

01  
Sreika Institute  
Moscow

Sreika, housed in part of an old chocolate factory overlooking the Moscow River, opened its doors for the first academic year in October, and while the number of students may be small, the architecture and design institute has big plans.

The institute is funded by Russian businessmen and teaches a one-year masters course that focuses on five core areas: preservation, energy, public space, design and urban planning. Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas has devised the programme and plans to travel to Moscow three or four times a year to give lectures and participate in workshops. The rest of the five courses will be led by a range of Russian and international luminaries.

The 35 students were selected from more than 300 applicants. The course was attractive that many of those who applied were overlooked because they were simply too qualified. Most of the final 35 have architecture or design backgrounds, but there are also a few wild cards, such as an economist and an environmental activist. Tuition is free, and the institute also provides housing and a living allowance.

Andrii Goncharenko, 24, says he applied for Sreika after graduating from a Moscow design institute where he was disappointed with his education. "I'm more interested in how things exist in context and how they interact with people, but my education was very traditional and didn't address concrete issues," he says. Anastasia Alboletsova, from the Russian city of Samara, says she hopes Sreika will foster better taste among Russians. "Russian designers don't have well-developed styles," says the 23-year-old. "Most design and architecture here is just slick."

There is a heavy focus on research, practical application and production. The idea is that the projects don't get stuck at the idea or prototype stage. The goal is to fuse the best ideas from western and Russian design and architecture, giving an impetus to the sorry state of the discipline in Russia today. — [www.sreika.net/en/our](http://www.sreika.net/en/our)



**C&A**  
Rya Oskolkov-Tarantseva  
President of Sreika

**What is the balance of design and architecture in the programme?**  
The amount of design will vary from year to year. This year we're architecture heavy, but in general we're producing an educational experiment, the broader the approach, the better. We're heavily research oriented rather than teaching technical skills.

**What is Sreika trying to achieve?**  
We're trying to do something that is new not just for Russia but for the world. We need to take the best of what existed in Russia in architecture and design from the glory days of the 1920s and integrate it with the best contemporary global thinking.

**How does the education at Sreika relate to the world of business and commerce?**  
Industrial design requires some industry. But at the moment, most Russian industries are about getting stuff out of the ground and selling it. If economic reform in Russia is successful, the need for all things designed will increase greatly. That's what we're aiming for.

- 01 The Sreika Institute with Christ the Saviour Cathedral behind Michael Schneider, German author and film director, who is a visiting tutor
- 02 Sreika president Rya Oskolkov-Tarantseva
- 04 Student Ivan Sokolov
- 05 Sreika's lobby
- 06 Rem Koolhaas lecturing
- 07 Student Kania Makarova
- 08 Sreika student Kang Mirko



**Sreika students:**

**Kang Mirko, 24 (right)**  
"I graduated from Hanyang University in Seoul with a BS in interior design and I was planning to do a masters in the US. But this course sounded a lot more interesting. I was particularly attracted by the 'Shining Theme' - mass migration to cities, and what happens to the places left behind. I think what I learn here will be useful when I go back to Seoul."

**Kania Makarova, 26 (above, right)**  
"I've done a wide range of design work, from designing sets for the Bolshoi Theatre to working as a graphic designer in a multinational company. When I heard about Sreika it sounded like more of a movement than a school. This was a possibility to change things in Russia - we need a new understanding of architecture and design."



**C&A**  
Jeffrey Ho Kiat  
Executive director, Design Singapore Council

**Government-run Design Singapore Council is investing \$600,000 (\$300k) into Singapore's design industries between 2009-2015.**

**How important is design education in Singapore?**  
It's gradually becoming more important as Singapore moves towards a knowledge-based economy. We intend to use design as an economic growth driver, which means that we need to be training our people - our workers, engineers, business people - to be able to use design competently. Singapore has five design schools and two universities that offer programmes in architecture, interior design and visual communications. In addition to that, our newest school, the Singapore University of Technology & Design - set in collaboration with MIT and Zhejiang University in China - is a whole university dedicated to technology and design that will graduate its first students in 2012. We intend to raise design training from ordinary school all the way to CEO level - that's our mandate.

**How is this ambitious programme implemented on the ground?**  
We support design education and also help to grow demand for design by giving grants capped at SGD10,000 (\$20,000) to design firms to work with businesses. The grant is 30 per cent of the consultancy fee as design firms can go to companies and say, "We can help you and we'll give you a 30 per cent discount." — J.H.