



**REPORT FORM FOR
NETWORK ACTIVITIES**

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Confidential

1. Lead Applicant

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Present appointment and employing institution

University Senior Lecturer, Department of Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge

Role in activity

Convener

2. Activity details

Type and title of activity

Inter-disciplinary workshop: <i>Russia on Edge: Reclaiming the Periphery in Contemporary Russian Culture</i>
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Location

CRASSH Centre for Research in the Arts and Humanities, University of Cambridge
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Date

From: 11 Dec 2009	To: 12 Dec 2009
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Brief Description of activities carried out (please include or attach a confirmed list of participants)

[Please see attached workshop booklet for a complete list of participants and workshop website <http://www.ellenrutzen.nl/russiaonedge.htm> for additional information concerning the event.]

The workshop *Russia on Edge: Reclaiming the Periphery in Contemporary Russian Culture* was a one-and-a-half-day international workshop hosted by the University of Cambridge's Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). The workshop focussed on contemporary Russian culture from a transdisciplinary perspective; speakers addressed the question of how usefully the notions of 'centre' and 'periphery' provide analytical tools for understanding current processes at work in Russian cultural production. Speakers and panels on a wide range of topics – literature/language, fashion, ethnography, new media, contemporary art, gay culture, and contemporary film – critically examined traditional views of centre and periphery. They argued (1) that in post-Soviet space, major cultural figures increasingly emerge beyond major urban centres and mainstream culture, and (2) that notions of centrifugal power sources and competing centres are pivotal to contemporary Russian society and its cultural products. In addition to the panel sessions, the participants addressed these cultural shifts in informal discussions – during lunch/breaks/drinks and a dinner at Trinity College – and during the round table session which concluded the workshop.

3. Achievement of stated aims and objectives

Please summarise how the stated aims and objectives of the activities proposed have been achieved and how these have helped to further the aims and objectives of CEELBAS.

The workshop sought to address a common research focus that emerged in the course of a seminar series hosted by Cambridge's Study Group on Contemporary Russian Culture, which met at CRASSH biweekly from October 2007 through to April 2009. At that seminar series, speakers from a range of disciplines (including architecture, fashion, ethnography, political science, literature, gay culture, film and post-colonial studies) discussed contemporary cultural processes in Russia. At a substantial number of sessions, speakers suggested that there has been a shift in cultural focus from the centre to the margins in Russian culture – whether these be defined in geographical, social, political or institutional terms. Cumulatively, the seminar series of the Contemporary Russian Cultural Studies Group suggested that the conventional view of Russian cultural momentum as located in the nation's capital, Moscow, is misleading. It suggested that contemporary Russian culture is marked by new configurations of centre and periphery – configurations that have been explored outside of Russia by such groundbreaking scholars as Gayatri Spivak (the marginal centre), Homi Bhabha (cultural hybridity), and Nancy Fraser (transnationality).

The workshop *Russia on Edge* was set up in order to explore these new configurations, thereby addressing the crucial need identified by CEELBAS to understand better contemporary cultural processes in post-Soviet Russia. Rather than focusing on speakers' previous contributions to the seminar series, it was conceived as an opportunity to develop new, transdisciplinary approaches to a common theme: cultural projects and hierarchies of space in a global context. By asking panelists to present new research within this framework, to share it with experts from other disciplines in order to transcend disciplinary boundaries and produce a more panoramic overview of cultural production and consumption in post-Soviet Russia, this workshop explicitly responds to the intellectual challenges identified by CEELBAS concerning the future of research on Russia.

By bringing together former seminar speakers while also inviting relevant new speakers the organizers sought (a) to consolidate the community of scholars that formed during the seminar series; and (b) to expand the network of scholars working on 'cultures of the margins' in Russia. With the latter goal in mind, the event was co-ordinated with the similarly-themed Cultures of the Margins workshop organized by Professor Hilary Pilkington on 12-13th December 2009, at the University of Warwick. Speakers were encouraged to participate in both events – an invitation that three speakers took up – and the programmes of both events were adjusted in light of that goal.

The conference organizers were particularly eager to involve graduate students in the event and announced the workshop in advance via a website and online mailing lists. This enhanced the workshop's visibility, and the event was attended by a substantial group of graduate students both from within and outside the UK (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands), who learnt about the event via online communication channels. We were able to provide 6 graduate students from out of town with subsidised accommodation in Cambridge colleges.

4. Outcomes

Please indicate the outcomes and 'value for money' of activities carried out.

The workshop sparked vivid discussion on a number of problems linked to the themes at hand. It evoked considerations of issues of *social* marginality: for example, that of canonical cultural figures whose homosexuality is consistently concealed in mainstream cultural history. And it led to discussions of how classic 'peripheral views' of Russia – as a margin in relation to a culturally important centre located in Western Europe or the US – invite localized resistance. Participants investigated how the geopolitical disposition of the Siberian managerial elite has affected political activity, and whether the concept of "life-style" was a more fruitful alternative to centre-periphery oppositions.

