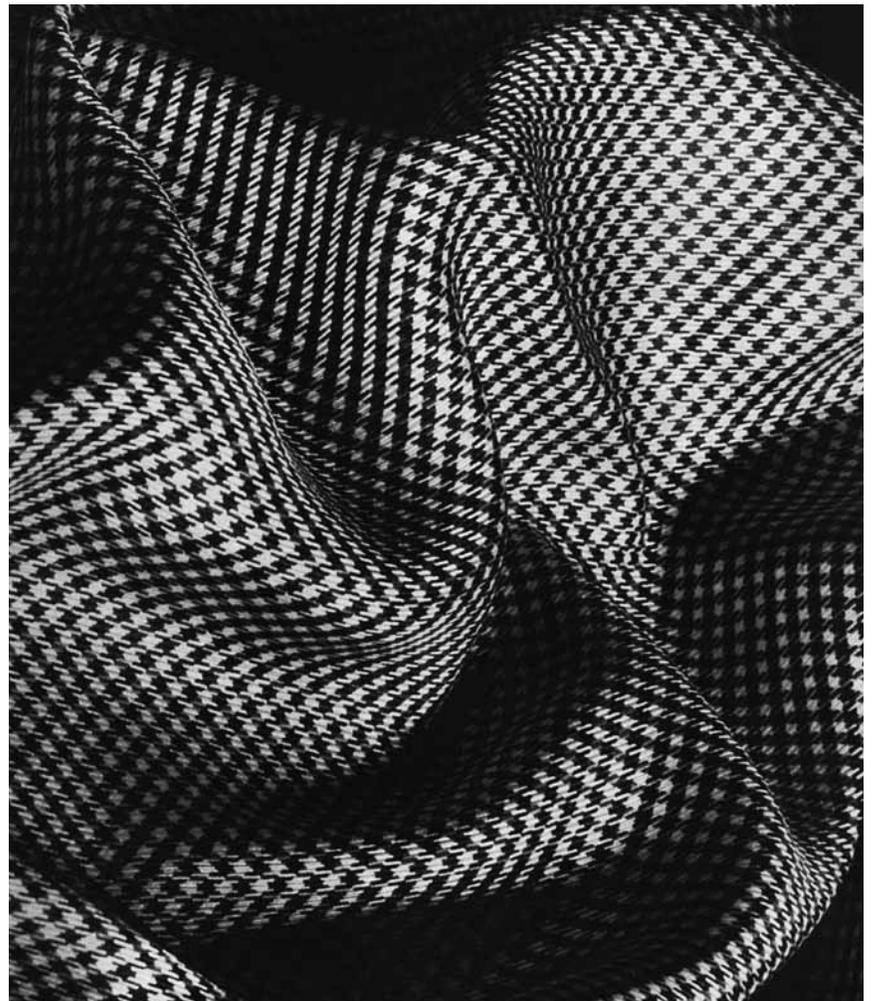


The Slavic Scene

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES & LITERATURES

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An image from *Photography Sees the Surface*, an MSP publication

The Slavic Scene

Letter From the Chair

Dear Friends

The initiatives that we launched last year are off to a great start; we appreciate all of the help that we have gotten from many of you. Our undergraduate program's new Polish major and the new "tracks" within our Russian major are attracting students in increasing numbers, and our interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to graduate education has met with an enthusiastic response from our current Ph.D. students.

The concentration (major) in Polish Studies, which was activated just two months ago, already has majors, in addition to the students who are minoring in Polish language and literature. Demand for instruction in Polish language is on the rise as well; for the first time in several years, we had to add an additional section of first-year Polish to accommodate the thirty students who wanted to take the course.

On the facing page, you can read more about the continuing success of the new tracks that we have already added to our Russian major. The Culture and the Heritage Speakers tracks are attracting students to the major and we have similar hopes for the "Global Russian" track which we plan to introduce next year. The unique feature of this latter track are the opportunities it will provide for using the language in the "real world," both in this country and in Russia. Alina Makin is actively engaged in developing a pilot of the service-learning course which will be the keystone of this track. She has made contacts in local organizations who help recent Russian-speaking émigrés and older Russians who speak limited English. Our students can be of service in a number of ways—from translating, orally or in writing, necessary documents and forms, to helping these Russian speakers adjust culturally by talking to them in their own language about the everyday situations they encounter. Working with non-Russian adoptive parents of Russian-speaking children will be another extremely beneficial and challenging service activity. Alina has already met with an enthusiastic group of undergrads who will pilot the local outreach dimensions of the program in the Winter semester. A second key component of the Global Russian track will be a semester or summer internship in Russian during the final two years of study.



