

MOSCOW:

paradise

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paradise

KRINZINGER

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INTRODUCTION

SOUL IS BACK: 2003

Constantin Bokhorov

This text is an introduction to the exhibition organized by the Krinzinger Gallery and called Moscow: Paradise 2002. Of course paradise especially in this connotation is a tough hyperbole. But I haven't taken the title and for me it's just interesting why it has been put so because I believe that it reflects some shift in relationship of west and east, which is an important contemporary paradigm. But the title is especially significant for me because in its perspective the notion of soul has the chance to come to light one other time. In my opinion, this notion again becomes of paramount importance for the world culture but, because of culture's chronic disease happened with coming to power of the era of mercantilism, remaining in the unjustified exile.

Not coming to the roots of this notion down to the depth of religious mysticism I take only one aspect which is more close and important to the art. Through soul art is connected to truth because it's commonly known that if intellect is contemplating truth in rational categories, soul does it in the images of art. Today this simple aesthetic seems obsolete and the words sound too pathetic. The notion of soul which has become the figure of the deceitful clerical-bourgeois rhetoric has been deconstructed by the culture itself. First Nietzsche overthrow the God, then the notion of soul has happily died away. But now to speak about art and not to mention soul becomes more and more difficult (especially in perspective of paradise).

The notion of soul remains in the indirect forms in psychology and psychoanalysis. It obtains definite operative substitute in the notion of sub-consciousness which started actively functioning in culture, and is exemplified by Hitchcock's "PSYCHO" etc. This sphere of abiding of soul I'd call contemporary metaphysics, very fruitful for culture, though the soul than has a medical reading. Of course, not I should develop this subject for the enlightened Vienna audience and I believe that Russians here are not able to give something of the first importance, though, so to say, 'surgery of soul' is practicing by two very influential Russian artistic movements: "Medical herme-neutic" group (Moscow) and artists grouping around the Cabinet Magazine (St. Petersburg).

But returning to the soul, I want to remark, that, perhaps, we live in the time making all to suspect that the modern culture is still suffering from the birth trauma implicated in the question: "The baby wasn't poured out with the water when the act of reduction of soul has been performing, was it?"

Of course, if soul is a creature with wings leaving body in the moment of death it is not worth any regrets. This concept was many times the object of punch and irony of artists. Back in the end of the 70ies the pioneers of Russian contemporary art, Komar and Melamid, organized auctions of souls with curious slogans, like "the soul is the best investment", and even succeeded in selling the soul of Andy Warhol for 30 rubles (which was then \$ 21). But in spite of all this fun the question remained.

Because worth regrets is the fact that the feeling of soul that gave to individual absolutely unique position in relation to the world, that gave him system of coordinate and definite mapping where was possible to act consciously, has gone away. There wasn't any creature with wings, and nothing palpable on the whole, nothing that could be touched, fixed on the sensible film, weighted, or magnetized, and what is even more mysterious there was nothing that could be really conceptualized. Though, there was feeling of something that presented secretly but was not in a haste to reveal and if revealed not to all.

Maybe this is the very position/disposition in relation to the world that can be understood only if to calculate its latitude and longitude for which though doesn't exist any formulas and any appliance, and that one has to attain itself. And in this sense, perhaps, a bit abstract, I believe necessary to reanimate this notion for the needs at least of this text. If we speak about paradise, God damn!

Now coming to the point we should answer the question: what artistic problem is brought about by this exhibition?

The Paradise features the Moscow art and the Moscow artists, those who demonstrated in the 90ies the maximum activity and who was acknowledged and valued by the Russian and international art system.

This time was not easy at all for the Russian art. It met the problem that the direct message has become impossible

any more. From one hand, the national thematic was exhausted by the very strong and fruitful nonconformists of the 80ies (Bulatov, Kabakov, Collective Action Group) plus the reality of this years in Russia was much powerful than any art; from the other hand, artists in Russia couldn't juxtapose anything to the very elaborated western discourse which has sorted out all the contemporary artistic resources to numerous shelves and boxes mainly for the internal usage. Whatever emerging Eastern artist started to do it was surely reproached in unoriginality and inferiority, was told that something similar exists yet. And what was really dramatic that this was bare truth.

For instance, as committed critic, I should now describe the works at the exhibition and specify the western artists who have influenced or even preceded them and the well known tendencies they reflect. What I'm not going to do because I believe that this is a secondary issue.

