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EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIP...



ELENA KOLOVSKAYA, 2001 RUSSIA

Founder and Director, St Petersburg PRO ARTE Foundation for Culture and Arts

Elena Kolovskaya arrived for her fellowship less than a week after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. She has said she will never forget the overall feeling among each person with whom she met during her trip. She states that, “it was really special – people were re-evaluating their values, asking themselves: ‘Why has it happened to us? What is going to be next?’ It was a very sensitive moment in the life of the country and very important for building a dialogue with the outside world. Here I would like to emphasize that EF is not a one-way road, I believe it is very important not only to Fellows who travel all over the U.S. but also to the people with whom they meet, as every meeting is an exchange of thoughts and, yes, values”.



Kolovskaya’s organization, Pro Arte Foundation in St. Petersburg is a non-governmental organization founded in 1999 to promote contemporary culture in the fields of visual art, music and dance. The institute organizes a wide variety of educational programs (lectures, seminars, roundtables), events (concerts and exhibitions), and grant competitions for Russian artists and cultural institutions. Kolovskaya saw the fellowship as an opportunity to expand her then-developing business venture by exploring public administration and non-profit governance, with a heavy focus on art and culture.

Of her program, Kolovskaya states that, “the biggest impact you get during the Eisenhower trip is intense communication with the professionals from your field”. This dialogue has helped her immensely in her work, especially with the development of Pro Arte. In the summer of 2003, the two great art museums of St. Petersburg housed exhibits of video installations from American museums which were organized by Kolovskaya. It was during her fellowship that she began making arrangements for this event.

In spring 2002, just six months after her fellowship, she created a joint project with her fellow Fellow from the Russian Single Nation Program in 2001, Maria Lipman, a political journalist. The idea between Kolovskaya and Lipman was conceived in a hotel in Philadelphia. There they began making plans to create a program to train young Russian journalists to write about arts and culture. Since then it has been run by Pro Arte and it has been taught to more than 300 young journalists from more than 30 Russian cities.

In addition, Kolovskaya is a member of the Board of Experts at the Cultural Council of the St. Petersburg City Government, and a member of the Contemporary Art Board at the State Hermitage Museum. Kolovskaya is also very active in promoting contemporary Russian art and cultural institutions while collaborating extensively with leading cultural institutions in Russia and abroad.

Kolovskaya believes that networking is a hallmark of Eisenhower Fellowships, and the reason for continued success in her career, and the world. She states that, “the world has become global not only in geographical or economic terms. There is a lot of intersection between different spheres of human activity, and EF is a meeting point that facilitates people of different professions and different views to understand each other better – and what is more important – to create joint projects!”

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