We have welcomed an exceptional cohort of graduate students to our Ph.D. program in the last two years. You can read about them and their interests in this issue of Slavic Scene. Because their interests are quite varied, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, we have devised a series of graduate seminars that will be team-taught, covering material from several national cultural spheres. First up this Winter will be a seminar on Slavic and East European Literary (and Cultural) Theory, which will explore concepts and methodologies that emerged in Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Slovenia, spanning a broad range that includes Symbolist, Formalist, Structuralist and post-Structuralist approaches. It is our intention to offer one such team-taught graduate seminar every semester. On tap for 2009 and 2010 are seminars on the avant-garde, research methodologies, cinema and dissent, and post-modernism. Much of the material in these seminars will relate closely to the particular interests of our graduate students such as literature and ideology and nationalist mythologies, and the contrasts and similarities across cultures, Russian-Ukrainian-Polish-Czech-Jewish-Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian (our current students are interested in comparative work involving two or more of the above national cultures). These seminars encompass not only the study of literature, but also history, philosophy, politics, and aesthetics more generally.

We are also in the process of revising our required reading lists for graduate students and the structure of our qualifying exams in order to provide for greater individualization, so that students can focus their own course selection and study toward their particular scholarly interests at the same time that they acquire broad knowledge of the literatures they plan to be teaching.

While I am on the subject of graduate education, I want to remind you about the special opportunity that you have to help us continue to provide tuition and stipends for our students during five years of graduate study. Our current cohort has been exceptionally outstanding in their ability to secure highly competitive fellowships; however, we will have to augment these funds considerably in order to make five years of graduate study affordable. Any donation to our Graduate Student Endowment or our Graduate Student Fund will be matched 50% by President Coleman (see the box on the last page of this issue for further information). However, this generous match, which can multiply the impact of any donation you make, is only in place until the end of 2008. Help that you can give us now will have an especially significant effect.

Best wishes for a happy holiday and a healthy New Year to all of you,

Herbert (Herb) Eagle
hjeagle@umich.edu

The Slavic Scene

Feature

Russian Concentration Continues to Draw Attention

By Michael Makin

The Slavic Department's Russian concentration enrollment continues to grow. The two new tracks— "Culture" and "Heritage Speakers"— provide students with courses on Russian cinema, ideology and culture, the intersection of Russian and Judaic cultures, and other classes outside the traditional philological range. The second track, "Heritage Speakers," offers specialized instruction for students who have grown up with some Russian spoken at home, and who work on perfecting their skills in the written and literary languages. These have brought in a new sort of Russianist, while the planned "Global Russian" track is expected to be equally successful.

This year, RC Russian Program Director and Slavic Department faculty member Alina Makin is piloting a service-learning course, in which students take their knowledge of Russian language and culture out into the community, working with elderly Russophones, helping new arrivals to settle, and teaching classes about Russia to local schools. This

will be an important part of the Global track, which will also require students to internship in Russia.

There is new energy in the Russian program and new interest in Russia. The regularly taught "Russia Today" suggests that students from the Social and Natural Sciences find the booming Russian economy, driven by oil and gas, combined with the ever-exceptional Russian political stance, intriguing.

The success of the Heritage Track in the concentration reminds us that there are more and more young Americans whose families arrived from the former Soviet Union not too long ago. The success of courses on Russian cinema and contemporary culture indicate that Michigan students are aware of the flourishing of the arts in the new Russia. Plans are already afoot to take advantage of the Sochi Winter Olympics to draw attention to Russia's sporting renaissance. It is a great time to be teaching courses on Russia, and an even better time to be taking them.



Nina Shkolnik (far right) and her "Russian for Heritage Speakers" class

The Slavic Scene

Classroom Spotlight



Beyond St. Petersburg

Last summer, I visited the most beautiful and romantic city, my favorite place in the world, the majestic St. Petersburg. There I encountered a strange phenomenon, white nights. Although physically exhausted, the fantastic white sky outside my window prevented sleep. In the heart of St. Petersburg, I got lost in the art of the Hermitage, saw the breathtaking Cathedral of the Resurrection, and witnessed the bridges part at 2 a.m., something I thought only existed in the movies.

