

THE WENDE MUSEUM

EXHIBITION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW, NOVEMBER 2017 TO AUGUST 2019

With our exhibitions and programs, we aim to highlight the collections of The Wendé Museum and inspire local, national, and international communities to critically reflect on their relevance for understanding the past and interpreting the present. To that end, we intensively collaborate with national and international museums and research institutions as well as cutting-edge researchers, writers, filmmakers, and artists.

November 19, 2017 – April 29, 2018

Cold War Spaces

Political power relations, economic structures, and cultural ideas impact the way we experience, envision, and structure our environment. The Cold War, with its strict division between “East” and “West” in both physical and ideological terms, is a case in point. This exhibition explores the spatial characteristics of Cold War–era Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in eight sections on public, private, work, border, secret, outer, utopian, and changing space, emphasizing the constant interplay between politics, culture, and everyday life.



Vessel of Change

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“Vessel of Change” is a multimedia installation by artists David Hartwell and Bill Ferehawk, who also edited the Wende Museum documentary “Collecting Fragments.” Hartwell and Ferehawk developed their installation specifically for the museum. It playfully reinterprets the Malta Summit of December 1989 between Presidents George Bush Sr. and Mikhail Gorbachev, symbolically sealing the end of the Cold War. The summit took place on a ship in wild waters in front of the harbor of Marsaxlokk. In this case, the museum becomes the ship that metaphorically anchors the end of the Cold War in Los Angeles.



Russians

The photographic series “Russians” by Nathan Farb is based on a trip he took in 1977 to Novosibirsk as a host of the American exhibition “Photography USA,” part of a cultural exchange program under President Carter’s administration. Farb photographed a number of visitors to this exhibition. He used a Polaroid camera and gave the visitors the resulting photos. However, unknown to his subjects and to the Soviet authorities, Farb kept a negative of each Polaroid. He managed to smuggle the negatives out of the country with a diplomatic pouch at the US Embassy. The portraits show a diversity of people. Some

are dressed according to Western trends of the late 1970s; others are wearing more traditional clothing. In this series, Farb gave the Cold War enemy a human face.



May 20 – August 26, 2018

Promote, Tolerate, Ban: Cold War Culture in Hungary

The Wende Museum and the Getty Research Institute (GRI) are combining their rich and complementary Hungarian collections to convey the story of Hungary's visual culture between the 1956 uprising in Budapest and the end of the regime in 1989. The exhibition will highlight Hungary's special position among the East Bloc countries, defined by loyalty to the Soviet Union in international matters combined with a relatively liberal climate in domestic and cultural affairs. Displaying paintings, photographs, advertisements, and material culture, the exhibition will offer insight into the shifting boundaries between official, semi-official, and dissident art and culture in Hungary.



Socialist Flower Power: Soviet Hippy Culture

For the past ten years, cultural historian Juliane Fürst has researched a topic that has never been consistently addressed before: the history and culture of Soviet hippies in the 1970s and 1980s. Hippies represented the most widespread and pervasive counter-culture in the Soviet Union. Maintaining an elaborate network between regional centers, they experimented with alternative lifestyles, liberating themselves from the constraints of official culture. The exhibition highlights the power of idiosyncrasy in the very heart of the socialist empire. In collaboration with the Archive of Modern Conflict, The Wende Museum has acquired the material culture (personal documents, photos, posters, videos, clothes, and paraphernalia) from this period that would otherwise have been lost forever. Together with the exhibition, a special website will be developed with support from Bristol University that presents the project online and offers access to the sources.



September 16 – December 23, 2018

The War of Nerves: Psychological Landscapes of the Cold War

Resulting from a close collaboration between The Wende Museum and the London-based Wellcome Collection, this exhibition will address the various layers of mutual suspicion, fear, and mistrust between the Soviet Bloc and the Western world, and its impact on the lives of everyday people. What psychological techniques were used to influence groups of people and individuals, and how did people deal with existential anxiety and the concept of a Power of Evil behind the Iron Curtain? How does this way of thinking inform our societies today? The exhibition will also highlight the attempts by artists, writers, and filmmakers to both substantiate and critique the dominant Cold War rhetoric in East and West. The research for this exhibition, which has brought to light many new insights, has been financially supported by the Wellcome Trust.



