

zing 新

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我的祖国
Motherland

Simon Roberts

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Text & Photo / Simon Roberts

俄罗斯一直让我魂牵梦绕。孩提时，总觉得它是那么的广阔，那么的神秘。在我们上地理课的教室，俄罗斯占据了挂图的大部分；在那种名叫“冒险”的桌上游戏中，谁控制了俄罗斯这一关键地区，谁就赢得先机。此外，还有总是对抗着詹姆斯·邦德，也曾风光无限的克格勃，鞭笞前苏联的冷战题材电影，比如《天狐入侵》(*Red Dawn*)和《洛奇4》(*Rocky IV*)。前苏联解体时，叶利钦站在坦克上经过莫斯科的克里姆林宫，迎接一个崭新却又扑朔迷离的未来，那些照片常让我感慨不已。

《祖国》用镜头捕捉了在前苏联解体15年后现代俄罗斯的面貌。我力图真实反映俄罗斯的现实生活，以驳斥那些只反映它分裂和衰退的摄影题材——它们过于注重俄罗斯动荡不安的历史带来的后果，却忽视了一个可能的、更美好的未来。在外人看来残败不堪的公寓或平淡无奇的景致，在俄罗斯人眼中却美丽依然，我在俄罗斯待的时间越长，这种体会就越深。俄罗斯人并不否认自己国家的缺点，但他们更认为这片大地具有非凡独特的魅力。他们对祖国充满信心，他们的自信很快感染了我。这种乐观精神并不仅仅是出于爱国主义。俄罗斯是他们的家乡，是他们的“rodina”（在俄语中是祖国的意思）。他们眼中，俄罗斯的风景和人民具有独特的个性——他们与众不同、崇高、有韧性，甚至是神圣的。对祖国，俄罗斯人似乎天生就有一种使命感，他们和自己的祖国牢不可分。这种无形的精神，想要阐明它几乎是不可能的！这种俄罗斯特色，虽然难以描述，却又无处不在。

Russia has always fascinated me. As a child, it seemed vast and mysterious. It took up most of the wall map in my geography classroom and was the vital region to capture to win the board game 'Risk'. There were the glamorous KGB agents up against James Bond, and the Soviet-bashing propaganda of Cold War films like *Red Dawn* and *Rocky IV*. I marvelled at the photographs of Yeltsin aloft a tank outside the White House in Moscow on the collapse of the Soviet Union, ushering in a new but uncertain era.

Motherland is meant as a visual statement about contemporary Russia, fifteen years after the fall of the Soviet Union. I wanted to counter some of the photographic representations of Russia that focus on collapse and deterioration-with their emphasis on the consequences of Russia's turbulent past as opposed to the possibilities of its future-without sidestepping the realities of Russian daily life. As my year there progressed, I came to understand that Russians see beauty where an outsider might only see decaying apartment blocks or featureless landscapes. And whilst acknowledging their country's deficiencies, Russians nevertheless believe their native land to be a remarkable and exceptional place. They convey an optimism about it that I soon came to share-an optimism borne of more than just patriotism. They see Russia as home, their rodina, and they see its landscapes and people as being unique-set apart, spiritual, resilient, even holy. Russians carry with them an innate sense of the history of the motherland and, through it, feel inextricably connected to one another. This nebulous spirituality-defining it is impossible-this Russianness, is elusive yet all pervasive.



Friends keep warm by the eternal flame. Field of Mars, St Petersburg
Northwestern Region, December 2004



