

**PRESS RELEASE****GLASNOST:  
Soviet Non-Conformist Art  
from the 1980s**

16 April – 26 June 2010

Image:  
Erik Bulatov  
*Perestroika*  
1989  
Oil on canvas  
89.5x210cm  
Courtesy Alex Lachmann

In April 2010 Haunch of Venison presents the first comprehensive survey of Soviet non-conformist art from the 1980s and early 1990s ever to be mounted in London, in collaboration with Galerie Volker Diehl (Berlin) and Diehl + Gallery One (Moscow).

Featuring one hundred works by almost fifty different artists, the exhibition focuses on the period before, during and after Glasnost and Perestroika, examining the profound influence that Gorbachev's liberalising reforms had on the art that was being made at this transformative moment in the USSR's history. Rather than offering an exhaustive survey, the exhibition seeks to introduce Western audiences to the stylistic diversity, dynamic spirit and key exponents of the unofficial art of this period.

Encouraged by Gorbachev's insistence on transparency and freedom of speech, Soviet artists in the primary centres of Moscow and Leningrad retaliated against the official, state-sanctioned art that had dominated the Soviet Union for decades and began to produce work which was radical, experimental, and provocative in intent. They developed artistic strategies which were often openly critical of the official institutions of Soviet culture and sought to communicate the reality of immediate lived experience in stark contrast to Soviet ideology's nostalgia for a utopian past.

Glasnost: Soviet Non-Conformist Art from the 1980s examines the various strands of this vital underground movement. It bears witness to a radical change in aesthetics, an eclectic fusion of media and approach, and a political resistance to totalitarian power. Characterised by a new-found individualism, the work in this exhibition represents the sum of a number of different personal styles, from the conceptual and the analytic to the jocular and ironic. It features Eduard Gorokhovskiy, Ivan Chuikov, Semyon Faibisovich, Aidan Salakhova and other key figures of the Moscow scene, as well as the most influential of the Leningrad-based New Artists, such as Timur Novikov and Sergei Bugaev (known as Afrika).

Artists such as Alexander Kosolapov and Komar & Melamid (who had emigrated to New York by the 1980s) practised Sots Art, reworking the myths and tropes of Socialist Realism with biting irony and a pop aesthetic inherited from the West;

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other émigré artists such as Ilya Kabakov and Erik Bulatov worked in the tradition of Moscow conceptualism, subtly exploring the intellectual manipulation of mass consciousness; a third group of artists spoke out without a Soviet accent, looking instead to European contemporary art for genuine relevance and meaning; yet another enriched the borrowed languages of the German Junge Wilde ('wild youth') and the French Figuration Libre ('free figuration') movements with images assimilated from the Russian avant-garde.

Assembled over the past decade, the paintings, sculpture, photographs and installations in this ground-breaking exhibition represent an attempt to deconstruct the historical context of the Glasnost/Perestroika era and to convey the artistic revolution enabled by the unprecedented social and political change that Russia underwent in the 1980s and early 1990s.

A major bilingual publication featuring texts by Olga Sviblova, Ekaterina Degot, Joseph Backstein, and Boris Groys will accompany the exhibition.

With support from the Kira Foundation.

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## EDITORS' NOTES

Full list of exhibited artists:

Giya (Guram) Abramishvili, Yuri Albert, Sergej Basilev, Pyotr Belenok, Erik Bulatov, Andrey Bezukladnikov, Sergei Borisov, Alexander Brodsky, Anatoli Brusilovsky, Sergei (Afrika) Bugaev, Gor Chahal, Igor Chatskin, Olga Chernysheva, Ivan Chuikov, Semyon Faibisovich, Nicolai Filatov, Andrey Filippov, Eduard Gorokhovsky, Evgeny Gorokhovsky, Sven Gundlach, Georgy Gurianov, Ilya Kabakov, Andrey Khlobystin, Ilya Kitup, Svetlana Kopystyanskaya, Vitaly Komar & Alexander Melamid, Maria Konstantinova, Igor Kopyastinsky, Alexander Kosolapov, Nikolai Kozlov, Leonid Lamm, Konstantin Latyshev, Rostislav Lebedev, Mikhail Magaril, Igor Makarevich, Oleg Maslov, Boris Matrossov, Boris Mikhailov, Sergey Mironenko, Andrei Monastyrski, Timur Novikov, Boris Orlov, Nikolai Ovchinnikov, Pavel Pepperstein, Arkadi Petrov, Mikhail Roginsky, Andrei Roiter, Aidan Salakhova, Sergey Shablavin, Sergey Shutov, Leonid Sokov, Alexei Sundukov, Natalia Turnova, Oleg Vassiliev, Vladimir Voinov, Sergey Volkov, Dmitry Vruble, Vadim Zakharov, Konstantin Zvezdochetov.

Haunch of Venison

Founded in 2002 by Harry Blain and Graham Southern, contemporary art gallery Haunch of Venison works with some of the most important and exciting artists working today, presenting a broad and critically acclaimed programme of exhibitions at international gallery spaces in London, Berlin and New York. In March 2009, Haunch of Venison moved their London programme to the 21,500ft gallery spaces at 6 Burlington Gardens.

[www.haunchofvenison.com](http://www.haunchofvenison.com)

Volker Diehl

Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, was created in 1990 and focuses on contemporary art with international relevance. In March 2008, Volker Diehl opened Diehl + Gallery One with an exhibition by Jenny Holzer, the first Western gallery to open in Moscow. The inaugural show was followed by a group show of Russian political art from the 1980s (Sots Art), *Glasnost/ Perestroika*, and solo shows of Wim Delvoye, Zhang Huan, Jaume Plensa and Olga Chernysheva.

[www.galerievolderdiehl.com](http://www.galerievolderdiehl.com)