I count that of the first importance is an evident contradiction intrinsic in the Moscow art. It bears signs of conscious understanding of its inferiority and at the same time unquenched will and energy to prove its right for the own voice. The contradiction that is even more obvious on the background of its recognition. Strangely, the contradiction doesn't devaluate but contrary to that valorizes efforts of Russian artists of the 90ies and this fact can be explained only by admitting that common critical mapping is influenced by some fluctuating phenomenon which I define as Soul. That

is what has been done by Kulik, Koshliakov, Gotov, Dubosarsky & Vinogradov, Moukhin and some others who should be understood as the realization of the efforts of heart and of spiritual experience.

I'm quite conscious that this last observation doesn't sound credible enough. This is too personal and could cause a lot of contradictions. So using this quite vague terminology, and the notion of soul that is very ambiguous for the modern language, I should at least put absolutely clear WHAT I DON'T WANT TO SAY. I don't want to say that contemporary art is some chosen area of the operation of soul; that soul in some way geographically linked to Russia or even has some inclinations in it's direction; that these Russian artists know something particular about soul or in some special way work with it, or took letters patent to its copyright; that only soul approve all their doings; or that they do something especially valuable and good, better than other artists before them and now around the world. Not at all: they are not heroes, saints, or genius, and they don't reveal any special truth to the world.

I speak without doubt about ordinary people, but what is important in my observation is that behind their best works stands not skill, artistic excellence or intellectual superiority, but the particular position in relation to the world occupied by them, occupied courageously, and without compromise, in spite of all the good advices of honorable critics and receipts of common sense; the position which finally marked the system of

coordinates for all their followers, thanks to what the fruitful situation has been developing in Russian art in these years.

And one other thing I DON'T WANT TO SAY that is implied in what was outlined above but that I want to make absolutely clear. The notion of soul that I use doesn't suggest absolutely anything national. The best examples of the western contemporary art (from futurism and dadaism of the beginning of the century, to minimalism, and actionism of the 60ies) also aren't the outcome of rational labors but resulted as the efforts of heart. No psychoanalysis explains the spiritual insight of Andy Warhol or Joseph Beuys. Of course, the subject generates endless speculations which means that it is an inexhaustible phenomenon and in this quality so valuable for the western rationalism finding in it its other, sometimes not very pleasant for the sight but which appears to be the cornerstone of its main values: individuality, liberty and justice.

Another question is how, in what idea the spiritual efforts of Moscow artists revealed themselves. I would put it that the best of them take in the situation of the historical REGRESS, the only possible definition of what is going on in today's Russia, the position of active un-involvement. Again in a not so absolutely obvious way: not all, not at once, not definitely. Also it should be kept in mind that they have the commonly known examples of the artists of the 60ies which they could follow. But their art proves, and I think it's the main reason why it should be interesting to the western viewer, that their position was

absolutely sincere and independent.

I saw myself how Kulik was preparing for his first dog's performance and will never forget how dramatic it is for a man to overcome himself, to turn from a prosperous bourgeois showman into the naked, beaten, bleeding dog.

To be active and not to be involved happened to be the most difficult thing for the Russian culture of the 90ies. I think that this position is very close to what is implied in Malevich's idea that the artist should be lazy and that not the labor lays in the base of art but non-action. Summarizing the point, it's possible to say that in the 90ies the best Moscow artists have been doing just that. They were idle, in the sense of Malevich, of course. And quite paradoxically eventually their efforts rejoiced, which is exemplified by this happy event.

So now I think all is ready to expose the metaphor of paradise proposed as a title for this exhibition.

At first, paradise is THE MEETING OF TIME AND PLACE WHERE SOULS REVEAL THEMSELVES TO THE SIGHT. And, from one hand, the Moscow art situation maybe by chance, maybe only for one instant, in the threshold of the new century revealed through certain art works remarkable constellation of souls, which, from the other hand, this exhibition is fixing. In spite of all contradictions of its curatorial text it reflects that Russian art was not mould of actual themes and topics but of soul and in this sense is reflecting the famous meta-projects of

modernity: freedom and justice.

Secondly, paradise is THE CONDITION WHEN SOULS DON'T WORK AND ARE HAPPY. As it was shown the possibility of this condition was proved by the new Russian art in the 90ies and in this sense it can be regarded as the successor of the traditions of the great Russian avant-garde of the beginning of the century, that brought to light the idea of active non-action.

And finally paradise is the embodiment of the idea of JOY. And what can be more rejoicing than acknowledgement by the great western culture of the return of the Russian art (even at this exhibition): return of one who was dead and is alive, was lost and found.

I'd like to finish, reminding that there is paradise neither in Moscow, nor in Russia. Perhaps, now it's something like tradition that the west is awaiting from Russia some sign. Maybe this sign in this new Russian Art Exhibition Sequel'2003 is the return of soul. I repeat again that soul is not the specific Russian oddness, but as once quite wittily observed Boris Grois, "Russia is the sub-consciousness of the west", and sub-consciousness is famous because it returns in quite grotesque forms what we think about but are afraid to admit.

