

Vladimir Seleznev

photographer, visual artist



bio

Vladimir Seleznev (b. 1984) is an Israeli and Russian photographer and visual artist.

The most important part of his professional activity is devoted to personal long-term projects that are centered around issues of personal and social identity, social mythology, collective unconscious, as well as problems of suppressing personal self-awareness within various communities, from family to governmental systems.

In 2020, he published his first photobook "Oseyev" — a pseudo-documentary research of the typical residential environment of a contemporary metropolis that examines the collective myth of the new "city of the future" and visualizes the consumer demand of the "middle class" of Russian society. It also identifies problems of personal isolation and social discomfort within new urban areas.

In 2022, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and intensification of repressive domestic policies, Vladimir Seleznev left

Russia and is currently staying between Tel Aviv (Israel) and Tbilisi (Georgia).

Since 2018, before leaving Russia, Vladimir worked on a new project "Those who talk in the temple are consigned to sorrow and woe", in which he continues to study the socio-cultural aspects of Russian society. This time, he explores aspects of religious self-awareness as contributing factor to social apathy, resentment, as well as the historical legitimization of despotism, authoritarian politics, repression, and external aggression by the state.

Vladimir Seleznev has a higher teacher education, he is the author of educational programs on the contemporary photography and visual culture, co-founder and the head of the Polezreniya Photography School.

Selected awards

2021 – Self Publish Riga dummy contest
Shortlist

2019 – International Photography Grant
Documentary nominee

2018 – International Photography Grant
Experimental nominee

2015 – Silver Camera (by Multimedia Art
Museum, Moscow)
Architecture nomination. Prizewinner

Selected exhibitions

2021 – Ways of communication. Group.
Pennlab Gallery, Moscow, Russia

2021 – Udar. Group. Borovsk Prison
Castle, Borovsk, Russia

2021 – Self Publish Riga. Group. ISSP
Gallery, Riga, Latvia

2018 – Photo Kyiv Fair. Group. Chicago
Central House, Kiev, Ukraine

2015 – Silver Camera. Group. Central
exhibition hall Manege, Moscow, Russia

2014 – The Third Museum Photobiennale
of Contemporary Photography. Group.
The Russian Museum, St.-Petersburg,
Russia

2007 – Apple History. Solo. Gallery XXI,
Moscow, Russia

Recent magazine publications

2022 – Meduza (RUS)
Review of the book Oseyev

2021 – The Calvert Journal (ENG)
New Moscow: capturing non-places in the
suburbs of the Russian capital

2021 – Photographer (RUS)
Conversation with photobook reviewer
Olga Bubich

Public collections

Josef Chladek bookshelf

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art
(Moscow)

Public talks

2022 – Presentation of the book Oseyev
"Koresyki" festival, Novosibirsk, Russia

2021 – Presentation of the book Oseyev
Pennlab Gallery, Moscow, Russia

2021 – Presentation of the book Oseyev
Fotobookmarket on Contemporary Art
Center Winzavod, Moscow, Russia

2018 – Presentation of the project SNR (in
collaboration with K. Selezneva)
Photo Kyiv Fair, Chicago Central House,
Kiev, Ukraine

Teaching

2013 - current — multiple courses in
photography at Polezreniya School.

Education

2001 - 2006 – Moscow State Pedagogical
University, Faculty of Philology, Russia

I am an artist working with photography. In my projects, I try to comprehend issues of personal and social identity, social mythology, the collective unconscious.

Overall, I am troubled by what can be encapsulated in the term "metaphysical anxiety" – a natural apprehension of irrationality and unknowability of being. This encompasses various forms of expression, including religious and national self-awareness, the desire to align with a specific social group, consumerism, aggression, resentment.

I am captivated by how a person, aware of their finiteness, explains the external world to themselves, and how these explanations, whether seemingly benign or overtly perverse, are legitimized, postulated, and subsequently become dogmas within different communities at different levels, from family to the state.

WORK

**Those who talk in the temple
are consigned to sorrow and woe**
2018 - Ongoing

Photographs



I contemplate apathy and resentment in Russian society, focusing on Orthodox culture which legitimizes historical despotism, authoritarianism, and military aggression. The work visualizes Orthodoxy narrative and its impact on the nation's future.