The workshop's format was specifically designed with a view to facilitating debate on contemporary cultural production in Russia. We arranged for 20-minute presentations to be followed by a discussion and half-hour coffee breaks. The workshop dinner on Friday, December 11 was a key moment for networking and continuing the debates occasioned by the papers in a more relaxed atmosphere. In addition to inviting the speakers, we offered limited dinner places at a subsidised price to interested graduate students and lecturers.

In the round table that concluded the conference, participants pondered the question of whether for contemporary Russia, the very existence of such dichotomies as centre versus periphery and core versus margin are still topical and desirable, or whether these binary oppositions are becoming obsolete. Is it, for instance, today still viable to consider Siberia as 'more peripheral' than Moscow, and if so, in what sense – geographically, culturally, or politically? Or is a more flexible approach to divisions of centre and periphery required? And if so, how does one translate that approach into effective analytical tools? These questions and others addressed at the workshop are crucial for articulating a response to the intellectual challenges identified by CEELBAS concerning the future of research on Russia.

5. Breakdown of total costs for workshops (please attach evidence of expenditure)

[See final CRASSH budget attached]

Item	Amount
<p>Key speakers (Travel, accommodation and subsistence)</p> <p>Accommodation 13 speakers participated in the workshop, one through a direct video link-up due to a last-minute event that prevented her from travelling. One speaker was based in Cambridge, so we provided accommodation for 11 speakers and one co-convenor in two different Cambridge colleges at £25/£18. The majority of speakers stayed for two nights, though some only stayed for one and one stayed for three nights.</p> <p>Travel We would like to reimburse 9 speakers and one co-convenor for their travels (2 speakers had their travel reimbursed by their universities).</p> <p>Subsistence We provided 2 light breakfasts, 3 coffee breaks, 2 lunches, 1 wine reception and a conference dinner.</p>	<p>Accommodation reimbursed by CRASSH: £468.37</p> <p>Travel claims reimbursed by CRASSH: £1,161.99</p> <p>Travel/expenses claim to be reimbursed by CEELBAS: £125.75</p> <p>Subsistence covered by CRASSH (all subsistence except conference dinner): £990.35</p> <p>Conference dinner expenditures: £1050.00</p>
<p>Postgraduate participation To facilitate the attendance of postgraduate students we did not charge a registration fee for our conference. We provided graduate students from out of town with substantial organisational and informational support and booked accommodation for 6 of them at a Cambridge college. We also encouraged graduate students to attend the dinner at a subsidised price (£15 rather than the full price of £35) and 8 graduate students attended.</p>	<p>(8 x £20 =£160)</p>
<p>Room/equipment hire N/A all costs were covered by CRASSH.</p>	
<p>Administration costs N/A</p>	
<p>Printing and publicity (including conference packs)</p>	

N/A All publicity costs were incurred by CRASSH.	
Other (please specify Income from registration (faculty members and late registrants) Income from conference dinner: post graduate students paid a subsidised price of £15 while faculty paid full price of £35.	(£40) – Already deducted from CRASSH figures £260
Total expenditure	£3536.46
Total contribution invoiced to CEELBAS	£915.75
Conference dinner	£1050.00 – £260 = £790
Travel claim	£125.75

6. Breakdown of total costs for projects (please attach evidence of expenditure)

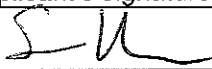
<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Staff costs	
Equipment/technical costs	
Administration costs	
Other (please specify	
Total expenditure	
Total contribution invoiced to CEELBAS	

7. Dissemination and further research


Please give details of dissemination of the outcomes of the workshop/project and any further research planned.

The questions raised at the conference will be re-addressed in a publication that will incorporate the conference proceedings. Two of the conference organizers – Dr Muireann Maguire and Ms Vanessa Rampton – are currently preparing a publication of a selection of papers in a peer-reviewed academic journal.

8. Signature and date

Applicant's signature <i>NETWORK CONTACT (FRANKLIN)</i>	Institutional authorisation (if required)
	Professor Simon Franklin
Date: <i>8 Feb 2010</i>	Position: Professor
	Date:

APPLICANT
Institutional ~~CEELBAS~~ Network Primary Contact

<i>DR. EMMA WIDDY</i> Professor Simon Franklin 
Date: <i>8/2/2010</i>

This form must be accompanied by an invoice from the applicant's institution, supported by receipts or other evidence of the expenditure incurred.

Please send the completed form to: CEELBAS Administrator, SSEES, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT and by email to: ceelbas-network@ssees.ucl.ac.uk.

