**ABSTACTS**

**Liliana** **Bajger. The shared space between a film and its viewers**

My presentation relates to Polish film star, Krystyna Janda and two of the films made in socialist Poland in which she was the lead. Through an analysis of the films and letters written to the star by her audience, I attempt to imagine how a female figure in a film might resonate in a viewer’s psyche. More specifically, how a film star might become what an English psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott conceptualized as a ‘transitional object’ for the viewers, a symbolic reference point between the viewer’s inner reality and the external world.

**Alessia Benedetti****. ‘Follow me, my reader, and me alone’. Western Classics and the Soviet Writer-Soviet Reader Relationship in Mikhail Bulgakov’s *Master i Margarita***

This paper will analyse references to Western classics in Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel *Master i Margarita*. First, I will provide insights into the specificity of the role of readers and writers in Soviet Russia in the aftermath of the revolution and during the Stalin’s era. Secondly, I will focus on the use of Aesopian language in Soviet works and examine the responsibilities assigned to writer and reader by this particular form of literary expression. Finally, I will show how references to Western literature can be deployed in Aesopian texts, with particular reference to Bulgakov’s *Master i Margarita*.

**Lucy Birge. “Quasi-history”-Sputnik, Identity and the 1917 Centennial**

Founded by the Russian state news agency in 2014, Sputnik is a heterogeneous web-based broadcasting outlet featuring news analysis, opinion pieces and opinion polls, multimedia content, live newswire, a social media presence and a digital radio station. Where RT, Russia’s state-funded international television broadcaster, is more concerned with critiquing Western domestic and foreign policies, Sputnik, principally a radio broadcasting outlet, concentrates on depicting a favourable image of Russia. The presentation will ask. what is the distinctive role of Sputnik in Russia’s efforts to project itself onto the new global media ecology? The presentation will focus on one particular case study. Sputnik’s English and Russian language coverage of 1917’s centenary**.**

**Vitaly Kazakov****. From Sochi 2014 to Russia 2018. Social Media Memory and Interpretation of Russian Mega-Events**

 This paper relies on accounts of social media interpretations of the questions of significance and legacy of the Sochi Olympics at various stages after the competition. from the Games’ Closing Ceremony to the Opening of the World Cup in 2018, and the several important milestones in between. Supplemented by reflections from media personnel, sports sector professionals, and fans gained through interviews in the wake of the World Cup, the discussion explores the dynamics of media and public memory of the first sporting mega-event in contemporary Russia.

**Ksenia Papazova.** ‘**Vintage’ paratext. wear and tear in contemporary Russian book design**

The collapse of the USSR followed by the era of digital innovations inevitably brought changes into the sphere of language, art, culture, and particularly contemporary book design. A shift from monochrome Soviet hardcovers to glossy and eye-catching book covers for fiction serves as a testimony that the materiality of the text matters. However, Russian book covers are not the only element in contemporary book design than underwent radical changes. My research addresses a largely ignored problem of paratext in contemporary Russian book design, with a particular interest into ‘vintage’ paratext, a new design trend, which foregrounds tear and wear of the book by artificially created dirty spots, glued bindings, foxing and other visual illusions of ageing and use. In an attempt to grasp readers’ attention, Russian publishers have to search for a new visual language and experiment with affordances of the book as a medium. This paper will give an overview of Russian ‘vintage’ editions and examine the time frame when they appeared, their functions and expressiveness.

**Batir Xasanov. Religionizing Russia’s Steppe Frontiers, the 1840s–1917**

There is an established scholarly tradition to categorize Buryats and Kazakhs as Buddhist and Muslims respectively. However, a close analysis of the writings by the native authors from the second half of the nineteenth century reveals much complicated situation, which corresponds with the latest findings in the field of religious studies. According to these findings, “religion”, like “nationalism”, is a Western European construct, which originates in the period of Enlightenment. Considering this it is technically wrong to search for “religion” in these communities prior to their colonization, rather we should speak only about cosmological perceptions, a fact that is well reflected in the examined writings.

**Mollie Arbuthnot. Picturingnationality in the Soviet periphery. propaganda posters and national identity in 1920s Uzbekistan**

 The role of the visual in constructing national identities is often neglected, with scholarship in the field often focussing on language or text as markers of the national. This paper emphasises the importance of visual culture in constructing national identities, and examines the ways in which propaganda images attempted to visualise nationality in Soviet Uzbekistan in the 1920s. In the fraught and unstable political context of early Soviet Central Asia, propaganda posters pictured 'nationalness' and 'Sovietness' at a time when these categories were unstable, aiming to give visual form to national identities under socialism, and developing a visual language for the representation and creation of the New Soviet Uzbek.

**Katarzyna Nowak. ‘Coming From the Peasant Sphere Which Loves Poland with its Impeccable Heart…’ - Immigration of Polish Displaced Persons to the United States in the Aftermath of the Second World War**

At the end of the Second World War, Polish victims of Nazi persecutions who found themselves in the territory of the Third Reich were classified by the Allies as Displaced Persons (DPs) and housed in refugee camps. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 allowed a certain number of DPs who refused repatriation to resettle in the United States. More than 110,000 Polish DPs resettled in this country, assisted by the organisations of the Polish-American diaspora. This paper examines the letters written by Polish DPs to the American Committee for the Resettlement of Polish Displaced Persons, preserved in the Immigration History Research Centre in Minneapolis. It analyses rhetoric and vocabulary employed by the authors to obtain help in immigration, situating it against the backdrop of Polish immigration traditions. In doing so, it reveals how class divisions of the prewar Polish society resurfaced in the situation of exile and in face of the perceived lack of independent state after the communist takeover of Poland. By using the theory of cultural hegemony, this paper explains how peasants and workers embraced the idea of the political exile to become a new layer of the Polish diaspora.

