

*Academy of Management and Agribusiness
The Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, Russian Academy of Art
Association for Assistance for Field Investigations and Rural Development*

invite

Master students, PhD students, junior researchers, and practitioners in landscape architecture, history, rural development, sociology, agriculture, ecology to take part in the Seventh International Summer Course in St Petersburg, Russia

Usadba – the Russian Estate as cultural heritage and a resource for rural development

24 July – 4 August 2006

Focus for the course

The cultural heritage of the Russian estate; with its architecture, park, village, agriculture and surrounding landscape.

Background

The identity of the Russian village was completely redefined after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Before the revolution the rural Russia was organized around the estate, *usadba* in Russian, which was the center of typical Russian village. In the early 20th century industry, culture, trade and agriculture of Russia was blooming. In this process the estates not seldom played an important role. Some of them were cultural centers, where artists, nobles and clerks stayed for periods of time, while other estates were centers for agricultural development.

With the communist revolution the production landscape of Russia and the rest of Soviet Union started a metamorphosis from a small-scale agricultural landscape into large-scale industrial state or collective agricultural units, *sovkhozes and kolkhozes*. The private estates were expropriated, the manor houses turned into museums and the village structure dissolved.

Ever since the breakdown of Soviet Union in 1991, Russia's agriculture production has been in crisis. The Soviet large-scale farms are without state subsidies and with the lack of money, few investments and improvements regarding technology are made. Today the Russian rural landscape is filled with abandoned fields, deteriorating or closed sovkhozes and kolkhozes. Meanwhile, the manor houses, still owned by the state are in poor condition. But attractive for

tourism, recreation and cultural identity. Estates adjacent to urban areas are of special interest as the interest for urban development is high. The exploitation and organization of the mansions are far from sustainable.

Topic for course

In the identity vacuum, in which the Russian rural areas are at present, there is a strong need to develop different concepts for the future. In this process the estate – *usadba*, could with its high level of historical, biological and cultural values, play an important role. The topic for the course is to explore the Russian mansion, its cultural history, specific architecture, parks and gardens, and its potential for the future as a possible catalyst in sustainable rural development. A mansion in Leningrad Region will serve as project site. During the course participants will work with different concepts for development regarding planning and design of the Russian estate, in a rural as well as in an urban context.

The course involves lectures, excursions, workshops and project work. During the ten days visits to sites of the core urban area in the region, St Petersburg, as well as to cultural-historical sites in the surroundings will be made in order to investigate and discuss the historical and present relationship between the metropolis and surrounding rural areas.

Each participant will receive portfolio with lectures and additional information.

Language of the course – English

For more detailed information about the course, please contact the Organizing Committee through
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