Sure enough, time was flying and soon it was time to begin what I was sent there to do—work in a children’s camp as a leader and English teacher.

By Alena Gerasimova

This experience turned out to be, by far, the most overwhelming, exhausting, difficult, and amazing time of my life.

For two months I lived, breathed, literally became a part of the camp—where the sun doesn’t set and leaders even dream of children. The campfires were the most memorable experience not only for the kids, but also for us—their friends and leaders. We sat around the fire, close to our kids watching the fire dance, listening to a guitar with ageless Russian songs, drinking real tea, made from leaves on nearby trees.

continued on next page

Meet Our Newest Graduate Students



Vladislav Beronja

Before immigrating to United States and becoming a U.S citizen, Vladislav lived in Bosnia and Croatia. His preliminary dissertation work deals with 20th century Russian and ex-Yugoslav novels that act as archives or museums of literary tradition through citation of “classics,” transformation of the author into a reader, and the growing importance of memory discourse in 20th and 21st century. Vlad is also interested in reading as a site of memory in the age of its global decline. He has a BA in Comparative Literature (U-M).



Aleksandar Boskovic

Aleksandar was previously employed at the Institute for Literature and Art in Belgrade and authored more than twenty articles in various literary periodicals across Serbia. He has been editing “TXT” a periodical for literature and theory of literature, and his book “*Poetic Humour in the Work of Vasko Popa*” was recently published. Research interests include literature of the 20th century and contemporary literatures from the Balkans, Russian and East European Cinema, Russian formalism, Bakhtin, semiotics, cultural practice, poststructuralist theories of literature and art, theory of possible worlds, interdisciplinary studies. Aleksandar holds degrees in South Slavic and Comparative Literature (University of Belgrade).



Eric Ford

His principle research interest is Russian prose of the 1920s and 30s, particularly some of the Formalist-influenced writers, and the writers associated with the OBERIU group. Eric is also interested in Postmodernism, Gulag, prison, and military memoirs and the “literature of fact,” as well as issues and trends in contemporary Russian art and culture. He has a BA in English and Russian (Wayne State University).

Beyond St. Petersburg *continued from previous page*

When the kids were asleep, I would go on late-night swims in the lake with my best friend, Maria Mikhailovna. It was only then that we had time to ourselves, away from the kids. Although we both had strict schedules requiring us to get up at 8:30 every morning, I never felt as alive as I did those nights.

Then there were the English lessons I taught to all of the different age levels. The 8 and 9 year olds were the cutest. I taught them the alphabet, and songs such as “*You are My Sunshine*” with hand motions. The children’s eyes looked at me as if I were a star—it was that day that a young 9 year old boy, Dennis,

asked for my hand in marriage! How could I say no to a face like that? I also met the sweetest, cutest 9-year-old orphan, by the name of Anton. I’ll never forget his smile or the way he held my hand. On his birthday, the other kids prepared birthday wishes and toys for him—his face shone brighter than the brightest star that day.

At the end of my stay, I said good-bye to my friends with tears in my eyes. No matter how difficult the journey was at times, the children became a part of me forever. Back at home, I am in touch with some of them on Russian Facebook, but feel that a piece of my heart will always be in *Восход*



Adam Kolkman

Adam’s primary research interests are 19th and early 20th century Russian literature, which he approaches from a historical perspective. Currently, he is focusing on 1860–1920 to better understand the trends and transitions of ideology and artistic and philosophical thought throughout this period. In addition to his studies, Adam enjoys researching and collecting 20th century popular and underground music from around the world, drawing, and creative writing. Upon his graduation from U-M, he was quite impressed with the Slavic Department and its faculty, and decided it was the best place for him to continue his studies as a graduate student. Adam has a BA in Mathematics and Russian (U-M)



Renee Scherer

Renee’s interests are on the influences of Jewish folklore and mid-century pulp fiction on the late Jewish-American speculative fiction writer Avram Davidson, combining her fascinations with Jewish literature and science fiction. She has traveled to Russia twice, splitting her time between Petersburg and the cities of Irkutsk and Ulan-Ude. Besides a lingering obsession with Davidson, her research interests include Jewish culture and literature of E. Europe, science fiction and the utopia in Russian literature, literary theory, semiotics, folk and fairy tales in the Slavic world, Soviet children’s literature, and 20th century Russian poets. She earned a BA in English Literature and Russian Language and Literature from Illinois Wesleyan University, where she also received the David R. Koehn award for Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities.



