



Moscow
Hanoi

Landscapes
of Optimism

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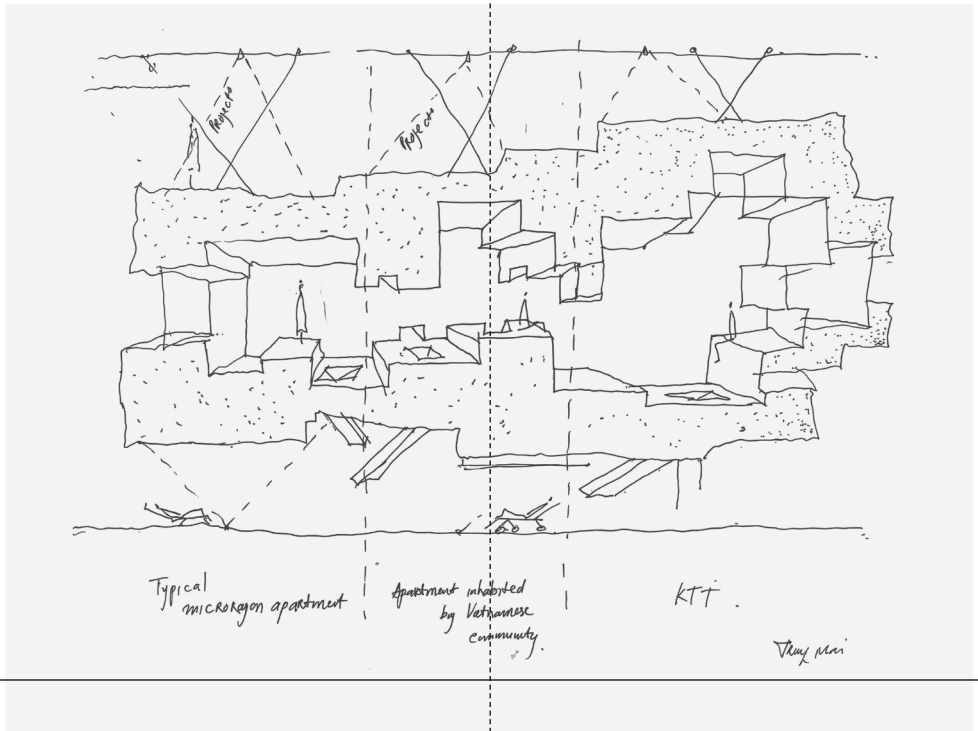


fig. 1
Trung Mai. Architectural concept
of the exhibition

fig. 1(1)
Typical mikrorayon
apartment

fig. 1(2)
Apartment inhabited
by a Vietnamese community

fig. 1(3)
KTT apartment

Khrushchevka—a type of building introduced in the late 1950s—early 1960s in the USSR—is characterised by the use of cheap, pre-fabricated concrete panels created through mould and cast. This technique—which reflected the utopic socialist approach to architecture as universal and productivity-oriented—inspired the overall spatial concept of this exhibition.

The space of the exhibition takes the form of a collage of several typical Soviet and Vietnamese apartment plans in 1:1 scale, with side facets of textile volumes repeating some of the walls of the superimposed floor plans. The walls of the construction—standing, lying, and hanging, of different sizes but of identical material—surround the viewer like ghosts from the standardised past. Experienced as a whole, these walls come to resemble a huge mould for casting a complex architectural form.

The content and modality of the collage changes from its beginning to its end, from Soviet to Vietnamese. It begins with Soviet blueprints collated in a rigid, rectangular manner, which are then gradually infused with Vietnamese layouts, creating a narrow corridor as a transition between two poles, leading to the final, irregularly-aligned open space of purely Vietnamese blueprints. These changes to the tectonic and conceptual organisation of space reflect the processes of translation and adaptation that accompanied the migration of Soviet planning models across geographies and climates. In this way, the massive rectangular grid of the Soviet mikrorayon section slowly morphs into the lighter and more chaotic spatial logic of the Vietnamese KTT, while regulated paths expand into zones of social interaction.