Port officials on patrol at dawn. Vladivostok.
Far East, October 2004



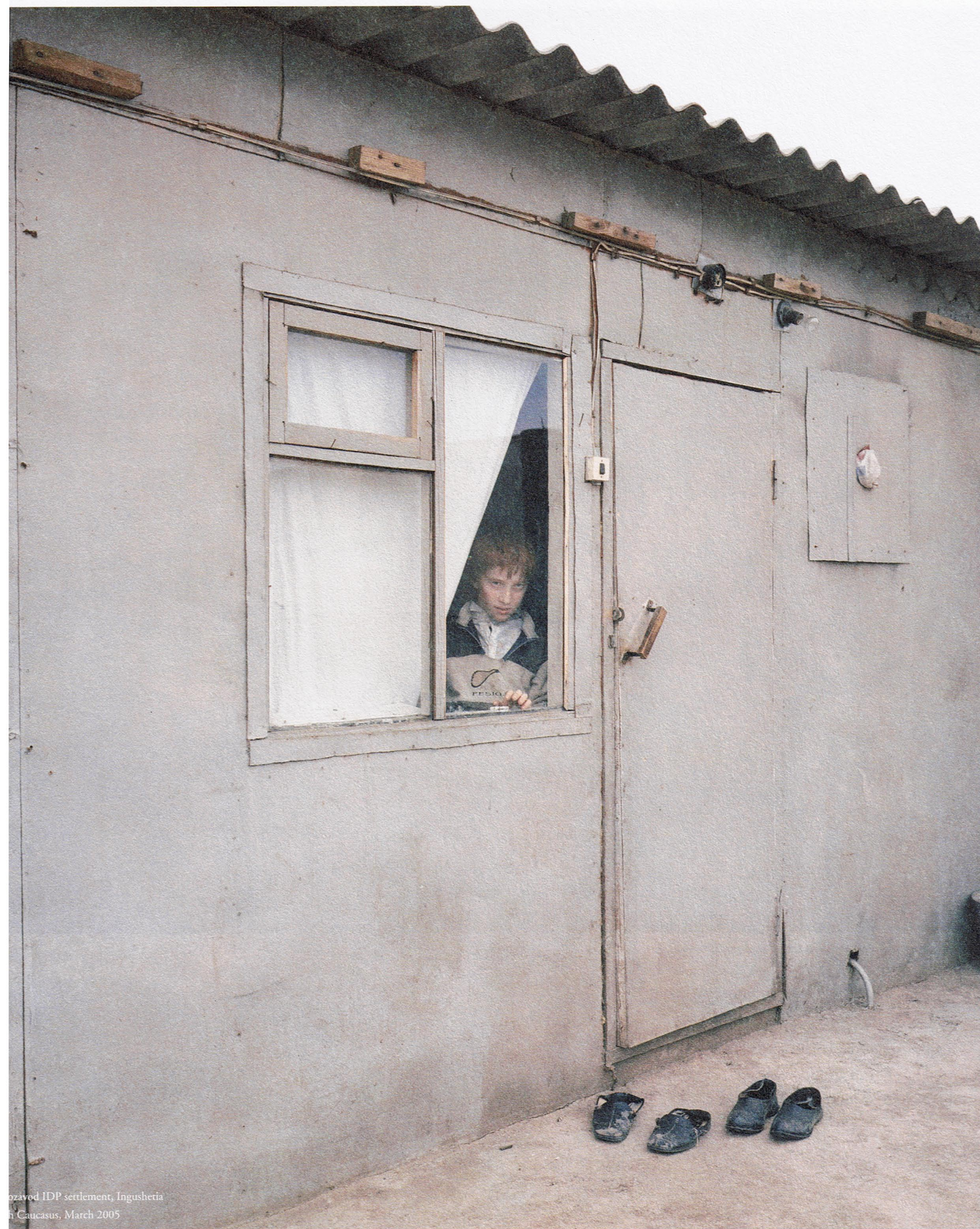
Yevgeny Chavkin. Ulyanovsk
Mga, June 2005



Room of a former sanatorium in Sludyanka, near the shores of Lake Baikal.
Siberia, November 2004



Ingushetia IDP settlement, Ingushetia
North Caucasus, March 2005



Ingushetia IDP settlement, Ingushetia
North Caucasus, March 2005



crocodile waits to be inflated for Victory Day celebrations. Yekaterinburg.
May 2005



Lenin Memorial Museum, Ulyanovsk
Volga, June 2005