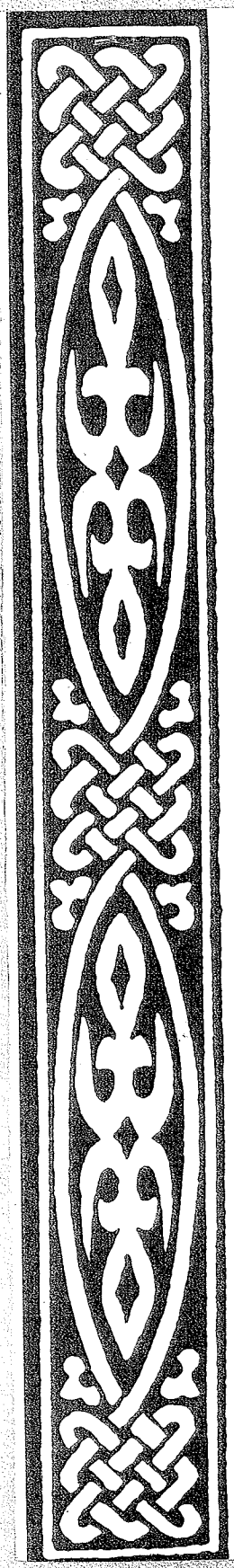

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INNOVATION THROUGH ITERATION:
RUSSIAN POPULAR CULTURE TODAY

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The author of *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Harvard UP, 1986), Herlihy has written for *Odessa Memories* a survey which is both comprehensive and precise, and equally rich in historical fact, human detail, and scholarly and literary reference. "Daily Life in Odessa," translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis, is a well-written and competent piece, which, however, suffers from a lack of editorial coordination with Herlihy's text, and too often makes the same point about the same facts, events, and personalities, going all the way back to the city's foundation. Such redundancy in a small book is unfortunate, and, in the absence of footnotes and references, Gubar and Rozenboim's narrative is closest to the genre of the sophisticated city guide. Still, Gubar and Rozenboim's and Herlihy's contributions provide a solid factual and historical foundation for what has become Odessa's cultural legend, and at the same time capture and convey to the reader the larger-than-factual spirit of that legend.

The best-known facets of Odessa's image are the city's cosmopolitan character, prominent Jewish life, and distinct brand of humor, all of which exercised a formative and lasting influence on its many famous citizens, from the writers Sholom Aleichem, Isaak Babel, Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov to the Zionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky, jazz musician Leonid Utesov, and others, who are remembered and cited on the book's pages. Herlihy in particular points out and reflects on those aspects of the city's diverse life that fed the creative energy and artistic imagination of its inhabitants. Yet if, as Gubar and Rozenboim suggest, Odessa's musical and poetic folklore and its peculiar verbal idiom are untranslatable into other languages and already partly lost (111), and if references to a work like *The Golden Calf* will be equally lost on an unprepared reader, the vestiges of the city's "daily life," material and visual culture reproduced in *Odessa Memories* are accessible and "translatable," and they should have received more attention in their own right. Iljine's selection of the volume's pictorial material is careful, apt, and original; a few images, such as the Potemkin steps massacre as visualized by Sergei Eisenstein or Leonid Pasternak's drawing of Jewish musicians, are a familiar presence, but many others are novel and rare, picked from Odessa museums and archives, Russian and American museum holdings, and several private collections, including Iljine's own. In addition to photographs, postcards, and commercial posters, one can see such curious small artifacts as candy wrappers manufactured in the early 1900s by the well-known Krakhmalnikov Brothers factory, which, unlike the Russian artistic postcard, celebrated the futuristic subject of aviation in its series *Chocolat Aviatique* (82–83). Whether or not the designers intended the pun, Odessa's "taste for modernity" as emphasized by the volume's contributors finds in such and similar images a remarkable and idiomatic expression.

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Waltraud Werner. *Wassili Masjutin 1884–1955: ein russischer Kuenstler 1922–1955 in Berlin.* Berlin: Willmuth Arenhoevel, 2003. 168 pp. € 48 (cloth).