The superimposition of kitchen spaces, which served as local centres of social life, organises the Soviet pole of the collage. Here, viewers' movements around the exhibited objects are strictly guided by massive, continuous volumes. In the transitional part of the exhibition, the connection of Soviet bedrooms to KTT hallways results in a winding pathway with small side chambers containing stories of immigration between the USSR and Vietnam. Loosely resembling apartment interiors, these side chambers summon up memories of the homeland, turning the corridor into a nostalgic, elongated time-machine that showcases various strategies of adaptation to an alien environment. Finally, the blueprints in the Vietnamese pole are adjoined through the potential spaces of the "tiger cages" that could sprout from balconies or windows. Extensions to the original layout, these tiger cages symbolise the adhocism of Vietnamese lifestyle. Taking the form of an amphitheatre or a gathering space, this final part of the exhibition foregrounds the collectivity and communality of KTTs. Taken as a whole, this smooth, upward and downward journey through the testimonies of artists, researchers, and residents of both countries allows socialist dwelling to be envisioned not as a static infrastructure but as a continuously evolving archetype.



fig. 2
Trung Mai. Architectural plan of the exhibition with an overlay of standard layouts of Soviet and Vietnamese apartments



fig. 3
Trung Mai. Architectural diagram with an overlay of key concepts and terms for each of the three parts of the exhibition. Author's version

Optimised
Standardised
Mass Production
Functionalism
15-minutes City
Development
Khrushchevka
Predetermined
Minimum
Centre
Cold
Moscow
State
Controlled
Zoned
Modules
Homogeneity
Socialist
Economy

As a question of statistics and technology, housing is essentially a question of the general plan, and as such it can be solved only when social development and general economic activity are guided by a predetermined scientific plan.

Prefabricated
Repetitive
Vanguard

That apartment of ours is just a short walk from the metro station on the far eastern periphery of Moscow. It's a humble building: concrete panels, afterthought balconies.

Compact
Basic
Production-oriented
Utopia

Proletarian
Equalising
Statistics
Enclosed
Monolithic
Concrete Panels
Blocks
Top-down

Decor
Identity
Belonging
Migrants
Renovation
Community
Survival
Resilience
Hybridised
Memory

Nostalgia

They do not know either the Russian language or Russian cultural traditions. Well, it is obvious that the effective adaptation of external migrants to a new socio-cultural environment is systematically linked to the economic and legal security of the city, with the reduction and prevention of ethnic and confessional tension in the interethnic relations between the city's natives and its guests.

Diaspora
Interiority

Renovation
Culture
Belonging
Solidarity
Tension
Misfits
Preservation

A small number live in Russia. They first came during the Communist Era as students or cheap labourers. Today they are scattered in various parts of massive Russia. Some live in Siberia in the East and Chechnya in the West. Others live in major cities like Moscow.

Individualised

Open
Social Nexus
Flux
Adhocism
Affordability
Change
Hanoi
Informality
Paradox
Extension
Adaptation
Grassroot
Context
Village—City
Expressed

Open-ended
Tropical
Auxiliary
Convenience
Heritage
Khu Tap The

The ideological and technocratic image of the KTT imagines them as a unitarian form, yet they were never uniform constructions. The role of foreign imposition and its fundamental incompatibility with the Vietnamese context.

Diversity
"Tiger cage"
Lived
Precarious
Banalities
Vibrant

**Moscow—Hanoi.
Landscapes of Optimism**

21 May—6 Sep 2026

Gallery C7

6+

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Trung Mai / Ad Hoc

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**The exhibition is organised
in collaboration with**

Kamensky District

Local History Museum

Museum of Moscow

Personal archive

of Natasha Kraevskaia

RIA Novosti

Russian State Archive

of Economy

Russian State Archive

of Samara

Russian State Archive

of Scientific and Technical

Documentation

Sakhalin Regional Museum

Shchusev Museum

of Architecture

Museum of Contemporary

History of Russia

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More about
the exhibition