HUMAN NATURE

Olga Chernysheva

One can feel how human nature yearns for its ancient and eternal basis - vegetable nature. It is especially obvious in the Rembrandt etchings where a human being is detached from the environment that had created him only for the moment of acting. He is visible then. But his legs are already about to interweave with the tree roots, the body diffuses into light or swells with the complex full-bodied shadow. A little more, and he would melt into the surrounding elements. His existence is guaranteed but by the special divine will, gathering him together. This is the kind of pausing that we have here. It could be characterized as a state of anabiosis, detachment from the rhythm of time and consequently, entropy. Or as enchanted and awkward states connected by the intense resistance to the passing social and political regimes. Their slow and endless life is full of its own private mystical joy. All is left to do is to let oneself be enchanted by it.

ANABIOSIS

Tatiana Salzirn, in: "European Photography", No. 70, winter 2001/2002

Life in today's Russia - full of desperate and for the most part unfulfilled hopes that used to be harbored by the millions - supplies Chernysheva with an enormous wealth of material. Fishermen near ice-holes and little trees wrapped in sackcloth appear in freshly fallen snow, and characterize Russian life over the period of the long severe winter. In anxious expectation

of a catch, fishermen have to sit motionlessly near ice-holes for hours in intensely cold weather. To avoid freezing, they envelop themselves in a transparent polyethylene film so that they begin to look like blocks of ice or snowdrifts. But it is difficult to determine what has been hidden from view by this diffuse curtain – the last possibility in the struggle for survival, or a form of recreation and pleasure? Plants too are wrapped up to protect them against frost. But what form of life is actually hidden inside the cover? Allegory turns into mockery. [...] Photography and life are of a similar nature; photons of light are at their origins. During anabiosis the process of photosynthesis is halted and life comes to a standstill. In Olga Chernysheva's view, anabiosis, or sleep even more so, is the image of Russia. Sleep is a mutation of time, a transition to another phase. In this sense, her studies of nature do nothing other than address the mystery of being, the fate of objects, people or whole countries. Discovering the future is only possible through a careful study of the present, through discrete images of objects. Chernysheva's photographs present the world in a state of peace and quiet, prior to the explosion of history, when events are clearly distinguishable in the present and not compounded by time, when every image is a valuable unit serving to measure a life or an epoch.

right page:

OLGA CHERNYSHEVA

"Anabiosis", 2000-2002

from a series of 8 photographs

104 x 72 cm each, Ed. 5



SOCIAL REALISM FOR SALE

Patricia Ellis, from the catalog of the Tirana Biennial 2001 / FlashArt Oct. 2002

Dubosarsky & Vinogradov are designed heroism for the 21st century. Sifting through the rubble of Russian mythology, Dubosarsky & Vinogradov are re-mixing folklore for the next generation. Spin-doctoring a new glasnost: a true power for the people type of propaganda. Sampling from every fad in the book, Dubosarsky & Vinogradov piece together a black market paradise. Social realism for sale: more glamorous than ever, a cut above the rest.

90IES - ART IS AS SIMPLE AS MOOING

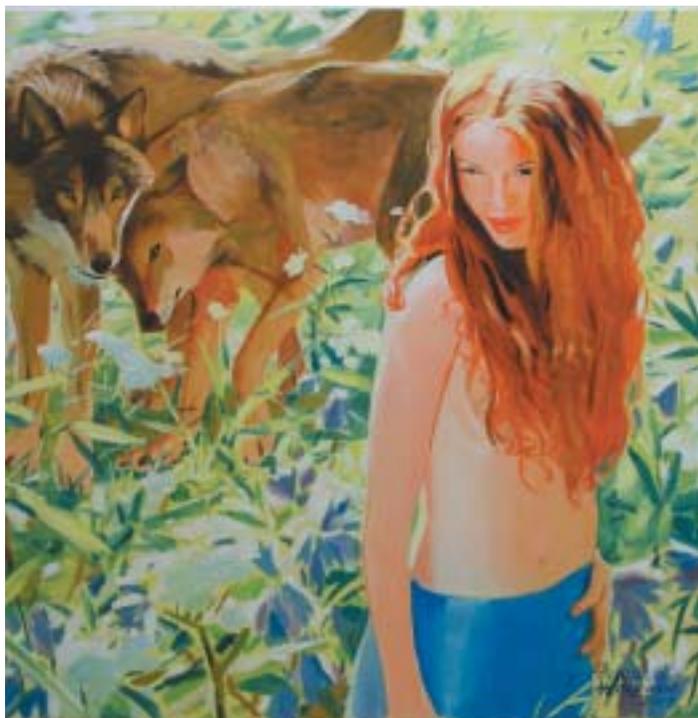
Anatoly Osmolovsky, in: Dubosarsky & Vinogradov, Soros Center for Contemporary Art Moscow, 1999 (excerpt)

