

And the Winner is: A Few Surprises at the 'Made in Russia' Awards

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Maxim Didenko accepts an award for his recent production “Pasternak, Life is My Sister” at the Gogol Center. **Dmitry Smirnov**

Last week Snob magazine hosted its

“Made in Russia” awards for the fifth time. The anniversary shindig took place at the luxurious Metropol hotel in the very heart of Moscow.

More is more seemed to be the spirit of the event: from the evening gowns to the opulent venue decor.

The winners were decided by the readers of Snob, who voted online for nominees selected

by an expert committee.

While perhaps not the most comprehensive way of awarding accolades, it can serve as a barometer for gauging the taste of Snob's mostly liberally-minded readers.

Pop-rock hooligans

Leningrad opened the evening with a medley of their hits after accepting an award for "Event of the Year."

They more than deserved it — this year Leningrad released not one, but two of their most popular songs to date.

Anna Chipovskaya accepted an acting award for her role as a journalist-turned-detective in the recent thriller "Chstoye Iskusstvo" (Pure Art), a film about the fake art industry in Russia. The script for "Pure Art" was penned by former journalist Mark Franchetti, who based the screenplay on a real story.

The film award went to Mikhail Mestetsky for his directorial debut "Tryapichny Soyuz," (Rag Union), a comedy about the adventures of disaffected youth. "Salam Maskva" (Salaam, Moscow), a critically acclaimed TV series that was held back for a couple of years before being shown, received the TV award. Directed by Pavel Bardin, known for honest, brutal dramas like "Russia 88," the series focuses on migrants in Moscow and the special police department dealing with crimes committed by ethnic minorities. The series features everything from markets owned by the Dagestani mafia to Vietnamese sweatshops and a Dagestani-Tajik love affair.

Maxim Didenko, best known for his unorthodox and post-modernist productions, received the theater award for his recent play "Pasternak, Life is My Sister" at the Gogol Center. The literature prize was taken home by Sasha Filipenko, who is also shortlisted for Russia's most important literary award, Bolshaya Kniga (Big Book). Filipenko received the award for his daring novel "Travlya" (Bullying), a story about an opposition-minded journalist whose life turns into a nightmare when his enemies want to make him leave Russia.

Among other notable awardees were Alexander Goncharov, who started his locavore restaurant "Mark and Lev" in the Tula region, but recently opened a second location on Rublevskoye Shosse, and famous journalist and TV presenter Anton Krasovsky, the face of the Russian AIDS Center.

The biggest surprise of the night was the "Art Project of the Year" award. This went to Pavel Pavlensky, the performance artist famous for setting the door of the FSB headquarters at Lubyanka on fire and nailing his testicles to Red Square. Because of the controversy surrounding Pavlensky's performance at Lubyanka and the charges brought against him, he was denied the right to participate in "Innovation," one of the major Russian art awards. Even though Pavlensky declined to appear at the "Made in Russia" ceremony, Snob's award is a rare acknowledgement of his work.

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