

## PRESS RELEASE

### ***Temporary Structures in Gorky Park: From Melnikov to Ban***

20 October – 9 December 2012

Garage Center for Contemporary Culture will present a new exhibition entitled *Temporary Structures in Gorky Park: From Melnikov to Ban* from 20 October to 9 December 2012 in a newly created temporary pavilion in Moscow's Gorky Park, designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. Showing rare archival drawings – many of which have never been seen before – the exhibition will begin by revealing the profound history of structures created in the park since the site was first developed in 1923, before moving through the Russian avant-garde period to finish with some of the most interesting contemporary unrealized designs created by Russian architects today.

By their nature, temporary structures erected for a specific event or happening have always encouraged indulgent experimentation, and sometimes this has resulted in ground-breaking progressive design. This exhibition recognizes such experimentation and positions the pavilion or temporary structure as an architectural typology that oscillates between art object and architectural prototype. In Russia, these structures or pavilions – often constructed of insubstantial materials – allowed Soviet architects the ability to express the aspirations of the revolution. They frequently became vehicles for new architectural and political ideas, and they were extremely influential within Russian architectural history.

This exhibition reveals the rich history of realized and unrealized temporary structures within Moscow's Gorky Park and demonstrates important stylistic advancements within Russian architecture. *Temporary Structures* also reveals the evolution of a uniquely Russian 'identity' within architecture and the international context, which has developed since the 1920s and continues today.

To reflect the significant phases of the park's history and the development of the different temporary structures, the exhibition will be presented within a chronological framework. Visitors will gain an understanding of the pioneering ideas that were being explored through structures which were erected in the park:

1. **A Soviet beginning, 1922**
2. **All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition, 1923**
3. **Development after 1923**
4. **Opening the park, 1928**
5. **1934 - 1940**
6. **Development after 1943**
7. **Contemporary Russian temporary structures**

The exhibition includes multi-media and interactive elements, together with original video archival footage.

The exhibition will include work by architects, including Konstantin Melnikov, Ivan Zholtovsky, Alexey Shchusev, Vyacheslav Oltarzhevsky, Alexander Vlasov,

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Fyodor Osipovich Schechtel, Vladimir Schuko, Panteleimon Golosov, Ilya Golosov and Moisei Ginzburg. Also represented will be the artists and sculptors who were involved in the decoration of temporary structures, including Aleksandra Ekster, Alexander Kuprin, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, Aristarkh Lentulov, Ignaty Nivinsky, Sergei Konenkov, Ivan Shadr and Vera Mukhina.

## Exhibition further details and information

### A Soviet beginning, 1922

The climate of political unrest that existed in Moscow at the beginning of the 1920s meant that daily life was subject to constant change and upheaval. In spite of their best efforts, this atmosphere restricted architects' freedom to design and create. However, even during this unstable period, there were a number of interventions that managed to alter the everyday norm and transform the streets of Moscow. For example, major routes were decorated for important public events – most notably the anniversary of the October Revolution. These different artistic projects would culminate in the All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition of 1923, located on pasture land near the city's river. It would be the first realization of a Soviet architecture, and a celebration of a new style in all its forms.

To prepare for the exhibition, an open competition was announced, inviting architects to submit proposals for the layout of the new park. A number of well-established architects were approached and asked to present their designs, whilst others were invited to submit their ideas.

### All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition, 1923

In 1923, the All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition officially opened. By this time, the committee behind the exhibition had already benefitted from the experience of organizing fairs in Nizhny Novgorod, as well as participating in exhibitions in London and Paris. However, the 1923 exhibition had far larger aims than its predecessors. It was to express the aspirations of the revolution and demonstrate the achievements of the young Soviet state. It was a monumental project, and the greatest architects of the period were called upon to see its completion. Ivan Zholtovsky and his students developed a general layout for the park, whilst another academician, Alexei Schusev, was appointed as the chief architect. Vladimir Schuko would play a major role in the construction, designing the Department of Foreign Affairs, and a number of young architects, including Moisei Ginzburg, Panteleimon and Ilya Golosov, Andrei Burov, Alexei Grinberg, Viktor Kokorin and Nikolai Kolli, who would all later be recognized as important figures within the history of Soviet architecture, were also involved in the project.

