

# 'New Flight to Solaris' Lands in Italy

The AZ Museum and Zeffirelli Fund bring the first show of nonconformist art to Italy

By [Maria Michela D'Alessandro](#)

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The Palazzo San Firenze transformed into a spaceship. **Courtesy of AZ Museum**

The cultural relationship between Russia and Italy is stronger than ever.

The latest proof of rich cultural exchanges is a new joint project that just opened in Florence. “The New Flight to Solaris” associatively connects the film by Andrei Tarkovsky with works of painting, drawings and sculptures of Soviet non-conformist artists. This “spaceship” of art from the Moscow’s AZ Museum and the private collection of Natalia Opaleva is on display in the unique venue of the Palazzo San Firenze in Florence.

The idea to start a project between the Franco Zeffirelli Foundation and the AZ Museum came when AZ Museum general director Natalia Opaleva and Franco Zeffirelli met in Florence for the inauguration of the Zeffirelli Fund in October 2017.

The “New Flight to Solaris” project is the final and most important part of an exhibition trilogy organized by the AZ Museum. The first two parts, based on Tarkovsky's films “Stalker” and “Andrei Rublyov,” were presented by the AZ Museum in Moscow in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

“When we saw the hall [in Florence] with all this beauty, magnificent baroque sculptures and high ceilings, it immediately became obvious we needed to think of a special project. We very quickly decided that the Zeffirelli Fund was just the right place to show the third concluding part of the trilogy dedicated to Tarkovsky and based on the movie ‘Solaris.’ This is how the idea of the project ‘New Flight to Solaris’ came about: it combines the main ideas and messages of Tarkovsky’s ‘Solaris’ and the artwork of the non-conformist artists from AZ Museum and my own collection,” the Opaleva told The Moscow Times.

On the Italian side, Pippo Zeffirelli, son of Franco Zeffirelli and vice president of the Fund, considered not only a pleasure but also a duty to bring to Florence the exciting installation in the baroque space of Palazzo San Firenze.

“‘New Flight to Solaris’ is the first international project of the Fondazione Zeffirelli since the museum opened to the public on October 1, 2017, but we are already in contact with various international art organizations for future possible collaborations. I think our next guest will be a Chinese artist,” Pippo Zeffirelli told The Moscow Times.

Using Tarkovsky’s filmic idea as the defining feature, Polina Lobachevskaya, the exhibition curator, created a futuristic installation of a space station equipped with 22 screens showing video art based on unique photographic and cinematic materials connected with Andrei Tarkovsky’s creative work. The same space also displays 32 paintings and two sculptures made by Russian artists of the second half of the 20th century: Anatoly Zverev, Francisco Infante, Dmitry Plavinsky, Dmitry Krasnopevtsev, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Vladimir Yakovlev, Lidia Masterkova, Pyotr Belenok, Yulo Sooster, Vladimir Nemukhin, Ernst Neizvestny.

“The first thing that amazes the visitor is how the art works are put together with the multimedia; the two forms of art somehow complement each other without letting the technology overwhelm the art,” Italian journalist Emanuela Chiumeo told The Moscow Times after visiting the opening of the exhibition in Florence. “But these new technologies just help the curators describe every work in detail. This is important, especially because these artists were non-conformist artists and thus not known,” Chiumeo said.

The organizers stress that the art displayed today in Florence could not be seen publicly in the Soviet Union. But after a half-century, the movement in the U.S.S.R. that developed in parallel to European artists and trends — the “Soviet Renaissance” — has finally found a way to be seen and enjoyed by an international audience.

*The exhibition will run in Florence until July 31. For more information about the show, Anatoly Zverev and other unofficial artists, visit the [AZ Museum in Moscow](#).*

*To see the film that inspired the exhibition, click [here](#). The film is shown with subtitles in a dozen languages.*

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