In my work, I reflect on the causes of apathy within Russian society, resentment, and apparent indifference towards the repressive and aggressive policies of the state.

In a novel about Ivan the Terrible and the terrorist despotism of the XIV century a Russian writer Aleksey Tolstoy wrote that he was most struck not so much by the fact that Ivan IV could exist, but "that there could be such a society that looked at him without indignation".

Even today, we see a similar society formed by a centuries-old dictatorship. I believe that one of the key forms of this dictatorship is Eastern Orthodoxy — the faith and cultural identity for the majority of Russians. The Orthodox doctrine which is based on the acceptance of suffering, self-sacrifice, and unquestioning submission to patriarchal attitudes creates such a mentality. The title of this project is a striking example of it: this is not a threat, but a typical appeal to keep silent while inside the church.

The Russian political system uses Orthodoxy as a mechanism of propaganda. The statement "there is no power but of God" (Romans 13:1) pronounced by state officials at a national level. According to the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), three new churches a day are being opened in Russia. The head of the ROC officially reproaches the desire for well-being and comfort, he calls the Covid-19 "God's mercy", while the president of Russia informs that in the event of a nuclear war, "we will go to heaven as martyrs".

The militarization of the church is becoming also one of the prevailing political attitudes. "Military temples" are being built, weapons are being consecrated. In June 2023, justifying the invasion of Ukraine, the ROC stated that "pacifism is incompatible with the Orthodox teaching". The new Orthodox dogmatics manifests itself as a convenient and working mechanism of subordination, military aggression, and the irremovability of power.

Today, the word "God" is enshrined in the Constitution of Russia, and since 2013, a law on insulting the feelings of believers has been introduced into the criminal code. This means that, theoretically, my photography work can become a criminal offence if there is a complaint filed.

This project is the last thing I had been working on for several years before leaving Russia. My aim is to visualise the world built by a bearer of modern neo-Orthodox ideology. I imagine a possible future of this country, the ghostly outlines of which are becoming more and more visible in its present.







































