

RUSSIA AND ITS NEAR ABROAD

A lecture series curated by Nina L. Khrushcheva

Monday, May 19, 2014, 7pm

THE LOST KHRUSHCHEV

A JOURNEY INTO THE GULAG OF THE RUSSIAN MIND

In the last year Russia has constantly been in the news. From granting asylum to the US National Security Agency's leaker Edward Snowden to the surprise brokering of the chemical weapons deal with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Sochi Winter Olympics to the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. For over a decade now, Russian foreign policy has been animated by defensiveness and suspicion. Russia even has uneasy relations with the congenitally non-threatening European Union. It is touchy about the independence of the near-abroad countries, especially those geographically close to the West – such as Ukraine. But Kyiv's political "Westernization" is perhaps an even greater threat to Russia's president Vladimir Putin. Ukraine becoming a real democracy poses an ever-greater threat of Putin's autocratic, restrictive and increasingly oppressive governing style. His forceful determination to destabilize the western neighbor has caught many by surprise. Yet in her new book *The Lost Khrushchev: a Journey into the Gulag of the Russian Mind* Nina Khrushcheva, curator of the Kreisky Forum's project on *Russia and its Near Abroad*, explains that Putin's mindset is not that original in Russia. She argues that Putin is messianic, and sees himself as "a uniter of lands and corrector of historic wrongs," still lamenting the dissolution of the USSR a quarter century ago. His efforts have been largely successful because of a Russian cultural tendency to view tough national leaders forgivingly.

In her book presentation Khrushcheva will speak of Russia's political past and present. She will address foreign policy challenges in dealing with the country that has historically resented freedoms. Given these challenges, what will be Russia's place in the world going forward?

Nina L. Khrushcheva is Associate Professor in the Graduate Program of International Affairs at *The New School* in New York, and a senior fellow at the *World Policy Institute*, where she directs the *Russia Project*. She is also editor of and contributor to *Project Syndicate: Association of Newspapers Around the World*. She is member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and her previous books include *Imagining Nabokov: Russia Between Art and Politics*.

Nina L. Khrushcheva: *The Lost Khrushchev: A Journey into the Gulag of the Russian Mind*, Tate Publishing, ISBN: 978-1-62994-544-6

Please register:

Bruno Kreisky Forum for international Dialogue | Armbrustergasse 15 | 1190 Wien
Tel.: 3188260/20 | Fax: 318 82 60/10 | e-mail: einladung.kreiskyforum@kreisky.org