Jessica Zychowicz

Following graduation, she spent two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Ukraine. Her research interests include Identity, nationalism, and resistance to censorship in Poland and Western Ukraine. She is also intrigued by the concept of borders, thresholds, and their dissolution in writing and inquiry, as well as young women as emerging figures in gendered cycles of literature, cultural inscription, and age in contemporary rural Poland and Ukraine. When she is not working on her studies, Jessica is actively trying to reinvigorate the art of the “old fashioned” paper letter with the help of friends abroad. She also enjoys watching obscure comedy series on British TV, culinary endeavors (not always successful, but worthwhile), and writing poetry and short stories. Jessica has a BA in English (University of California, Berkeley).

The Slavic Scene

Staying Connected

Mila Shevchenko, Ph.D. (2008)

By Mila Shevchenko

I defended my dissertation "*Melodramatic Scenarios and Modes of Marginality: The Poetics of Anton Chekhov's Early Drama and of Fin-De-Siècle Russian Popular Drama*" this past July. In June I had accepted an Instructor's position at Bowling Green State University; Department of German, Russian, and East Asian Languages. In the Fall Semester I taught three Russian language courses: two sections of First-Year Russian (12 students in the first section [a mixed class of regular and honors students] and 11 students in the second section) and a Third-Year Russian (Composition and Conversation: 9 students). Next semester I will continue teaching two sections of First-Year Russian and I will teach a course in Russian Drama. This course is to introduce the key 19th- and 20th-century Russian playwrights (such as Griboedov, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Mayakovsky, Blok, Kharms, Shvarts, Petrushevskaya, among others) and their dramaturgical poetics and aesthetics. The development of their artistry will be analyzed within the historical and cultural context of Russian literature and theatre and also against the backdrop of major dramatic movements and genres. Special attention will be paid to some specific dramatic topics, such as characters' system, plot, structure, and space—dramatic and stage space, on- and

off-stage space. The course is cross-listed with the Theater and Film Department Courses. I also serve as advisor to the BGSU Russian Club.

During my first year at U-M, I was on a departmental scholarship, and I fully devoted myself to coursework. Only when I started teaching Russian in the Summer Language Institute did I realize how much I had missed teaching. I love the dynamics of the classroom, the opportunity to share my knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm with others—and it was a pleasure to discover that I could make the same lasting connections with my American students as I had with my students in Bulgaria. Teaching does not only function as a means of transmission, exchange and solicitation of knowledge but also contains certain elements of performance. My classroom is my 'stage' and I find the energy of my 'audience' stimulating.

My experience as an instructor and scholar has been an ongoing process of learning and growing. My teaching in the Department of Slavic and Literatures has been a constant source of inspiration. When I joined the Department I had already had extensive teaching experience but teaching Russian in an American university was something different. I had great teachers though. Every one of them inspired me in his/her own unique way. My first teachers here were my Polish instructors: Ewa Pasek and Piotr Westwalewicz. I learned a great deal of teaching strategies from them, but most importantly that teaching language can and must be fun! I also owe a lot of pedagogical insights to the Russian Language Program coordinators: Snejana Tempest, Kelly Miller, and Svitlana Rogovyk. LRC's workshops, our monthly Pedagogy workshops, the Oral Proficiency Interview Tester Training Workshop at University of California, Berkeley, were also invaluable assets to my professional development. During my graduate tenure, I have been exposed to theoretical versatility and multiplicity of writing and teaching practices which I will implement in my future literature and culture courses. For this I owe a debt of gratitude to my professors at U-M.



Mila Shevchenko, Ph.D.
Instructor of Russian
Language and Literature
Department of German,
Russian, and East Asian
Languages
Bowling Green State
University

Being Part of the Bigger Picture: Russia through the U.S. Forest Service

By Lara Peterson

As for many with an interest in languages and international studies, my career path has been relatively unplanned. My involvement with Russian began in high school. My sophomore year, my school offered Russian in addition to the more traditional French, German and Spanish. Russian presented a unique opportunity to study a language and culture I had a peripheral connection to (I was named Lara after Dr. Zhivago) and 1991 was an exciting time to engage with that part of the world. Though the program was unfortunately canceled after my first year, my interest had taken root.

