

Carrying the Russian Aesthetic, From Lithuania to Georgia

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This is the fourth in a series of five blogs devoted to the work of British photographer Ken Reynolds.

Eimuntas Nekrosius and Robert Sturua have much in common. Each is arguably the greatest director to emerge from his homeland in many decades — Nekrosius from Lithuania, Sturua from Georgia. Both have strong ties to Russian theater — Nekrosius studied directing under Andrei Goncharov at the State Institute of Theater Arts in Moscow, while Sturua has often worked at such Moscow venues as the Vakhtangov, the Et Cetera and the Satirikon. Moreover, both have captured the fancy of photographer Ken Reynolds.

It was Sturua, in fact, who introduced Ken to the world of East European theater in the late 1980s when he travelled to the Edinburgh festival with his renowned production of Shakespeare's "Richard III" for the Rustaveli Theater of Tbilisi, Georgia. Ken never photographed that production, but he did bring his camera to Sturua's English-language

staging of Chekhov's "The Seagull" at the Port Royal Theatre in Plymouth in 1995. Over the years he has shot six Sturua productions, including rehearsals of "Shylock (The Merchant of Venice)" starring Alexander Kalyagin at Moscow's Et Cetera Theater in 2000.

Nekrosius, with his bold, physical and visual productions, is an ideal match for Ken. The photographer is a master at capturing movement and changing states of being on film. His eye is attuned to those moments that reveal character and motivation in movement. That does not mean, however, that dumb luck is not a good thing to have at times. In his story about filming Nekrosius's production of "Hamlet," Ken reveals how one of his favorite photos came about because he didn't know that a glass goblet was supposed to burst and unleash a stream of water onto the stage.

The Sturua monologue was filmed at the corner of St. Mikolaj and Odrzanska streets, just off the main city square in Wroclaw, Poland. The Nekrosius monologue was filmed in the alleyway at Rynek-Ratusz in front of the Jerzy Grotowski Institute. A plaque commemorating Grotowski repeatedly peeks out from behind Ken as the camera changes angles.

Click on the icons below to hear Ken talk about his encounters with Robert Sturua and Eimuntas Nekrosius.

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