Red Shoes: Love, Politics and Dance During the Cold War

Ballet was part of the high drama of the “culture wars,” as the US and USSR jockeyed for position during the Cold War. The Soviet Union produced some of the greatest dancers the world has ever known, with the Bolshoi and Kirov companies as standard bearers. But there were also painful losses, such as the defections of star dancers Nureyev, Makarova, and Baryshnikov, and the stifling of dance innovation during a time of great creativity in the West. This included Russian-born choreographer George Balanchine's landmark achievements with New York City Ballet – all too evident when after more than 40 years he returned to the USSR for performances in 1962. How did the culture wars fit into the larger context of Soviet and American ballet, and what was the place of dance in Soviet life? Curated by psychologist and Wende Museum Board Member Thomas E. Backer, PhD, the exhibition explores this question, with a focus on the personal stories of two couples dancing across Cold War borders. Kent Stowell, who performed with New York City Ballet in its historic 1962 USSR tour, and his wife, Francia Russell, who staged one of Balanchine's works in the USSR in 1988, are the co-founders of the world-renowned Pacific Northwest Ballet. Kirov soloist Ludmila Lopukhova left the USSR for the United

States (and stardom with San Francisco Ballet), after meeting and marrying Derek Hart, a British former dancer who directed the 1983 documentary “Backstage at the Kirov.” Their stories illuminate another side of the Cold War, one fought not with threats of nuclear war but with fierce competition for cultural dominance.



January 13 – April 28, 2019

Monument to Cold War Victory

In 2014, curators Yevgeniy Fiks and Stamatina Gregory organized the exhibition “Monument to Cold War Victory” in New York’s Cooper Union, the result of an international competition they initiated, inviting artists to reflect on why there is no monument to Cold War victory, and how such a monument might look like if it existed. The submissions were judged by a team of high-ranking international artists, curators, and scholars, including Susan Buck-Morss, Boris Groys, and Vitaly Komar. Fiks and Gregory are collaborating with The Wende Museum to present the second iteration of this exhibition, for which the participating artists will present works that reflect the context of Los Angeles. All of the artworks inspire reflection on the character of the Cold War and its topical meaning.



Artistic Interpretations of the Cold War

The Wende Museum aims to reflect on the legacy and topical relevance of the Cold War. Therefore, the Museum supports cutting-edge research by national and international scholars and artists who creatively reinterpret the remnants and ramifications of the past. This exhibition features new artworks by contemporary artists who interact with The Wende Museum's permanent collection.

May 19 – August 25, 2019

The Television Revolution Beyond the Iron Curtain

Organized in collaboration with Slovenian media historian Sabina Mihelj and British cultural historian Susan Reid, this exhibition focuses on the political and cultural aspects of Cold War-era television programming in Eastern Europe. It will demonstrate how television became incorporated into family homes, everyday life, and festive occasions, as well as how television technologies were instrumental in restructuring public spaces and contributing to both national integration and a sense of global belonging.



Ongoing Projects

Lenin Facial Recognition Project

The aim of this project is to analyze the facial characteristics of Lenin busts and statues from all over the world, including our own collection of around 100 examples, using face-recognition software, in a search for significant geographical and chronological variations. The Wende Museum has started a partnership with Computer Science Laboratory at Rutgers University to develop this project, which is currently in its exploratory phase.

Cotsen Textile Project

In collaboration with the Cotsen Foundation and its curator, Lyssa Stapleton, The Wende Museum is pursuing a research project into East-West textile design transfers during the Cold War, starting with both collections. The aim of this project is a publication and/or special exhibition, highlighting the results of our research into this largely uncharted terrain, which can add to a better understanding of mutual cultural influences and economic interests on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Art – Past – Present

Starting in 2017, The Wende Museum organized a discussion series with artists, writers, and curators about connections between past and present in contemporary artwork. How do historical research and personal memories inform our interpretation of the present? How is our interpretation of current affairs molded by what we decide to remember and to forget? After three successful iterations at Buckingham Parkway, the series will be continued at Armory.

Conference

Alternative Realities: Utopian Thought in Times of Political Rupture

Modern history has been marked by periodic ruptures, radical changes brought on by wars, revolutionary upheaval, or sudden political shifts that shattered existing social and political structures and belief systems. During times of fundamental change, cultural ideas and expressions pave the way for the imagination of a new order. This conference, co-organized by the Wende Museum, the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and the Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam, focuses on the key role of utopian visions, both artistic and intellectual, that changed the world from the twentieth century to the present day.