While an undergraduate at Brigham Young University (BYU), I chose classes because they sounded interesting. When forced to choose a major, I settled on two: Conservation Biology, Wildlife Biology emphasis, and Russian. At the time, I had little thought for what these two fields had in common beyond my passion for both. My undergraduate program provided many wonderful opportunities, including a summer study abroad in St. Petersburg. It was there that I fell in love with the language, culture, and that fascinating city. I did not realize at the time how this experience would affect my future career path.

After graduation, I worked in wildlife biology. When I started researching graduate programs, I sought ways to reconnect with Russia. I was attracted by University of Michigan's unique Dual Masters Degree Program in Natural Resource Management and Russian and East European Studies. Fortuitously, there were four of us who entered the program in 2004.

University of Michigan provided many opportunities to expand my knowledge. Advanced courses through the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures deepened my language skills, while complimentary courses in various departments broadened my understanding of regional and technical issues. I spent a summer in Irkutsk on a study abroad program and later conducted my graduate research on land-cover change in the forests around Lake Baikal.



After graduate school, I discovered that there are indeed jobs out there for everyone. I currently work with the U.S. Forest Service International Programs Office as the Russia, Europe, and Near Asia Program Coordinator. I manage the agency's cooperative programs with partners in the region on natural resource issues of mutual concern. My work takes me to various parts of Russia several times a year to develop programs, facilitate visits by technical teams, or attend conferences and meetings. Most people do not know that the U.S. Forest Service even has an international program. However, international collaboration is critical if we hope to solve the natural resource issues facing today's world.

Russian is a challenging language, and Russia is often a challenging place. However, through hard work, flexibility, and (most important) a sense of humor, I have been able to learn and grow from the difficult moments and savor the beautiful ones. I just returned from St. Petersburg, where my passion for Russia was reignited as I wandered the streets of tsars, poets, musicians, revolutionaries, martyrs, and visionaries and absorbed Russia's rich and complex history.

Lara Peterson (U-M 2004) on the Neva River in front of the Peter and Paul Fortress. She is the Russia, Europe and Near Asia Program Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service, International Programs.

Visit their website at www.fs.fed.us/global

Photo taken by Nina Savransky, U.S. Forest Service International Programs, October 2008

Highlights

The Slavic Scene

Searching for the Shtetl in the Twenty First Century

By Mikhail Krutikov

The shtetl — Yiddish for a small town — has preoccupied the imagination of Jewish writers, artists, and scholars for nearly two centuries. It has been idealized and criticized, analyzed and eulogized, but it seems that until recently it was universally agreed that the shtetl was no longer alive after the Holocaust destroyed Jewish life in Eastern Europe. The project that I am involved with tries to challenge this negative consensus. For more than twenty years, a group of enthusiastic researchers, which is now affiliated with the European University at St. Petersburg, has been traveling every summer to Podolia, a historic region in southern Ukraine, looking for the remnants of the shtetl life. They have accumulated a rich and diverse collection of interviews, images, historical documents, and material artifacts, which will be of great importance for scholars of ethnography, folklore, art, history, and architecture. As a literary scholar, I am particularly interested in the development of

metaphoric language and its relationships with reality. My visits to the towns of Balta, Mogilev-Podolskii, Bershadt, and Shargorod, as part of the summer expeditions of the European University, enabled me to read Yiddish fiction and memoirs in new ways, revealing intriguing mechanisms of “textualization” of human experience.

In the course of my research I became increasingly intrigued not only by what my colleagues and I discovered in the shtetlekh, but also by the motivation and attitude of St Petersburg researchers. I realized that each one of them has their own “shtetl” in mind. Their projects went beyond a narrow, academic focus, including a broader, cultural agenda. Their interest in the shtetl reflected a need to expand their intellectual and spiritual horizon beyond the limits of urban mental territory. Thus, my project acquired a new dimension, namely, studying of the interaction between St. Petersburg intellectuals and provincial Ukrainian town folk. While our research focuses on the remaining Jewish population of the shtetl, we are also interested in broader issues of multiculturalism, urban culture, economic, social, and cultural interaction between different ethnic and religious groups, both in the local framework of a small Ukrainian town and in the larger, global frameworks.