Many of the exhibition's constructions would become archetypal examples of Soviet architecture: the Izvestia VTsIK and Krasnaya Niva pavilion, the Main Entrance Arc, the Hexahedron, the Machine Building pavilion and the Far Eastern pavilion. It was also at the exhibition that Konstantin Melnikov realized his first architectural project, the Makhorka pavilion. This wooden building was highly influential to his contemporaries, and would become a major inspiration for the Russian architectural avant-garde movement.

### Development after 1923

Even in the early stages of its planning, it was known that the exhibition space would eventually become a public park. However, the *Park of Culture and Leisure* was not opened until 1928. Konstantin Melnikov was appointed as the chief architect and immediately made a number of changes to the layout that was originally developed by Zholtovsky in 1923. Melnikov moved the central entrance to the main axis of the parterre – the entrance that is still used today – thus creating the vast space behind that is the present park.

### Opening the park, 1928

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On 1 June 1928, the park was opened on the territory of the Neskuchny Sad and the previous All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition. The new park included pavilions with painted facades and amusement rides for visitors including a 'spiral' designed by the Russian brothers V.A. and G.A. Stenberg.

### 1934 – 1940

This period of the park's history is very strongly linked to architect Alexander Vlasov, who was responsible for creating the famous open amphitheatre entitled the *Green Theater* and the *Island of Dance* on the Puskinskaya Embankment. He also created one of the most well-known Gorky Park landmarks, the enormous pond where the famous *Girl with a Paddle* sculpture stands.

### Development after 1943

With the outbreak of war, the park fell into decline, and many of its buildings were left derelict or destroyed. However, the tradition of celebrating important contemporary events in the park was maintained, and in 1943, an exhibition of captured weapons was opened to the general public. The park was renovated specifically for this event, and ideas of military supremacy and victory were reflected in its new decoration.

**Exhibition project team includes:** Yulia Aksenova, Irina Chepkunova, Marianna Evstratova, Sergey Koluzakov, Andrey Misiano, Anastasia Tarasova and Olga Treivas

### Gorky Park history

The park is located on the Moskva River bank in the Neskuchny Sad territory in the heart of Moscow. The very first structure to be built on the site was the 8,500 square meter hexagonal pavilion to celebrate the All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition of 1923. The structure later became a pre-war exhibition space for Soviet artists and sculptors. Garage plans to occupy this site in the future as part of its developments within the park.

The more formal park was further developed during the Stalin-era and officially opened in 1928. Later, the park was extended further and now stretches over 300 acres, making it one of the largest parks in Europe. The park was named after Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), a Soviet author and political activist who founded the socialist literary method.

### Garage Center for Contemporary Culture

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Opened in 2008, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture is a major non-profit international project based in Moscow, dedicated to exploring and developing contemporary culture as a platform for new thinking. Garage brings important international modern and contemporary art and culture to Moscow, to raise the profile of Russian contemporary culture and to encourage a new generation of Russian artists. These aims are explored through a series of exhibitions ranging from major surveys of important collections to single-artist retrospectives and group exhibitions. Garage also hosts a strong program of special events, including talks, film screenings, workshops, performances and creative activities for children and young people. In addition, there are publishing and scientific research programs that are being developed.

Garage recently relocated from the Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage to a new site in Gorky Park, Moscow, which is currently being developed by Rem Koolhaas' OMA, to be opened in 2013. In the meantime, the first phase of its program in the park will launch in October 2012 in a temporary pavilion designed by the Japanese architect Shigeru Ban. The structure uses locally produced paper tubes to create an oval wall that will be 7.5 meters high. The total area of the pavilion

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will be 2,400 square meters based on a rectangle within an oval. The pavilion will host exhibitions and educational activities until late 2013, after which time it will be dedicated on experimental projects.

In the longer term, Garage plans to develop an 8,500 square meter hexagonal pavilion in the park. This historic 1920s structure, which consists of six sections built around a central courtyard, was first constructed to house the first All-Russian Agricultural and Handicraft Exhibition, but later became a pre-war exhibition space for Soviet artists. The development will become one of the most important non-profit international contemporary art sites in Moscow, with international standard gallery facilities and areas dedicated to education and learning.

Garage is a project of The IRIS Foundation, founded by Dasha Zhukova.

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