

New Garage Venue Announced

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Rem Koolhaas

LONDON — Rem Koolhaas, a Pritzker Prize-winning architect, presented his plans to convert an abandoned Moscow restaurant into a new art space for the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, founded by Dasha Zhukova.

Zhukova — whose partner is the Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich — founded Garage as a contemporary-art nonprofit organization in Moscow in 2008. Earlier this year, Garage left its base in the Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage for Moscow's Gorky Park, where the ruined 1960s restaurant, a modernist structure of prefabricated concrete, is located.

Koolhaas said the project fit in with the "polemic" started by his architecture practice OMA on the theme of art institutions "getting bigger and bigger."

"Scale is not necessarily productive for art," Koolhaas said in a presentation given last week at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. "If you look at the Serpentine Gallery, small can work extremely well."

Koolhaas said the once-popular restaurant, where he himself sampled "Soviet" food back in the day, was now "a ruin, but not a very old ruin." The site was "incredibly polluted," and he was "shocked by the amount of neglect."

"Neglect is quite picturesque and offers insights into the beauty of decay," he said, pointing out that he planned to keep the original tiles, decoration and other "traces of Russia's recent history," and push for the "rescue" of other buildings from the '60s and '70s around the world.

Zhukova, who co-hosted the news conference, said she had been seeking a more central location for Garage. The Koolhaas project, she said, "defines Russian identity: We're taking the past and not ignoring it, and creating a new future."

Koolhaas was her choice, she said, because "I like the way he thinks." She wouldn't give figures on the cost of the conversion.

The space, due to finish next year, will have flexible exhibition galleries on two levels as well as a cafe, shop, auditorium and education center.

Asked which artists she wanted to show in the gallery, Zhukova said her "dream" would be to exhibit the work of sculptor Richard Serra.

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