The collaborative work of Alexander Dubosarsky and Vladimir Vinogradov started in 1994. Before, Dubosarsky was known as one of the most active participants in the Gallery in the Trehprudny alley, which, being supervised by Avdei Ter-Organian, showed extremely intensive exhibition activity. Weekly exhibitions-actions had been grasping the attention of the Moscow art scene for more than two and a half years. However, in 1993 the gallery terminated its activity, the authors' circle disappeared and each participant started to look for his own way in contemporary art. While Dubosarsky exhibited in the Trehprudny alley his friend and future partner Alexandre Vinogradov was graduating from the Surikov Institute. His knowledge and abilities obtained in the institute were the most influential for the contemporary project practise. [...] In

1994 the Moscow situation had been marked by the appearance of radical art - an absolutely different art situation, which later became extremely famous (sometimes it was also called Moscow actionism). At that time radical art, mostly focused at highly aggressive and brutal performances, was the most noticeable and popular method for communication with the society. In its turn, radical art starting with the first actions (at the end of 1989) argued with the circle of the Moscow conceptualism that had appeared in the Soviet age. In spite of the declining interest to esoteric conceptualism, it kept quite distinctive influence in the Moscow art context. [...] However, contrary to radicals who created an image of an anti-hero, of an anarchist terrorist and provocateur, Vinogradov & Dubosarsky tried to construct an image of a post-perestroika positive hero. Their main task was to synthesize a new Russian style, which, on the other side can provoke misunderstanding (misunderstanding is the main attribute of interest) in the field of art. This misunderstanding in the situation of total decline of traditional interpretation schemes, total economic and social state instability could be achieved only by demonstrating a comprehensible and simple gesture. [...] Critics were trying to find out: what is it? Another turn of sots-art in different social conditions? Apology of a new Russian state? Intellectual infantilism, craziness or possible madness? New aestheticism or simulationism? I think that all this interpretations are similarly probable, they do not reflect the complicated and contradictory idea of Vinogradov and Dubosarsky, but represent the spontaneous and schizophrenic post-perestroika Russian reality. [...]

top:

DUBOSARSKY
& VINOGRADOV
"Wolfs", 2002
oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm



bottom:

DUBOSARSKY
& VINOGRADOV
"Summer", 2002
oil on canvas
200 x 300 cm



THREE COMPONENTS

Viktor Misiano, in: "Zeitwenden",
Kunstmuseum Bonn, 1999, p. 126-127
(excerpt)

Dmitry Gutov's creative activity consists of three components. Obviously they are present in his latest projects; therefore, they already existed in his earlier works of the 90ies. Those were hand-painted canvases depicting wallpaper fragments. They looked old fashioned, in the spirit of the 60ies, with the geometrical stylistics typical also for the 20ies. Gutov's earlier works appropriated the stylistics of the Russian constructivism, linking it with the language of Russian avantgarde. Trying to give a schematic and formula of Russian avantgarde aesthetics one can use Victor Shklovsky's words "Art as a Method". Gutov is faithful to this principle in all his works: they are built upon total rooting of a pithy part of a work in its material and formal structure. Thus, one of his works was made as a giant installation: clouds were floating high above the forest field, and the clouds consisted of badminton shuttlecock ("Shuttlecock"). Whether the shuttle-cocks are floating above the ground, earth and wooden planks lay upon the surface: in his work titled "Over the Black Mud" the floor of the Moscow gallery "Rigina" was covered by the muddy black earth and the audience was moving along the wooden light planks thrown over the mud. This effectiveness and effectness of the method lies both in the idea of hand-made wallpapers, and video where the change of a shot coincides with the change of a posture.

However, Gutov's work is not a Russian

version of American minimalism. He does not read Clement Greenberg but marxist aesthetologist Mikhail Lifshitz and philosophical classics - Marx and Hegel. Gutov's art opposes to the avantgarde idea of linear construction of the art language, his creative activity is consecutively historic. [...] However, Gutov's historicism has nothing to do with post-modern deconstruction. On the contrary, it is vital and natural experience of the past as something actual, and work of a thought born by reading of aesthetics and philosophy by Hegel. [...]