A rapid globalization in all areas of life is one of the most striking features of contemporary Ukraine. Although the majority of Jews left small towns in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse in the early 1990s, many emigrants maintain close connections with their old home. A few come back permanently, many others come to visit. Increasingly, Ukraine is becoming a popular destination for pilgrims who come to pray at the graves of the tzaddikim — Hasidic rabbis of the past. The shtetl becomes part of the global network of communication and movement, and continues to play a significant role, both as a symbolic locus of “authenticity” and a very real destination for many travelers.



Signs in Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Polish identify the town of Shargorod in Ukraine. The town was an important Jewish town until the early 1990s. The use of Yiddish is unusual and reflects current artistic and cultural statements (photo taken July 2008).

Stasys Exhibit

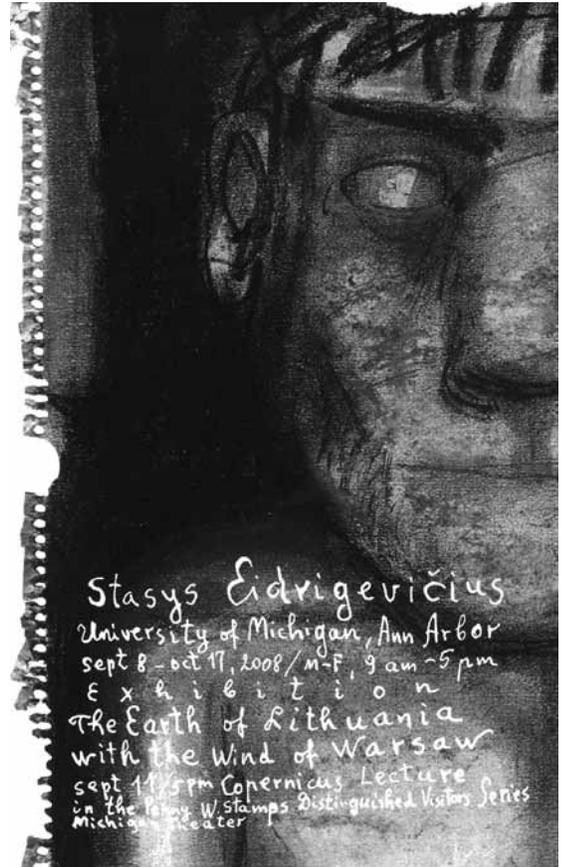
By Rachele Grubb

The University of Michigan welcomed Stasys Eidrigevicius as the first artist in the 2008 Penny W. Stamps Distinguished Visitor Series. His presentation dwelled on the familial. Sharing images and stories that playfully documented his childhood home, family and surroundings, Stasys provided a visual timeline of personal interest and observation.

The continuity of Stasys' images from past to current was remarkable. In one photo taken as a young teenager, he positions the viewer below the gaze of a rooster in the middle of a dirt path, composed delicately between a wooden fence, the stark horizon, and the viewer. In another image he captures the arrangement of two men (his father and neighbor) in conversation. The seemingly mundane nature disappears when the viewer learns that Stasys designed and built the porch where they sit, and that his neighbor is willing to do nearly anything to avoid being captured on film—which Stasys had also documented through a series of photos that illustrate this same man running away from the camera lens and into a ditch where he hid among the rushes in hopes to avoid being captured on film.

Stasys' illustrative portraiture and graphic design ring harmoniously in his gigantic posters, and small library stamps. His creative essence is straightforward and uncomplicated in both execution and presentation. The images require no language or common history. The images, like the viewers, share together an inquisitive gaze, captured briefly in memory.

Stasys designed his lecture and exhibition poster for his appearance at the University of Michigan; it is a self-portrait with hand-lettering that appears as though it were just pulled from his sketchbook.



Polish Film Festival Celebrates 15th Year



The Ann Arbor Polish Film Festival is an annual cultural event organized by the Polish Cultural Fund—Ann Arbor in cooperation with the Polish-American Congress Ann Arbor Chapter, the University of Michigan's Polish Club, and the University of Michigan. Since its beginning in 1993, the Festival has promoted Polish culture by offering audiences an opportunity to see a broad range of narrative forms and visual styles present in contemporary Polish cinema, including

documentaries, animated shorts, and feature films. These works are not only commentaries on life in contemporary Poland, but also reflect the views of Polish artists interpreting diverse issues around the world. Excerpt from www.annarborpolonia.org/filmfestival

