

Soviet Socialist Realism

Schedule

- Avant-Garde
- Soviet Socialist Realism
- Examples in Visual Culture
- Structure of Novel and Katerina Clark
- Film Clip from *Fall of Berlin* (1949)

Soviet Culture

- Base and Superstructure
- A new organization of the means of production will produce a new culture
- Bolsheviks thought that, because they were actively building a new economic organization, they should promote a new culture to support it

The Avant-Garde

- Express the newness of modernity in new ways
- New artistic techniques and ideas about what constituted art
- Vanguard of art
- Bridge boundary between life and art

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917)



Natal'ia Goncharova, *Cyclist* (1913)



Mikhail Larionov, *Red Rayonism* (1913)



Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square* (1915)



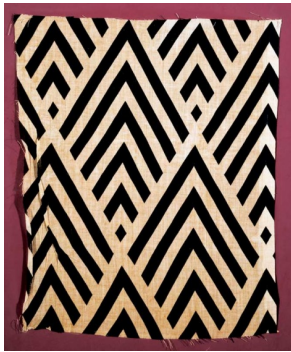
Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematism (Self-Portrait)* (1916)



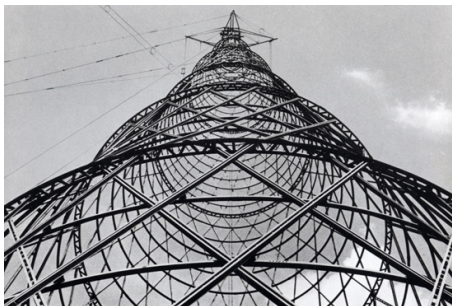
El Lissitzky, *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, 1919



Liubov Popova, Textile Design (1924)



Aleksandr Rodchenko, *Shukov Tower* (1929)



Socialist Realism

- May 17, 1932 term first used at Writer's Union
- 1934 adopted at First Writer's Union Congress
- Sole "method" for Soviet literature and arts

Socialist Realism

- A method to produce art that is a "truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its historical development"
- What does this mean?

Four requirements

- Proletarian: accessible, easily understandable, and relevant to workers and peasants
- Typical: scenes of everyday life of the people
- Realistic: in its representation
- Partisan: supportive of the State and the Party

What this means in practice

- Teleological (everything leading to a bright future)
- Didactic
- No ambiguity
- MONUMENTALISM

Aleksandr Gerasimov, *Stalin and Voroshilov at the Kremlin*, 1938



Boris Vladimirskii, *Roses For Stalin*
1949



Vera Mukhina, *Worker and Kolkhoz Woman*, 1937



Aleksandr Deineka, *Goalie*, 1934



Iurii Pimenov, *New Moscow*, 1937



Moscow Metro 1935-present



Katerina Clark

- *The Soviet Novel*, 1981
- Changed the way Socialist Realism is studied
- Socialist Realism combines realistic and utopian elements, "the most matter-of-fact, everyday reality and the most heroic prospects"
- All Soviet Socialist Realist narratives follow a "master plot"

Master Plot

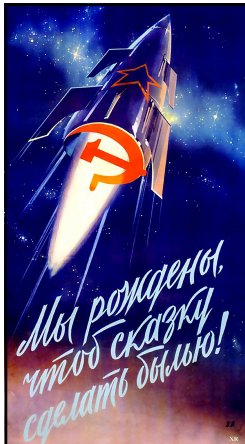
- Positive Hero
 - Moves from Spontaneity to Consciousness
- Task
- Mentor
- Trials: Task frustrated
- Climax
- Consultation with the Mentor
 - Mentor gives him an object
- Completion of the task/Happy Ending

Link to Propp

- **Initial situation**
- Task=**Villainy**
- Completion of Task=**Liquidation**
- End Determined at the Beginning
- Mentor=**Donor**
- Object=**Magical Object**
- Finale=**Wealth/Wedding**
- **Functions** operate independently of **how** or **by whom** they are carried out

The Fall of Berlin (1949)

- Directed by Mikhail Chiaureli
- Best Picture at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival
- 4 Stalin Prizes



"We were born to make
fairy tales come true."

Homework for Recitation

- **CW:** Lazar Lagin. "The Old Genie Khottabych."