However, Gutov's art is not a "Musee Imaginaire". He appropriated one phrase from his spiritual teacher, a marxist, Michail Lifshitz: "It's time to say good buy to the petty intrigues of reflexion". That phrase has become Gutov's slogan not only in his polemics with self-sufficient intellectualism of conceptualism (the most alien trend in the Moscow art of previous decade), but also in his polemics with the idea of art autonomy. Gutov is obsessed with reality and he represents still actual figure of a social artist with an active critical point of view. [...]

right page (top):

DMITRY GUTOV

"Flag", 1999

digital print on textile

180 x 300 cm

right page (bottom):

DMITRY GUTOV

"Sascha from Urupinsk", 1997/2002

series of 4 b/w photographs

40 x 60 cm, Ed. 10



MOSCOW, KREMLIN, CARDBOARD

Barbara Wittwer

Those sleeping under bridges certainly appreciate the qualities of cardboard. Those selling their wares in the open-air know the value of a windbreak made of cardboard. When children build their first playhouses, they make them out of cardboard. Cardboard boxes in the attic – containing books, items no longer used, memories. Cardboard boxes that transport dreams of the “good life” – video recorders, televisions and kitchen appliances, PC’s or wall units. Whoever said cardboard is just cheap packing material to be disposed of after use?

Corrugated board is an invaluable favourable material, available in enormous quantity, well suited for large areas, easy to transport and fit, flexible and much more durable than its reputation suggests. Corrugated board is structured and stable, both warm and soft in its colourfulness and material effect. It consists of little more than surfaces that do not take themselves seriously and always act in the service of what lies beneath.

At the mention of the word “Kremlin”, the listener sees in his mind’s eye more than golden domes and towers with the red star – he also associates the term with Russia’s political seat of power. Anyone who has been there will also know the Moscow Kremlin as one of Russia’s most important cultural heritage sites. Irrespective of soviet star or double eagle: while emblems may change, such sites outlast revolutions.

In this sense, the subject of the cardboard pictures is not merely an external ‘post-card motif’, but a symbol, the weight and supra-individual, social importance of which have grown in the course of its history. The themes of the picture series are not arbitrary, but depict places of identification, places where history, aesthetics, style and belief are concentrated – in short, places that exude culture.

The painting style used in the cardboard pictures is extremely casual, demonstrably more academic sketch than ‘modern art’, uncontemporary to some degree.

Cultural continuity in difficult, painful, exciting times of upheaval: which contemporary, modern material could convey this theme better than cardboard?

right page:

VALERY KOSHLYAKOV

“Moscow. Kremlin”, 2000

mixed media on cardboard

340 x 140 cm



**THE SAME. ENTER SKOTININ,
MAN ON ALL FOURS**

Mila Bredikhina, 1994 (excerpt)

Freud believed that the figure of a human being standing upright is at the beginning of the cultural process. A human being stands upright and then irreversible processes take place: smell is no longer valuable, genitalia become conspicuous as never before, shame appears, sexual excitement becomes almost constant – in other words, the road to culture is clear.

And so too the road to dissatisfaction. In the case of the latter, energy is significantly depleted and the tired mind is inclined to go again on all fours. Oleg Kulik went on all fours as a result of an excess of energy. This makes him resemble Professor Presbury, a character from Conan Doyle's story, Man on all Fours. An old professor obsessed with a passion for a young woman easily climbed vertical walls at night, squealed and jumped, teased dogs and unfortunately came to a bad end. The source of his mysteriously energy was simple enough: it was a sex hormone of a black headed monkey. [...]

Kulik claims that it is sufficient for a human being to become the other in order to be an animal, to go on all fours when he or she loses shame, acquires the sense of smell etc. In this process, identifying oneself with an animal as a non-anthropomorphic Other, one is not losing connection with one's own species. On the contrary, treating one's "animal" passions with such consideration guarantees attention on the part of other people. In the moment of existential inspiration Kulik is pulled away from human beings. He could follow the lead of Fonvizin's cha-

racter, Skotinin, and say: "What sodomy. I'd better take a walk around a cowshed". But, unlike Skotinin, Kulik is sure that inevitably he will be discovered in that uncivilised place, that culture will catch up with him. In other words, no matter where Kulik goes with his libido, he would never take a walk without being ready to introduce it into cultural spheres: he would never walk around a cowshed without a video or a camera, without a tape recorder, a microphone etc. [...]

