

HIGH-TECH SHIP STAR OF MULTI-MEDIA SHOW

By Sergey Chernov

The *Stubnitz*, an 80-meter-long ship stuffed with all possible kinds of state-of-the-art technology, did not arrive in St Petersburg on Saturday as planned. But despite all this an international arts and media festival that was to coincide with the ship's arrival has started.

A hope still remains that the long-awaited ship will come on Wednesday or Thursday while the festival is under way.

The event entitled "Arts in Transit...The Arts in the Context of New Technologies and Social Change" will last for two weeks, from July 17-31, and include conferences, seminars, lectures, workshops, exhibitions, performances, techno raves and punk concerts.

Both West European and Russian artists, musicians, and critics will take part in the cultural program.

The story of the *Stubnitz* as a creative center started two years ago, when reunited Germany destroyed former GDR ships in accordance with EEC quotas. The *Stubnitz*, a former fishing ship, escaped such a fate when in June 1992 it was purchased by a group of art enthusiasts who received financial support provided by Austria's Radio Subcom, Germany's advertising company Fritz Deutschland and Swiss businessman Christian Jost.

Over the ensuing 14 months the ship was converted into a modern arts media center, with workshops, photo labs, recording and film studio — all in all, into something called *Art Space Ship*.

Since that time the ship has staged six exhibitions, 12 concerts, two drama productions and two broadcast talk shows while docked in the East German port of Rostock.

This trip to St Petersburg is the *Stubnitz*'s first major tour.

According to the project's cultural manager Evelyn Bodenmeier, who also works for Munster's German-Russian Friendship Society, the main idea of the project is to effect an East-West cultural transfer.

"There is a lot of technology in the West and a lot of human feeling in the East. Project organizers seek to connect both of these cultural aspects," Ms Bodenmeier said. For art critic Alla Mitrofanova, the project's coordinator on the Russian side, emphasizing the groundbreaking nature of the project is vital. "What is very important for me is the appearance of new creatively provocative zones in the areas of contemporary culture, which are themselves new technologies." "I have always liked more experimental and less analyzed art, and in new technologies I have found the sphere of a new avant-garde," he added.

"New technologies always spawn new media," Ms Mitrofanova says, "and a person has to adjust and expand one's consciousness to accommodate these new media. So the main idea is to provide opportunities for such an expansion of consciousness in all directions of experimentation."

However, not all local artists support the mass introduction of new technologies into the arts. Dozens of opponents will take part in a cultural action called *Operation Counter Landing*, whose slogan, according to organizer Nikita Unksov of the *A-Ya* society, will be "Art Over Computers." *Operation Counter Landing* will include a series of exhibitions both on board the *Stubnitz* and in local art galleries.

• For details about the events call the festival's information line at the "21" Art Gallery on 164-65-27 (English, German and Russian speakers will be there midday-7pm every day except Sunday), or visit the gallery at Room 21, 10 Puskinskaya Ulitsa. (Metro Ploshad Vostanniya). To reach the gallery go through the archway and take the first door on the right.