

Cambridge Courtauld Russian Art Centre

STRAVINSKY'S FOX

Myth, Folk and Ritual in the Russian Silver Age



The Department of History of Art
1-5 Scroope Terrace
Cambridge
CB2 1PX

14 December 2015

PROGRAMME

Registration (from 10.00am): Lecture Room 2

Welcome (10.20-10.30am): Dr Rosalind Blakesley

Panel 1 (10.20am-11.30am): *Music, Literature and Art*

Chair: Maria Mileeva (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

- Philip Ross Bullock (University of Oxford)
Foxes and Bears: Afanasyev, Remizov and Jane Harrison
- Louise Hardiman (Independent Scholar)
Hares Hiding: Myth and Mystery in Elena Polenova's Firebird Textiles

COFFEE (11.30-11.50am)

Panel 2 (11.50-12.50pm): *Dance and Fashion*

Chair: John Milner (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

- Katerina Pantelides (The Courtauld Institute of Art)
Performance and Play: Russian Folk Culture in the Émigré Ballet Community c.1920-1935
- Djurdja Bartlett (London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London)
Between the Ethnic and the Avant-garde: fashionable dress in the cultural landscape of early twentieth-century Russia

12.45-1.30 Roundtable discussion, chaired by Professor Philip Bullock

1.30-2.30 LUNCH (optional)

Lunch will be served in the Seminar Room, 4a Trumpington Street. This is a separate part of the Department. Please cross the road and look for the building directly opposite the Department, immediately to the left of the coffee shop.

Abstracts and biographies

Foxes and Bears: Afanasyev, Remizov and Jane Harrison

Philip Ross Bullock (*University of Oxford*)

In this paper, I shall seek to situate Stravinsky's *Renard* within a tradition of Russian folk literature dealing with animals, exploring the extent to which non-human characters represent a move away from the human that forms a crucial strain within modernism. At the same time, I shall also ask whether such texts can be seen a heightened expression of non-rationalistic thinking that was prominent in the Western reception of Russian culture around the turn of the century and thus form part of the broader 'Russian soul' trope.

Philip Ross Bullock is Professor of Russian Literature and Music at the University of Oxford. He has published widely on various aspects of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian culture, including *Rosa Newmarch and Russian Music in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century England* (2009) and - co-edited with Rebecca Beasley - *Russia in Britain, 1880-1940: From Melodrama to Modernism* (2013).

Hares Hiding: Myth and Mystery in Elena Polenova's Firebird Textiles

Louise Hardiman (*Independent Scholar*)

Mikhail Larionov's playful set and costume designs for Stravinsky's *Renard* (1922) are a reminder that continued artistic engagement with the Russian folk tradition was a central feature of theatre productions staged in the west. *Renard* continued a trend which Diaghilev had established with his first original ballet in 1910, *The Firebird*, for which Stravinsky also composed the score. This paper sites these developments within a broader context of exploration of the folk tale by artists, and, by way of a case study, examines the motif of the firebird in the work of Elena Polenova. My research, using photographs and exhibition catalogues, has uncovered a clearer picture of her practice in the decorative arts, allowing us to begin the important process of analysing her approach and its relationship with broader trends of the *fin de siècle* such as Symbolism and decorativeness.

Louise Hardiman is an independent scholar specialising in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian art. She recently gained a PhD in History of Art at the University of Cambridge, and her dissertation 'The Firebird's Flight: Russian Arts and Crafts in Britain, 1870-1917', examined the promotion of Russian arts and crafts in Britain during the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Her publications include a chapter in Anthony Cross (ed.), *A People Passing Rude: British Responses to Russian Culture* (Open Book Publishers, 2012) and a catalogue essay for the Elena Polenova exhibition at Watts Gallery in 2014. She teaches and consults on Russian art on a freelance basis.