PARADIS ARTIFICIEL

Irina Kulik (excerpt)

Oleg Kulik, who has long existed in the hypostasis of the "Dog-man", suggests a radically new strategy in his project titled The New Paradise: a suicidal, doomed attempt to transgress the borders of the human and the borders of culture. When Kulik became an animal in his earlier projects and performances, he inevitably turned into a show himself, instead of being an artist or a spectator, and his response to the eternal "don't-touch" impermeability of a museum was to bit spectators breaking through the barrier from the opposite side. The New Paradise is a project where Kulik goes back to the human. He tries to restore the image of the lost paradise combining the images of man with the natural world, which has long appeared to be the world, which is possible only when we are absent. [...]

top: OLEG KULIK
"The Mad Dog"
performance, 1994
b/w photography
30,5 x 41 cm

bottom: OLEG KULIK
"Giraffe, Museum of Nature
(New Paradise)", 2001
c-print on aluminium
124 x 208 cm



THE BODY AS REFLECTION

O. Shishkin, in: "The Body as Reflection", Segodnya, Nov. 25th 1994 (excerpt)

Parts amount to more than the whole. The number of details cannot be ascertained. If we view parts on the whole and the whole world as a particular instance, we can make a definite conclusion: details are always more impressive than what they make up because they are closer to us and more concrete.

Lying on the beach on a summer holiday we are in a most directly tangible contact with a colossal cosmic body. But we certainly don't see it as an astronaut would from the orbit. Our immediate judgement is that the Earth is a flat surface overgrown with grass and stretching to infinity. The farther away we are removed from the object, the more changed it looks. From the far edges of our galaxy the Earth must look like a point of light and still farther away - the phantom will totally disappear from view. The works of Tatyana Liberman study the existence of an object in its transition from the particular to the general. The shadow plays the role of a brake in that process, which is needed for close scrutiny. The subject thoroughly examined in them is the sculptured female torso, armless and headless, as found in excavations of ancient ruins by the Europeans of the classical revival period. The words "ancient Greek or Roman" actually sound to us as synonyms of "fragmentary". We are used to looking at broken statues visualizing them as whole in our minds. But that is the charm of the past - it can only be properly seen by the schizo-

phrenic fragmentary consciousness.

The shadow has with Liberman still another important function - a disorienting one. The mesh through which light falls on the rough surface exists only in the imagination of the onlooker as a call from emptiness, a simulation of the non-existent. Where might the strange scenes depicted in the photographs take place? Just in the mind of the artist who provokes the environment to generate phantoms? Or in the world of variations in the brain of God, or some God-like Supercatalog where the eternal creation of sculptured human trunks must be taking place? Armless, legless, headless ancient marbles are rotating in semi-darkness, strangely weightless, somewhat like X-mas tree decorations. [...]

It would be even more logical to view Libermans experiments from another angle - as experiments conducted on people. A live nude body has always symbolized in art the absence of time, arbitrariness of space, and strangeness of Being. "Enough of the black", said Degas. "Enough of the white", we might echo. Between black and white are the ancient marble torsos - just traces of light on the surface of the photographic film.

right page (top and bottom):

TATYANA LIBERMAN

"Anonymae", 1999

b/w photography, Ed. 10

55 x 74 cm



MOSCOW - PARIS

Olga Sviblova, in: "Moscow-Paris",
Moscow House Of Photography, 2001

Igor Moukhin started his career as a photographer in the middle of the 80ies during the epoch of the wave of a new soviet art when underground showed on the surface of the soviet art life and provoked a big interest in the West. The time of Perestroika gave birth to a new generation of artists whose names are now undoubtedly engraved in the history of national and world art. At that time the world had rediscovered Russian photographic modernism of the 20-30ies and first of all such classics of the Russian photography as Alexandre Rodchenko, Boris Ignatovitch, Arkadi Shaikhet.

Nevertheless, photography still remained out of focus of curators' and critics' attention and existed in the state of a certain immobility. There was only a few number of photographers (such as Boris Mikhailov, Boris Saveliyev, Alexandre Slusarev, Ilya Kabakov, Eric Bulatov, Grisha Bruskin, Igor Moukhin etc.) whose work was broader than a traditional photo report. Using the patterns of the contemporary art they worked in the field of Social Art, the strongest movement of the Russian underground at that time.

In 1988 Igor Moukhin showed his series "Fragments" and "Monuments" which made him one of the leaders of the new Russian photography. Both projects were dedicated to the ruins of the soviet empire. The Soviet propaganda had already lost its influence and the August Putsch of 1991 had defined the difference between the soviet past and a new direction of development of the country.

The post perestroika epoch marked a "Babylonian" mixture of the soviet economics, aesthetic, mentality and the new Russian reality, new tendencies supported especially by the young generation. It was youth which became the main theme of Moukhin's works in the 90ies.