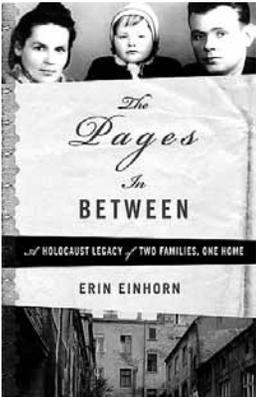
For more information, please visit their website, at www.annarborpolonia.org

The Slavic Scene

In Print

A History Revisited

By Priya Bali



The Pages Between

It's often said there are three sides to a story: yours, mine and the truth. In 2001, New York Daily News reporter and Michigan alum Erin Einhorn boarded a plane to Poland to find that elusive third side, the one that would tell her about her mother's complex past and survival of the Holocaust. She found more: the larger story of World War Two in Nazi-occupied Poland. A year later, having learned a new language and returning with a journal filled with entries recounting her experiences, she began to write her first book. Her memoir, entitled "The Pages in Between: A Holocaust Legacy of Two Families, One Home."

On her trip, Einhorn was able to track down the Skowronski family that sheltered her mother during the Holocaust. From Aug. 1943 to Nov. 1945, Einhorn's mother remained hidden, spending two-and-a-half years as a member of the Skowronski family. This situation was based on a deal made by Einhorn's grandfather, who begged the Skowronskis to hide his daughter in exchange for, among other things, allowing the family to live rent-free in a building he owned in Bedzin, Poland. Einhorn recalls the moment when she met Mrs. Skowronski's son, who was essentially a brother to her mother.

"I walked into the life of an elderly man who was the son of the woman who saved my mother," Einhorn said. "I showed up in his life one day and brought his long-lost sister back to life. I showed him a photograph of my mom as a little kid and he pointed to her and said that she was his sister."

What followed was something Einhorn hadn't anticipated: For years, she had only heard the reassuring yet inadequate tale of how her mother was always loved, and the reasons her grandfather had stopped associating with the Skowronskis. Now, Einhorn was being introduced to an entirely new family and country she'd never traveled to in order to fill in the gaps of a story she'd been trying to piece together for years. But matters became complicated when she found herself tying up loose ends of two families who never found closure from their pasts.

"It brought home for me the difference between memory and truth," Einhorn said. "It's like a moment when your family intersected with history and everybody relates to that moment and then they're inspired by it, and when you try to measure up that moment with provable facts, you find that it doesn't necessarily align. In my case, I found a new version of how my grandmother may have died."

The understanding she gained of her family's past was deeply rooted in Poland's own history. The tale of the two families goes beyond Einhorn's own history and represents two larger stories, those of the Jews and Poles during a pivotal point in history. Although not a Holocaust memoir, Einhorn's personal story becomes a tale of how these people were driven apart and the ways in which the goals of reconciliation have been met.

Before Einhorn immersed herself in this project, she was a journalist for The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News. She covered small town life before moving to New York City, where she began reporting on the public school system and the city's government.

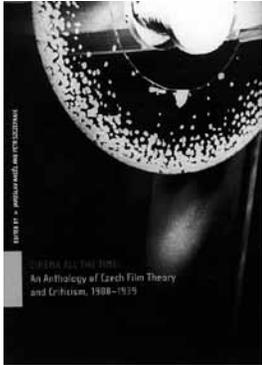
But experiences outside the professional world were formative too, especially the ones at Michigan, where Einhorn earned a bachelors degree in 1995 and wrote for The Michigan Daily. Whether it was the Holocaust denial-ad protesters on the Diag, Bill Clinton on the steps of Hill Auditorium or guitarists on the steps of the Hatcher Graduate Library, all had an effect on her life. No matter where a person lives, environment doesn't just become a backdrop against which things happen; it becomes the action itself.

Einhorn remembers this time as being crucial to the enhancement of her identity as a writer, and perhaps when she first realized what she calls the single greatest thing about journalism: "The excuse that you have to go up to people and just start asking them who they are and why they're doing what they're doing." *continued on next page*

The Slavic Scene

Michigan Slavic Publications

New from MSP: *Cinema All the Time: An Anthology of Czech Film Theory and Criticism, 1908–1939*



Cinema is available
from Michigan Slavic
Publications

[www.lsa.umich.edu/
slavic/msp](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/msp)

This anthology assembles some of the earliest Czech texts on film published in the period between 1908 and 1939, i.e., between the rise of art cinema and the outbreak of World War II, writings that were instrumental in shaping various ways film was seen and understood in this formative period. The authors include scientist Jan Evangelista Purkinje, whose studies of the perception of movement from 1819 and 1820 laid the foundation for the rise of the cinematic apparatus, and writers and critics Vaclav Tille and Karel Capek, who, year before their counterparts abroad, analyzed cinematic language as it was emerging, reflecting on its genealogy, genres, and future development. How was it possible that in a country without a well-developed film industry, these cultural and literary critics, linguists, theater directors, architects, and filmmakers articulated ideas and concepts that predated later theoretical developments? This collection suggests that Czech writers benefited from their location at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe, where Austrian, Slavic, German, French, and American cultures intermingled.

