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Soviet Bus Stops



Synopsis

Photographer Christopher Herwig first noticed the unusual architecture of Soviet-era bus stops during a 2002 long-distance bike ride from London to St. Petersburg. Challenging himself to take one good photograph every hour, Herwig began to notice surprisingly designed bus stops on otherwise deserted stretches of road. Twelve years later, Herwig had covered more than 18,000 miles in 14 countries of the former Soviet Union, traveling by car, bike, bus and taxi to hunt down and document these bus stops. The local bus stop proved to be fertile ground for local artistic experimentation in the Soviet period, and was built seemingly without design restrictions or budgetary concerns. The result is an astonishing variety of styles and types across the region, from the strictest Brutalism to exuberant whimsy. Soviet Bus Stops is the most comprehensive and diverse collection of Soviet bus stop design ever assembled, including examples from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Abkhazia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Estonia. Originally published in a quickly sold-out limited edition, Soviet Bus Stops, named one of the best photobooks of 2014 by Martin Parr, is now available in a highly anticipated, expanded smaller-format trade edition.

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Customer Reviews

Why Russia has the world's most beautiful bus stops  Architects may have felt creatively stifled in the old Soviet empire  but there was one place where their imaginations were encouraged to run riot: the bus stop. (Oliver Wainwright The Guardian) Perhaps it's the low

stakes of structures with no windows, no doors and no permanent inhabitants that allowed the designers the freedom to flex their creative muscles; the results comprise seemingly limitless variations of expressive concrete waves, colourful murals and mosaics, and bold polyhedral forms. Set against the backdrop of rural, often desert-like terrains, these diminutive structures stand out like contained explosions of creativity. (David Dick-Agnew Azure) Over 150 photographs of architectural exuberance dotting the streets and highways of the vast country... Although many of these structures are falling into disrepair from age and neglect, that they still exist is a testament to how meaningful they must have been in an otherwise homogenous built environment. Herwig's tenacity and devotion to accomplishing a project of this scale is extraordinary. (John Foster The Design Observer) Designed by individual architects, each bus stop proffers a glimpse of the artistry that still flourished in an era when uniformity was imposed and creativity was often suppressed. (Claire Voon Hyperallergic) Christopher Herwig's weirdly evocative photographs show how the loneliest corners of the former Soviet Union were enlivened by whacky bus shelters. Most alien of all are the radiant Gaudí knock-offs in the disputed region of Abkhazia, where Soviet elites once took their beach holidays. (Roland Elliot Brown The Spectator)

Christopher Herwig has produced an amazing photographic journal of an utterly unique Soviet architectural art form, the bus stop. To get these photographs Herwig traveled to 14 countries including difficult to access Moldova, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan (not to mention his treks across Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Estonia among others). Herwig's text and the introduction by Jonathan Meades are illuminating and the essay "The Bus Pavilion: A Minor Architectural Form" by Vera Kavalkova-Halvarsson is especially insightful and explains how in a sea of ugly Brutalist architecture (particularly under Khrushchev and Brezhnev) big budget construction was tightly regulated, but smaller inexpensive projects like bus stops were not considered terribly significant and flew under the radar of the bureaucrats allowing an astonishing array of creativity from mostly young designers and architects with considerable help from local communities. I am genuinely astonished at the creativity on display here, and Herwig's photography is more than up to the challenge. The contrast between the diverse bus stops (many of which are now unserved and abandoned) and their settings are frequently amazing and definitely helped me have a more considered appreciation of this unusual architectural form as a mode of artistic expression. My favorites in the book were concentrated in Kazakhstan (particularly the unusual installation in Astana) and Lithuania, although for sheer diversity of design and astonishing concepts, the bus stops of Abkhazia (especially in Pitsunda and Gudauta) are unbeatable. From

both a photographic and architectural viewpoint, Herwig has created a truly unique gem with "Soviet Bus Stops" and I recommend it highly.

This is a great photo book. Definitely recommended for any Soviet history nerds. It's worth pointing out that there are no pictures of Russia, but every other Soviet satellite state is included. Served as the catalyst for an upcoming journey in the region. Unfortunately my copy came with a bent front cover and a little spot scratched off, which is a little disappointing given the price of the relatively small/short book, but that is a criticism of the seller and not the content.

I've had my eye on this book for a while and I'm glad I finally bought it. It's smaller than I would have imagined, but it's the perfect size for a guest to pick up and flip through at a house party. The foreword and author's introductions are interesting, but I wish there was a bit more text to go along with each image.

What could be more adventurous than crisscrossing ex-Soviet Republics in search of that which has been forgotten? Hats off to the author for sticking with this project for over a decade.

I absolutely love this book. I keep it on my coffee table and it's fun to observe people's reactions when they notice it - "is that a book about... bus stops?" However, everyone that picks it up gets more and more interested as they flip through the pages. Some of the bus stops in the book are pretty amazing, and it's inspiring to think about how much time and artistic detail was invested into building them. I can't recommend this book enough. My guests and I sure get a kick out of it, and you probably will too!

Marvelous book. Nicely bound and printed, and of course the photography is quite striking. Makes a great gift for any fan of Soviet architecture or history. I do wish some of the photos were accompanied by more detailed information, but it is what it is.

I purchased this book for my boyfriend as a gift. The book is small, which is actually quite nice- it's compact but not lacking in substance. It's made well and the pictures are beautiful. The printing is nice, and I really like the red binding. Very sturdy.

Really nice introduction part! Its probably one of this times when one cant skip introduction. Excellent

photos, somewhat made be sentimental.

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