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This month in *e-flux journal*, we are pleased to present a special issue focusing on Moscow Conceptualism, guest-edited by Boris Groys in conjunction with an exhibition of the work of Andrei Monastyrski and Collective Actions, curated by Groys and on view at e-flux until January 6, 2012.

The essays in the issue take the works and activities of the Moscow Conceptualists – among whom Monastyrski was a central figure – as a departure point for interrogating not only the specific concerns of a small group of advanced artists working in relative obscurity in the Soviet Union of the 1970s, but also how the modest artistic practices they developed reflect the resilience and flexibility of a more general sphere of conceptualisms in the plural.

Here Moscow Conceptualism presents itself as a window onto a proliferation of conceptual art practices that exceed their purported origins in canonical European and American art history. How can we begin to account for the many artists whose work overlaps with the aims of dematerialized, idea-driven conceptual art, but without direct contact with this lineage – or even predating it entirely? The same question has been posed over ten years ago by Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss in their landmark Global Conceptualism exhibition at the Queens Museum in New York, in this journal by writers such as Carol Yinghua Lu, and in April 2011 in Moscow at a conference organized by Groys and the Stella Art Foundation, where the papers included in this issue of *e-flux journal* were first presented.

What seems key in addressing this question, as the essays in this issue suggest, is the exceptional nature of each of these conceptualisms, for, as Ekaterina Degot points out in her essay, “Moscow art of the ’70s inhabited an upside-down world, one defined by the victory of *anticapitalism* rather than the victory of communism, socialism, or the Soviet regime.” In this world, communist ideology had already converted objects to ideas (collective property) and citizen-subjects to (non-professional) artists, so the found object, the privileging of idea over material, and the disappearance of the artist’s hand were already indistinguishable from an ideological landscape taken for granted by the artists. Interestingly, it is in this sense that Moscow Conceptualism must be considered not only as the work of dissident artists confronting the triumphs and failures of socialism, but as a continuous line of inquiry producing radically unexpected terms for non-alienated art.