

Russian Material and Visual Culture: Technologies

Russ 248/AH 248
Spring 2023

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This course will survey the aesthetics and politics behind three centuries of Russian design, beginning with the semiotics of Lomonosov's glass, zooming in on the avant-garde's furniture and textile designs, visiting Soviet records and rockets, kitchens and kitsch, and ending with Putin's oil-soaked baroque.

In the process we will ponder the following questions: How are material goods, and specifically technologies, deployed on behalf of a political agenda? Are tools value-neutral or invested with the values of the societies that create them? How does the past manifest itself through material and visual culture? What makes technologies artful or art technological?

TR 11-12:15

CRN35494/35938