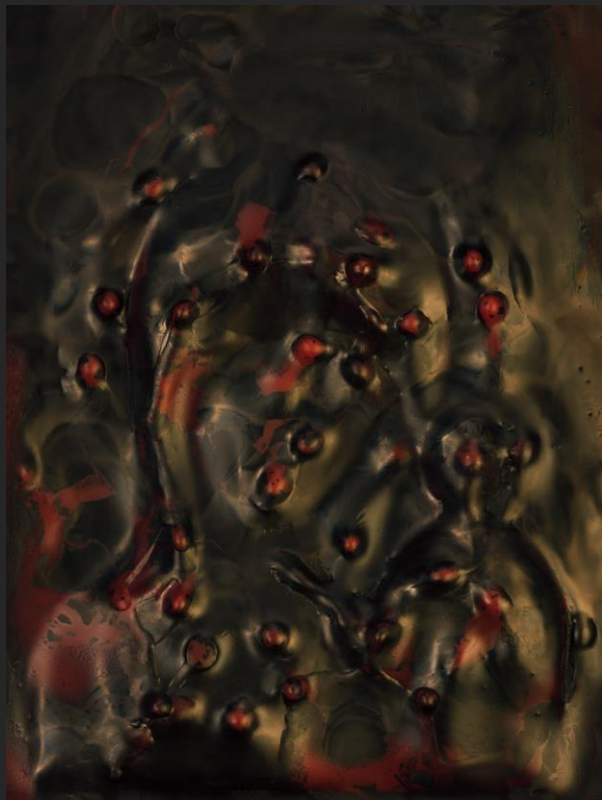










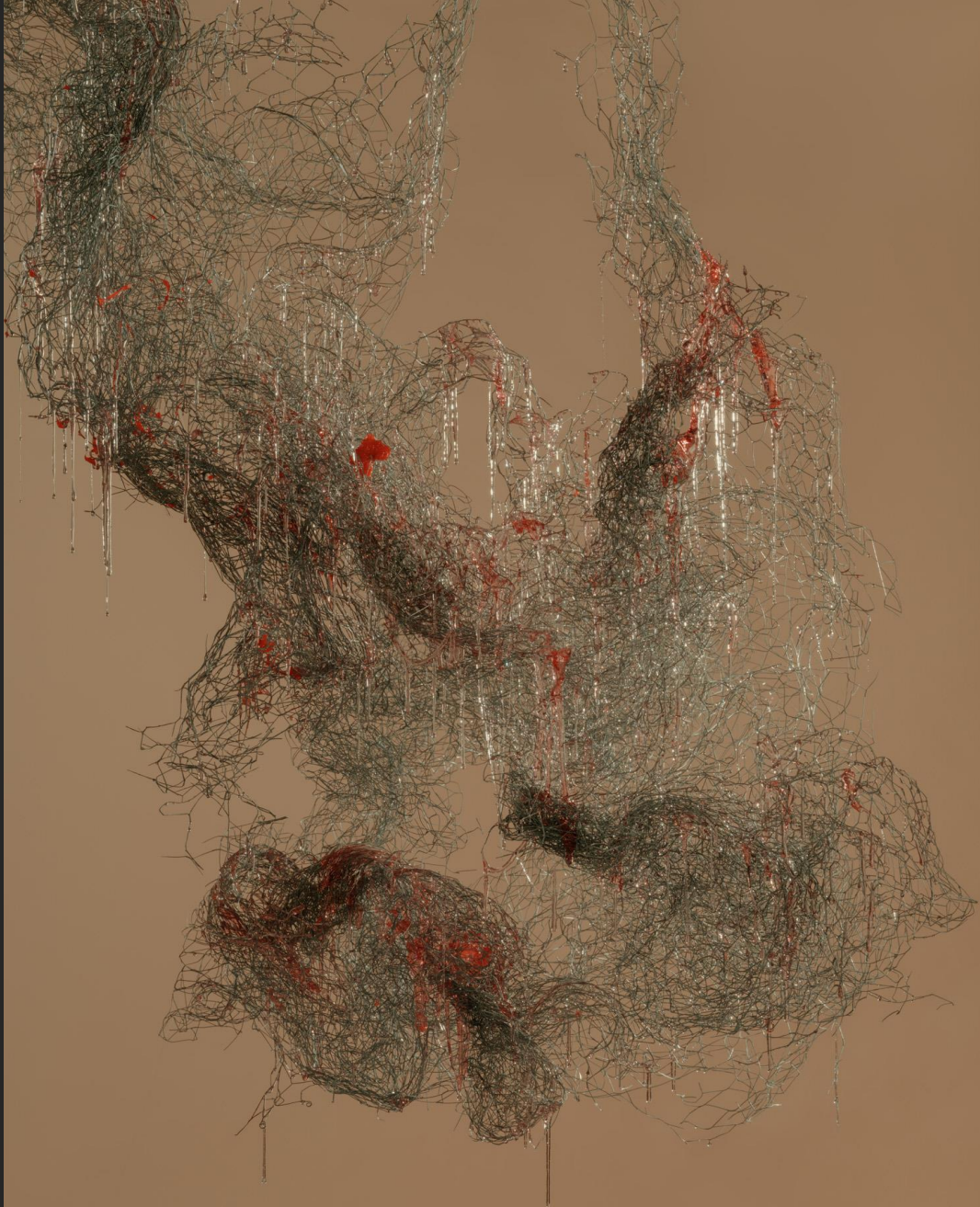


























Udar
2021

Residence
Borovsk, Russia



Within a few days, a group of artists had to work and reinterpret the space of the prison castle in the city of Borovsk (Moscow region, Russia), which depending on the historical period was either a jail for political prisoners, or a communal house for workers, or a tourist attraction of the city, and after some time should acquire another new status :art-cluster with hotel.

A group exhibition in Borovsk Prison Castle was held at the end of the residence.

[Interview with curators of the residence](#)

"October, 1931, Housewarming"
Installation

Stones, wire, iron



“The second visit of St. Avvakum Petrov”
Installation

Construction foam, fabric



“Mycobacteriaceae Carcere”

Installation

in collaboration with Katya Selezneva

Fabric, silicone, garbage of various origin



Oseyev

2013 – 2020

Photographs

Photobook, 2020

Installation



«Oseyev» is pseudo-documentary research of new territories of mass development. The book contains photographic views, archive materials and recollections of residents of the utopian metropolis Oseyev - a city from an impossible future that seems to have arrived right now.