Performance and Play: Russian Folk Culture in the Émigré Ballet Community c.1920-1935

Katerina Pantelides (The Courtauld Institute of Art)

This paper explores the currency and significance of Russian folk culture for émigré ballet practitioners, c.1920-35. Russian folk culture took on plural forms within the diaspora, including narrative tales, decorative art, costume and dance. The origin of these folk motifs was equally heterogeneous; some derived from memory and familial traditions, while others were inspired by nineteenth-century Russian aristocratic practices or the pre-war Ballets Russes' ideas of Russianness. Drawing upon practitioners' written testimonies, in addition to their personal photographs and imagery surrounding productions, this paper considers how different aspects of Russian folk culture expressed themselves through the female dancer's body. In doing so it will explore the significance of folk elements in the presentation and experience of contemporary feminine embodiment and creativity. The paper examines Bronislava Nijinska's vision of the female body in the Ballets Russes production *Les Noces* (1923), in addition to the role of indigenous Russian costume, music and dance in the education and lifestyle of fledgling émigré dancers, including Irina Baronova, a ballerina with the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo in the 1930s.

Katerina Pantelides is a Visiting Lecturer and final-year PhD candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Her thesis, *Russian Émigré Ballet and the Female Body: Paris and New York, c.1920-50*, explores how émigré practitioners influenced and were influenced by fashions in clothing, exercise and corporeality in their host countries. She is especially interested in the relationship between lived experience, techniques of the body and dress, and will be investigating this further in a research project on technique, vulnerability and improvisation in the American dancer's body, c.1940-69, in a Visiting Fellowship at the Houghton Library, Harvard University in Spring 2016. Katerina is also a co-founder of Fashion Research Network, an organisation that promotes the work of early-career researchers in fashion and dress, and seeks to unite practitioners with academic researchers.

Between the Ethnic and the Avant-garde: fashionable dress in the cultural landscape of early twentieth-century Russia

Djurджа Bartlett (London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London)

This paper explores the activities of fashion designer Nadezhda Lamanova, artist Nataliia Goncharova, and French fashion designer Paul Poiret in relation to his 1911 visit to Russia. Relying on a reading of Russian pre-1917 arts and applied arts journals, picture weeklies, women's magazines, and contemporary memoirs, this paper contextualizes Lamanova's and Poiret's fashion designs, and Goncharova's art within the contemporary Russian and European modernist arts, and applied arts movements, observing their activities through their varied engagement with the ethnic. A highly-urbanized cosmopolitan such as Poiret could be modernist and fashionable simply by transferring Russian ethnic motifs on to his new Parisian haute couture outfits. The paper argues that Lamanova had to distance herself from

the conventional Russian ethnic patterns in order to achieve Poiret-like modernist-cum-fashionable status in her homeland. She could use neither authentic nor newly-composed Russian ethnic motifs, as her cultivated customers could have understood it as a neo-nationalist, retrograde take on the Russian sartorial legacy. Instead, Lamanova demonstrated an interest in Goncharova's 1913 neoprimitivist sketchy drawings of Poiret-style dresses, embellished with the artist's unorthodox interpretations of traditional popular patterns. In this context, siding with Goncharova and her modernist take on the ethnic heritage was not only an aesthetic choice but also a significantly ideological one.

Dr Djurdja Bartlett is Reader in Histories and Cultures of Fashion at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. She has widely published and lectured on the theme of fashion during socialism and post-socialism. Bartlett is author of *FashionEast: The Spectre that Haunted Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010); *FashionEast: prizrak brodivshii po vostochnoi Evrope* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011), and editor of the volume on East Europe, Russia and the Caucasus in the *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion* (2010). Funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellowship grant, Bartlett's new research project took her to seven countries – Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Russia – with the aim of exploring previously unrecorded, dress-mediated discourse between East Central European and Russian fashion, and its western counterpart throughout the 20th century to the present day. The main outcome of this project will be Bartlett's new monograph *European Fashion Geographies: Style, Society and Politics, 1912-2012* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

Organisers' contact details

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