Moukhin's work is a bright and full reflection of the first decade of the Russian capitalism performed precisely by means of a cinematographic-like static images. The series "People in love" (1996) is the conscious act of refusal and resistance against the military intervention in Tchetchnya. This series became "a visit card" of the new Russian photography defiling the myths "we are the happiest" and "we are the most miserable". Igor Moukhin's works do not bear the influence of the critic and romantic realism. The photographer tries to catch the energy of a social space and of a concrete person which allowed him to create a rigid, bright and dramatic image of Russia at the edge of the 21st century. In 1999 Igor Moukhin works in Paris within the framework of the artistic exchange between Moscow and Paris. [...] The Project "Moscow-Paris" unites the two latest series by Igor Moukhin and reflect a unique specificity of both cities. In a very fine and delicate way the works reveal common features of existential problems of the citizens of Paris and Moscow, especially of their youth.

right page (top and bottom):

IGOR MOUKHIN

"Moscow", 1990 - 2001

b/w photography

30 x 40 cm



LE ROI DE LA FORÊT - LE ROI DES AULNESÂ

Ekaterina Degot, in: "NU The Nordic Art Review", 2001

The project "The King of the Forest" is a series of performances in different countries (Russia, Sweden, Egypt, France, Italy etc.).

The "King of the Forest" is a mythological creature of Europe. It kidnaps beautiful children and hides them in its palace. This plot was used in a poem by J.W. Goethe and in a novel by Michel Tournier (titled "Le Roi des Aulnesâ"). For the first performance in throne hall of the Catherine IIs palace in Pushkin town we chose more than two hundred pupils of the special ballet and sport schools and some children of model agencies from St.Petersburg, all of them from 3 and 5 to 11 years old.

The unhappy paedophilic protagonist of Michel Tournier's "Le roi des Aulnesâ" - after which the work of AES+F is named - was a keen photographer, sublimating his obsession in obsessive representation." In the performance "Le Roi des Aulnesâ" children are represented in a large crowd, and there is a totalitarian twist about it. Are they victims looking at the invisible tyrant giving them orders as in Tournier's novel where children are entering the Nazi youthcamp and the totalitarian fascination with the fragile young beauty is addressed? Are they called by an invisible Forest King who will take the mout of this life, turn them into statues? Or are they generating the stereotype themselves, willingly entering the realm of the image?

Like the children on these photographs, many artists today including AES+F are walking a rope of glamour stereotype, since they feel this is the only way through the abyss. Some are balancing dangerously, some are brilliantly falling and catching the rope again: the point is to be on the edge. In any case, the show is unavoidable: these are those to be shown, these are those to take the ingrateful job of representation.

bottom:
AES+F
"Le Roi des Aulnesâ", 2001-02
inkjetprint on carvas
120x140cm



CUBOMETR GALLERY

V. Dubosarsky & A. Vinogradov

Dear friends,

Facing you is our new project, a gallery we called "Cubometr". Admittedly, last summer, we saw something like this in Chelsea, New York. We admired the artist's clever idea: he had used corrugated board to model a certain space, with abstract art painted on its walls. We conscientiously noted down the author's name so as to refer to him if need be. Of course, we have since lost this valuable note. Forgive us, our unknown American friend!

As, for almost a year, we nurtured this idea of a little gallery, we invented exhibitions, discussed our visions, and consulted colleagues. Then, the moment came when we realized that it had to be done there and then.

Our baby has virtually inexhaustible resources: solo exhibitions or international biennales, advertising drives or performances, mass media or nonspectacular projects. We are open to cooperation with artists, curators, and various institutions. Your wildest fantasies as well as projects that could not be implemented for one reason or another can now be translated into reality at the cubic metre gallery. Every exhibition project will culminate in a full catalogue in Russian and English.

The gallery opens with an international video festival, "Politika-Buff" (curator Genia Kikodze). Before breaking a symbolic bottle of champagne, we wish to express our deep gratitude to the National

Center for Contemporary Art for its support and interest. Godspeed!

center and bottom:

two videos shown in the Cubometr gallery during the "Politika-Buff" (video festival from Ex-URSS, curated by Genia Kikodze)

OLEG KULIK (middle)

"With you I'm a beast", 2002
videotape, 3 min.

RADEK COMMUNITY & DMITRY GUTOV (bottom)

"Demonstration", 2000
videotape, 5 min.