The anthology is organized both thematically and chronologically to reflect the rise of film as a new medium, a cultural institution, and an art form—in other words, to document the discursive construction of film in its variety and multiplicity. The writings express a number of concerns that relate to major trends and forces of modernity in the twentieth century: film is seen as a means to educate and enlighten, as an example of the dynamic relation between time and space, as a new formal model for other arts, as a tool for ideological struggle, and as a unique signifying system. While some of the authors are known to scholars in various fields—Purkinje to historians of science, Karel Tiege to students of the European avant-garde, Jan Mukarovsky and Roman Jakobson to literary scholars and linguists, and Alexander Hackenschmied to film historians—only a few of their texts on film have been translated into English, and this anthology marks the first time they have been systematically and critically assembled. *From editor's introduction.*

This volume was published in cooperation with the National Film Archive, Prague.

A History Revisited *continued from previous page*

In doing so, not only is curiosity about particular people and places fulfilled, but one can also share his or her newfound knowledge with others, and this is exactly what Einhorn has done with her book.

“Too often with the Holocaust, this mantra of ‘never forgot’ ends up being about the crimes committed and not about all of these lives, cultures and communities that survived for hundreds of years in Eastern Europe and were obliterated,” Einhorn said. Her book — and searching for one’s own personal history in general — presents one way to reduce this effect and live more fully within the spirit of

“never forget.”

Rediscovering our own histories may seem like a daunting task. It may require visiting a strange country and learning about a time that is completely foreign to us: but at the same time, the process may provide us with the missing third side to a story.

“You look for slices of life that tell a larger tale,” Einhorn said.

So if you ever decide to travel half-way across the world to visit an old street corner, or to simply look into the eyes of relatives in antique photographs, pay attention to what you find: you might be

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**The Department of Slavic
Languages & Literatures**

3040 Modern Lang. Bldg.
University of Michigan
812 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275
(734) 764-5355

Chair and Editor:

Herbert J. Eagle

Assistant Editor & Layout:

Rachelle Grubb

**The Regents of the
University of Michigan**

Julia Donovan Darlow
Laurence B. Deitch
Olivia P. Maynard
Rebecca McGowan
Andrea Fischer Newman
Andrew C. Richner
S. Martin Taylor
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Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)

A Departmental Logo

We are pleased to introduce our departmental logo. A lot of thought went into the design, with important insights from the staff and faculty. As a metaphor for continual growth, the circle embodies

renewal and change, and embraces the strength of the University of Michigan. Here it is printed in a single color. The full-color version is blue and red, with black text. We hope you like it too!



Supporting Slavic Studies



U-M President
Mary Sue Coleman

[www.giving.umich.edu/
where/
presidents_challenge.htm](http://www.giving.umich.edu/where/presidents_challenge.htm)

We have been presented with an exciting fundraising opportunity that we hope you will consider! President Mary Sue Coleman has announced a matching challenge that responds to the great departmental need Herb Eagle described in his Letter from the Chair — graduate student funding. We know that such funding is a key factor in helping graduate students decide where to pursue their studies, and we know that attracting these students is critical to the vibrancy of our department. In other words, the success of our program is largely dependent on the graduate students that we can attract! To address this need, President Coleman will match 50% of all gift and pledges made by December 31, 2008, including pledges which extend up to five years. For instance, a gift of \$1000 will be matched with \$500; and a pledge of \$5000 over five years will yield \$7500. With this kind of match in place, even small donations can make a significant impact on our department and the experience we strive to give our students. All such gifts should be designated to the Graduate Fellowship Fund, and will be combined to create annual support packages for our graduate students. Our goal is to establish a graduate fellowship endowment of \$50,000, with slightly over \$33,000 to be raised through alumni and friends of the Department. We hope that you will consider making a gift or bequest!