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Back in the USSR: Soviet Roadside Architecture: From Samarkand to Yerevan

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Bus stops are normally mundane structures, standardized and replaceable and therefore scarcely paid any attention. Out on the country roads of the former Soviet Union states, however, lies a treasure trove of unexpected waiting zones for those willing to make the trip--a wide-ranging panoply of socialist architecture. Germany-based freelance photographer Peter Ortner offers up a selection of these varied and jaw-dropping bus stops in *Back in the USSR: Soviet Roadside Architecture from Samarkand to Yerevan*. Taken both in Central Asia and in Eastern Europe, in Azerbaijan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and the Crimea peninsula, Ortner's photographs illuminate the imaginative variations on this vernacular architecture as well as the more expected works of socialist modernism. His shots present us with an endless variety of forms and colors, an eclectic micro architecture whose neglect and weathering somehow adds to its charm. In a regime often characterized by standardization and creative repression, anonymous architects and artists created original, expressive work in the form of bus stops, buildings for everyday purposes. With its roadside architecture--sometimes brutalist, sometimes not--resembling waves, UFOs and octopuses, the Soviet Union, it now seems indisputable, was light years ahead of its neighbors in bus-stop design.

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