BIOGRAPHIES

AES + F (Tatyana Arsamasova, 1955; Lev Evsovich, 1958; Evgeny Sviatsky, 1957 and Vladimir Fridkes). Started their activity with projects exploring the theme of the human body (Decorative Anthropology, 1991; Body Space, 1995 etc). The anthropological interest was for them, though, only pretext for the calculated intellectual provocation. In the projects which followed raised the whole spectrum of challenging mass-media themes balancing on the edge of polite-correctness (Islamic Project, 1996; Suspects. Seven Inner and Seven Righteous, 1997; Defile, 2000-2001; King of the Forest, 2001-2002). Noted figures at the Moscow art scene, participants of many international exhibition projects (Biennale de Lyon, 2000; Gwangju Biennale, 2002; etc.).

OLGA CHERNYSHEVA, 1962. In the 80ies studied film scenography in the State School of Cinematography, than passed the course at the Riecksacademy in Amsterdam. Has a particular eye for the deep metaphysics of reality and has been able to express the specific transitive character of today's Russian life. Works in different media: drawing, video, photography, installation. Involved in numerous projects of Russian and international institutions and galleries. In 2001 her installation was presented within the framework of the Russian project at the Venice Biennale.

VLADIMIR DUBOSARSKY, 1964 and **ALEXANDER VINOGRADOV**, 1963. Art duo which gave the second birth to the Moscow painting school. Educated in the fortress of soviet social realism traditions, the Surikov Art School in Moscow. Later

brought fine manner of painting to serve the eccentric pop-culture. This contradictory synthesis resulted in a specific grotesque imagery and expression, which attracted the living interest of curators, critics and influential Russian and international institutions. Participants of numerous Russian and international art events (Secession Vienna, 1997; 3rd Biennial Montenegro, 1997; "Russian Madness", Biennale de Valencia, 2001; "Davaj! Russian Art Now.", Berlin, 2001, MAK Vienna, 2002; etc.).

DMITRY GUTOV, 1961. Educated as art critic and historian of art and in many of his projects explores the contradictory nature of contemporary art. At the end of the 80ies opened for the Moscow art the romantic of the decorative style of the 60ies. Later came to works without particular manner or media but marked by the distinctive leftist ideas. Has a widest exhibition mapping equally involved in regional education art projects all over Russia as well as in prestigious international mega-events (Venice Biennale, 1995; Zeitwenden, 1999; L'autre moitie de L'Europe, 2000)

VALERY KOSHLIYAKOV, 1962, painter from the southern region of Russia (Rostovsky Region) where he started as stage decorator in a musical theatre. Developed his own original style and technique of painting, painting on rough cardboards which he uses for monumental architectural compositions, dramatizing the nostalgic feeling of the golden age of culture. Shares his time between Moscow and Berlin and is equally active in both art scenes.

OLEG KULIK, 1961. As two other ex-soviet artists received wide acknowledgment of the international institutional system, Kabakov and Mikhailov, originates from Ukraine. In the 80-90ies made a brilliant art career full of scandals and contradictions from the instructor of an amateur art club in the remote village to the international art celebrity, entering into all most prestigious ratings and taking part in the biggest international art forums (Istanbul Biennale, 1999; Sao Paolo Biennale, 1999; Venice Biennale, 2001). The subject of his art is the deep ecology: it explores the phenomenon of the animal in the human being.

TATYANA LIBERMAN, 1964. Professional photographer. In many of her works makes point on the female body: in some as subject of desire, in some as idea-fix of commercial advertisement, in some as eternal image of art (project "Antonyms", 1999). Another direction of her art is eroticism of common objects (project "Vegetables, fruits and sea-products", 1997), the theme which lead her to more abstract metaphysic of time, light and logical combinations (project "Game with Light", 2001). Participant of many exhibitions in Russia and abroad.

IGOR MOUKHIN, 1961, Moscow born photographer and artist. Started in the end of the 80ies with metaphysical photo-series depicting the transformation of the soviet cultural object in the time of transition and changes. Got international acclaim for his sharp-eye city-scopes, done first in Moscow then in Russian province and then in the world capitals (Paris, Vienna). Author of socially orientated

elaborate photo panoramas as the project "Youth in the Metropolis" at the Moscow Photobienale 1998. Participant of numerous international shows focused on emerging east European Art in the 90ies ("After the Wall", 1999; "Davaj!", 2001).

CONSTANTIN BOKHOROV, 1961. Curator, art critic, historian of art. In the 90ies took active part in the institutional development in Moscow (Regina Gallery, National Centre for Contemporary Arts). The organizer and administrator of numerous projects in the framework of activity of these institutions (Commissioner of the Russian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, 1995-1999). Author of critical texts reflecting on contemporary art in the logic of institutional development. As a curator produced a number of experimental projects integrating art in the context of ethical (Without Permission, 1992) and existential issues (Conforming / Nonconforming, 2001).

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