**Anna Glew. The commemorative activity of ordinary people in Central Ukraine after the Euromaidan**

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 Ukraine has started a process of defining its national identity, and this process involved the re-assessment of Ukraine’s national history and re-evaluation of the country’s relations with its neighbours. The Euromaidan protest in 2013-2014 and the subsequent Russia-Ukraine war marked a significant shift in Ukraine’s interpretation of its past. Events following the Euromaidan have had a great impact on the physical representation of the historical memory in Ukraine, from the mass demolition of Lenin monuments to the erection of new monuments in memory of the victims of the 2013-2014 protest and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine military conflict. It is notable that changes in the physical objects of historical memory have resulted from a combination of the state’s policy (including the 2015 “de-Communisation laws”) and the independent actions of ordinary people.

In my paper I intend to examine several case studies from my fieldwork in Central Ukraine (in particular the Poltava region), and to analyse successful and unsuccessful campaigns which were initiated by ordinary people with an aim to change the memorial landscape around them. In my paper I will analyse such aspects as the role of personal connections with the authorities and the local community, the dynamic of relations within the local community, and also the different ways in which ordinary people interact with the state authorities in order to achieve the desired outcome of their campaign.

**Dmitrijs Andrejevs. After iconoclasm, or what happened to the monuments of Vladimir I Lenin in the capital cities of eastern Europe and former Soviet Union.**

Within the visual narratives of the collapse of communism, images of the fallen monuments come to the fore. Beyond the highly publicised acts of iconoclasm, the afterlives of many socialist monuments remain obscure. This paper addresses this gap by exploring diverse fates and legacy of monuments dedicated to Vladimir I Lenin. It gathers examples of prominent approaches to the above monuments taken in the capital cities of former socialist countries in Europe and further east. The discussion will present a pattern of monumental actions and will be structured along four categories, namely relocation, commodification, replacement and artistic intervention.

**Marco Biasioli.** **Russian Indie Musicians and Politics. Resistance, Parallel Coexistence, Unintentional Social Change, Escapism?**

This paper considers new Russian indie music (2014-present) in relation with politics. Following Yury Saprykin’s (2018) coining of the term ‘panelka generation’, according to which young Russian artists (in independent music, fashion, journalism) are imagining and, perhaps inadvertently, enacting a new Russia that is parallel to (rather than against or in favour of) the official government, the paper proposes to discuss whether this is actually taking place. if not, what is it then? If so, how? How do musicians position themselves within the Russian post-Soviet space in times of critical national and international tensions? And how does the State react?

**Rui Wang. The Perception of Putin’s Speech on A Chinese Video Website. Subtitlers’ Renarrations and Viewers’ Bullet Comments**  
  
This study sets out to examine the perception of Putin’s political speeches by Chinese netizens as evidenced by their re-narrations in bullet comments attached to subtitled videos on Bilibili, a major Chinese video website. “Bullet comments” are real-time online comments, which are added cumulatively by viewers as they watch the videos and are preserved for subsequent viewers. A socio-narrative approach will be adopted to analyze the evolving and collaborative nature of this phenomenon, its links to translation issues, and its significance for our understanding of how Russian soft power plays out among un-targeted audience.

**Craig Proctor. Explaining the Rise and Fall of Right Sector in Times of Crisis.**

The Ukraine crisis, starting with the EuroMaidan protests in 2013-2014 presented opportunities to previously marginal forces. Radical Right Nationalist organisations were able to capitalise on the crisis. Right Sector, formed at the EuroMaidan, brought together a coalition of RRN organisations numbering several hundred during the protests, but punching above their weight due to members’ willingness to use violence and the large scale media coverage it received. Right Sector grew exponentially receiving financial and material support and a large influx of volunteers. However, following the leader’s resignation the organization quickly debilitated. This presentation explains Right Sector’s sudden rise and fall.

**Connell Beggs. Navigating a Crisis. The Russian Orthodox Church’s Shifting Framing during the Conflict in Ukraine**

This paper analyses the official response of the Russian Orthodox Church to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine – a country of significant importance to this so-called ‘soft power’ organisation. The paper explores how the Church reported key topics and events through its online media outlet and thus represented its (self-perceived) role and responsibilities in the region. The results of the analysis show that the ROC’s initial reporting on the crisis was both limited and restrained. Following the annexation of Crimea, the Church increasingly framed its activities in Ukraine through the lens of humanitarianism rather than the centrality and legitimacy of Church peacekeeping and mediation, as previously. This framing then later shifted to prominently portraying the Church as a major victim of the crisis. The paper argues that the ways in which the Church reported on the crisis reveal that it was adopting specific media tactics to try to protect and stabilise its influence and interests in Ukraine.**Adelaide McGinity-Peebles You’re not supposed to like us, you’re supposed to fear us”.Representations of the state in contemporary Russian film**

While multifarious in theme and tone, many Russian films of the 2010s depict state institutions, in particular the police, in a deeply unflattering manner. State representatives are portrayed as (at best) indifferent, but more frequently as sadistic and cruel, themselves the source of strife in the protagonists’ lives. This is striking, as official state discourse of nationhood presents the state as a powerful, protective framework which is the Russian people’s greatest value.

Looking at several key examples from the past decade. *Durak* (Bykov, 2014), *Dolgaia Schastlivaya Zhizn’* (Khlebnikov, 2013), *Leviafan* (Zviagintsev, 2014), *Portret v Sumerkhakh* (Nikonova, 2011), *Zhit’* (Sigarev, 2012) and more recently *Aritmiya* (Khlebnikov, 2017), this paper will analyse how these films cinematically construct a counter-discourse to official narratives of the nation-state.