backyards where it was “exiled” by the organizers who have sold out the entire Central House of Artists to commercial expositions. But in Kazan and Perm the exhibition has drawn a wide response. A significant first was also the Yakov Chernikhov Prize awarded by the foundation of the same name on the results of a contest. A representative jury, a substantial financial component, efforts by the organizers and the name of Chernikhov has attracted quite a number of participants.



I hope that the release of our New Moscow 4 guidebook on the contemporary architecture will prove to be a noticeable event. It includes most significant works of architecture for the last 20 years that give an idea of the processes going on in the megalopolis and its environs. It is the first publication where the latest high-quality architecture of the capital is presented both in a broad review and in the concentrated outlook. It is intended for general readers.

Practically the only notable architectural project on TV was our Projections of Vanguard series ordered by the Culture TV Studios, the only company that sees architecture as true art. It included 8 films on the most vivid manifestations of the Soviet vanguard, its heroes and monuments, in particular, Narkomfin building, Melnikov House, Gosprom building in Kharkov, building clubs in the 1920's. ■

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