

“Poema Vremenyi / Floodplain of Time”

When asked, what we are doing, I once answered, “I, personally, love.” And the rest of us? It seems that my friends were doing the same...

Eugene Grinevich

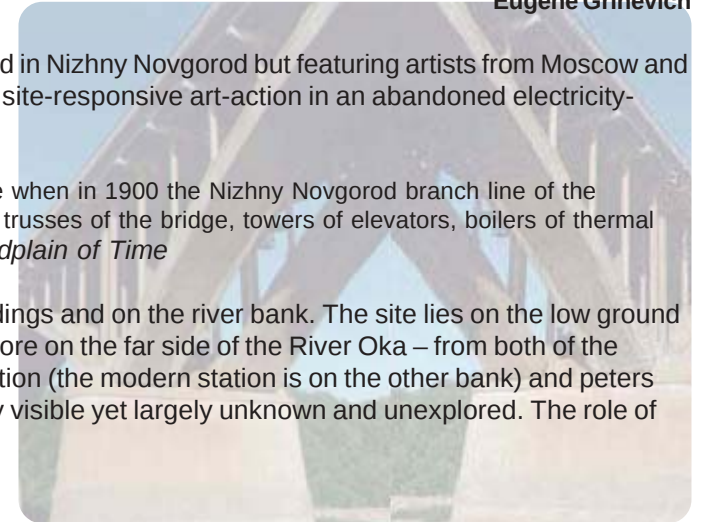
In June 2000 London group Luna Nera joined Russian group Dirizhable (based in Nizhny Novgorod but featuring artists from Moscow and Nizhny Tagil) in the city of Nizhny Novgorod to create **Floodplain of Time** a site-responsive art-action in an abandoned electricity-generating plant and surrounding area on the banks of the River Oka.

The locale was not chosen at random: the city began its modern life here when in 1900 the Nizhny Novgorod branch line of the Moscow to Kazan railway was built. Modernity went then further into the trusses of the bridge, towers of elevators, boilers of thermal plants. Now everything is disused, desolate and deserted. Strelkov, *Floodplain of Time*

Working together for a week, the artists built installations in the derelict buildings and on the river bank. The site lies on the low ground beneath the upper (old) town. The site is fully visible from the city's modern core on the far side of the River Oka – from both of the bridges – but the access road ends by the ruined Romadonovsky railway station (the modern station is on the other bank) and peters out into a dirt road. So the site has the paradoxical quality of being constantly visible yet largely unknown and unexplored. The role of the artists was to make the “invisible” visible.

The installation “Lost” was inspired by the derelict ruin of the Romadonovsky railway station which was on the site but was not accessible to the public. This was built when the railway first came to Russia, joining Moscow to Kazan, further down the Volga. I was thinking about the “ghosts” of the humanity, particularly families, that passed through the station until it fell into disuse. The work was an assemblage of objects with video. The main part of the installation was a series of filmy white oddly-shaped garments suspended by invisible fishing line, interspersed with discarded objects (mainly broken toys, bus tickets, combs etc.) of every-day human life. The video was a loop filmed onsite, in the derelict station and on the river bank, featuring figures wearing the white garments, enacting a ritual of rebirth in the river. The river is the timeless factor, the life-giving element, while the human structures, pass away and are reclaimed by nature.

“Lost”, Gillian McIver, Nizhny Novgorod, 2000



***Floodplain of Time** was curated by Eugene Strelkov and supported by the Soros Foundation and the Centre for Contemporary Art Nizhny Novgorod*