Book

[Artist website](#)

[Josef Chladek, Virtual bookshelf](#)

[Garage Museum of Contemporary Art \(Moscow\)](#)

[Video](#)

Publications / reviews

[Meduza \(rus\)](#)

[The Calvert Journal \(eng\)](#)

[Photographer \(rus\)](#)

Events

[Artist talk, Moscow, 2021 \(rus\)](#)

[Self Publish Riga 2021. The book exhibition in ISSP Gallery](#)

[Ways of communication. Group exhibition. Pennlab Gallery, Moscow, 2021](#)

Oseyev
Photographs



Oseyev
Photographs



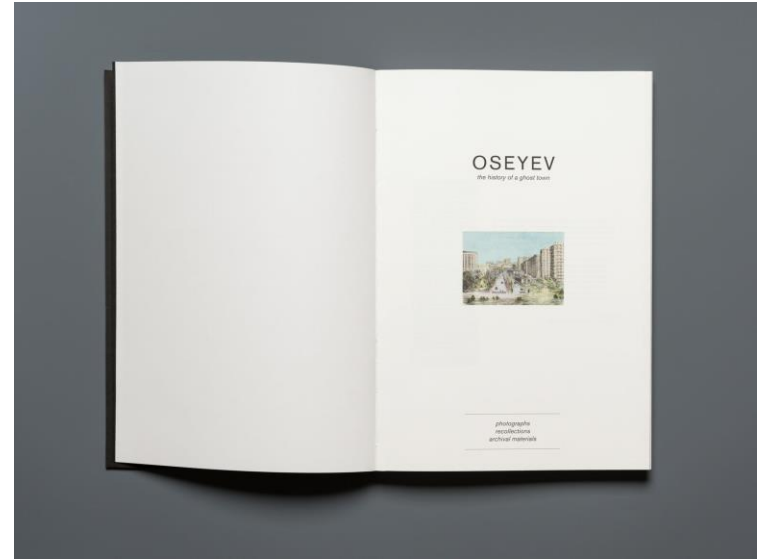
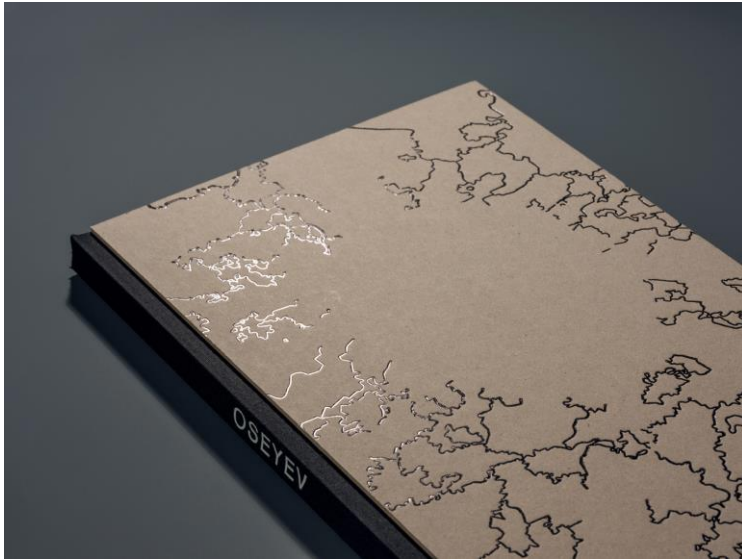
Oseyev
Photographs



Oseyev
Photographs



Oseyev
Photobook



Oseyev
Photobook



Oseyev
Self Publish Riga 2021
The book exhibition in ISSP Gallery



Oseyev

Self Publish Riga 2021

The book exhibition in ISSP Gallery



Oseyev

Self Publish Riga 2021

The book exhibition in ISSP Gallery



Oseyev
Installation views



Oseyev
Installation views



Oseyev
Installation
(fragment)

