

Kindred spirits

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William Brumfield, a Tulane professor of Slavic Studies, is well known for his scholarly photographic documentation of [Russian architecture](#). In a current project, Brumfield highlights the work of Russian chemist and photographer Sergei Prokudin-Gorsky who, in the early 20th century, developed an elaborate process to produce vivid, detailed color photography documenting the Russian Empire from 1905-1916.

Following Prokudin-Gorsky's death in 1944, more than 2,000 of his glass negatives were sold to the Library of Congress. Brumfield, who began documenting Russian architectural heritage in 1970, became fascinated with the parallel between Prokudin-Gorsky's images and his own work.

"We were both motivated to record the richness and diversity of Russia as a way of artistic expression and to share a sense of this vast place," said Brumfield, who organized the first exhibit of the Prokudin-Gorsky photographs at the Library of Congress in 1986.

His latest book (still untitled) will juxtapose the Prokudin-Gorsky and [Brumfield collections](#). The publication will explore the similarities and differences in the historical significance of the structures and surrounding environment.

Brumfield's work is currently featured on [Russia Beyond](#).

(Photos by William Brumfield and Sergei Prokudin-Gorsky)













The Monastery of Saints Boris and Gleb from the east bank of the Tvertsa River photographed by Sergei Prokudin-Gorsky in the summer of 1910.

Brumfield's photograph, shot 100 years later in May of 2010, documents the Monastery of Saints Boris and Gleb in their current condition.

Atop the city of Smolensk, Dormition Cathedral photographed by Prokudin-Gorsky in the summer of 1911.

The Dormition Cathedral, which miraculously escaped major damage during World War II, was later documented by Brumfield in July 2014.

This 1916 black and white contact print of the Solovetsky Transfiguration Monastery by Prokudin-Gorsky, made from the magenta glass plate, demonstrates that not all of the glass negatives used to produce the color photos survived as many were destroyed, lost or broken.

Taken in 1999, Brumfield's photo of the Solovetsky Transfiguration Monastery records the survival of many of the original buildings.