The legacy of Russian Berlin, the brilliant yet short-lived period from 1921 to 1923 when Russia's literary and intellectual elite thrived in the literary capital of Russia, continues to unfold. Another figure of the period rescued from obscurity is Wassili Masjutin in this the recently published overview of his life and work. Born in Riga in 1884, Masjutin served in the military before he attended the Moscow School of Art, Sculpture and Architecture. Just after graduation Masjutin was recalled to active service for World War I, but he was still able to produce a number of drawings, photographs, paintings and sculptures. In 1917 he returned to the Academy to become a professor of graphic arts. It was in Berlin, however, where Masjutin arrived in 1922, that he created and left the images that earned him the title of the "King of Russian Illustrators in Exile."

Werner's richly illustrated book shares with us that heritage. There are over two hundred reproductions of his works, primarily drawings and single-colored prints, as well as photographs and reprints of documents surrounding the artist's life. There are also fifty high quality full-color reproductions of paintings and book covers. Scholars of Russian literature will delight to find here the covers for Remizov's *Skazki obez'ian'ego tsaria Asyki* and *Rossiia v pis'menakh*. Along with illustrations to other Russian authors, including Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Turgenev, Masjutin has left us prints of the key literary figures in Berlin at the time, including Remizov, Bely, Aleksei Tolstoy, and Khodasevich. Even after most of the literary community moved on in 1923 to Paris and Prague or returned to Moscow and Petersburg, Masjutin remained in Berlin, where he supported his family with illustrations of the characters for Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and commercial projects, such as sketches of Lufthansa airplanes above the Brandenburg Tor and the skyline of New York. While he survived the war unscathed, he was arrested and imprisoned in 1945 by the Soviets and held until 1946, when his talents as a sculptor were required. Ironically, one of his most enduring contributions is the set of statues that still sit atop and inside the former Soviet and now Russian Embassy erected on Unter den Linden in Berlin immediately after the war. Until his death in Berlin in 1955 Masjutin remained one of the most prolific of the Russian artists in emigration, with almost 700 items recorded in the book's works catalogue.

The primary audience for the volume is the German mass market. But Werner has assembled and preserved for scholars an authoritative study of Masjutin's work. The scholarship is meticulous with careful attention to detail and citation. The book contains a sixty-page essay documenting the artist's life career and including photographs of the artist, his family and friends, his diploma from the Moscow Arts Academy and his Latvian pass issued in Berlin. The depth of the work is matched by its breadth: it includes a catalogue of the artist's known work, a list of exhibits and catalogues from exhibitions where he participated, a bibliography of works by and about the artist, a selected list from the more than 1000 letters to and from Masjutin, as well as the beautifully reproduced illustrations, photographs and documents. The catalogue, citations and bibliography are in German or in Russian with German translations. Those familiar with the techniques of printing and illustrating will find the information readily comprehensible. Much of the material comes from Werner's personal archives and is shared here for the first time. Werner has spent a lifetime collecting, examining and evaluating the work of Masjutin. Her book insures that he and his contributions to Russia's artistic history will not be forgotten.

Thomas R. Beyer, Jr., Middlebury College

David Gillespie. *Russian Cinema.* Inside Film Series. New York: Longman, 2003. Bibliography. Index. x + 201 pp. $11.95 (paper).

Gillespie's book is an examination of the "major genres" of Russian cinema (vii) that, despite its slender appearance, manages to touch on over 300 films, according to the publisher's website (http://www.pearsoned.co.uk). This nice volume will complement existing works on Russian cinema, many of which the author discusses in his annotated "Further Reading" section.

In the first chapter, "The Sight and Sound of Russian Cinema," Gillespie sets his "aesthetic framework" by establishing parallels among Russian cinema, music, and art (mostly landscape painting). He concisely argues cinema's place as a natural extension of Russian nineteenth-century cultural traditions, to which he refers many times in the remaining chapters. The eight subsequent chapters are devoted to discussions of a particular genre, for example, "Women