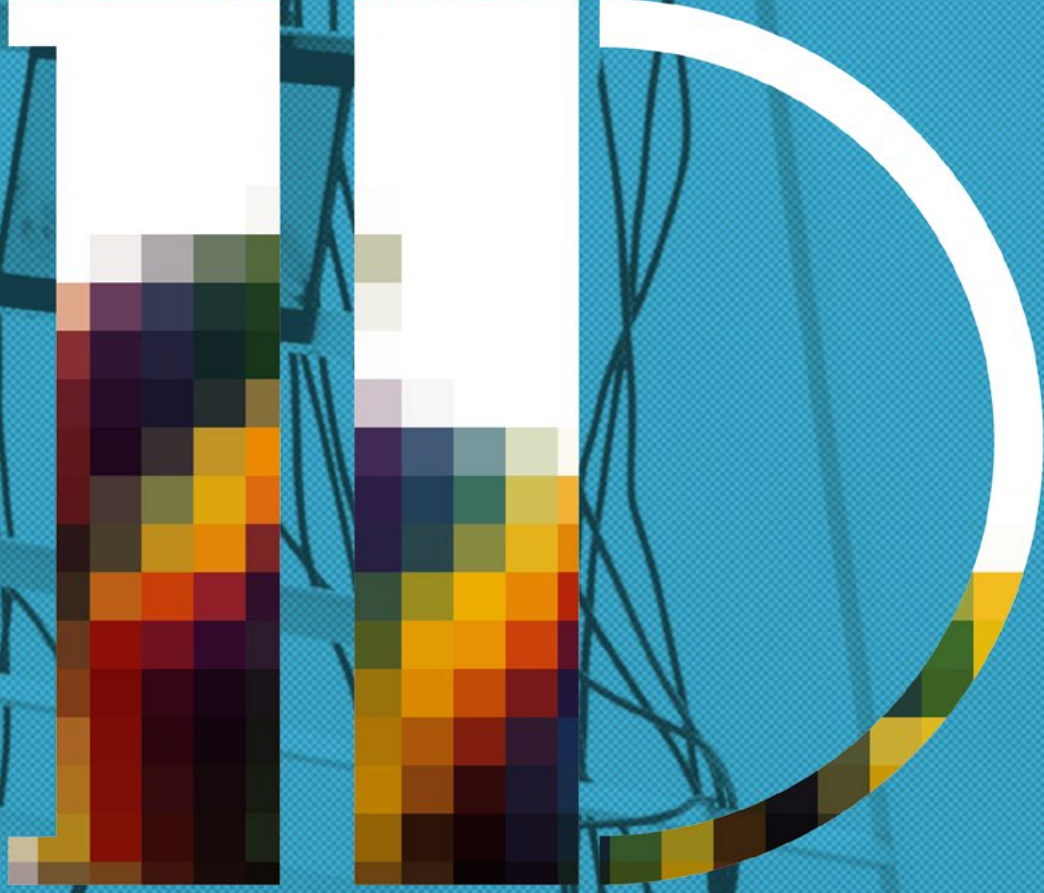


ART:TECH EXHIBITION VENICE



ID

ART:TECH EXHIBITION

As a Part of Cyfest-12
the International
Media Art Festival

Venice
CFZ
Ca'Foscari Zattere

05.11–06.28'19

Cultural Flow Zone

Zattere
Dorsoduro 1392
Venice

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(technical director, software,
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President of Big Data Solutions

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Silvia Burini, Ph.D., Professor of Russian
Art History and Contemporary Art History
at Ca' Foscari University in Venice.
Director of the Center for the Studies of
Russian Art (CSAR)

Giuseppe Barbieri, Professor of Modern
Art History at Ca' Foscari University
in Venice

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LEONARDO

CYFEST-12: ID.

The International Media Art Festival

Elena Gubanova
Anna Frants
Lydia Griaznova

Concept

When portrait was conceived as a genre, a person was depicted at the best moment of his or her life – at the height of their maturity, strengths and actions. The portrait, the painted ID, was conferred on prosperous and influential people. Galleries of their images are kept in the museums while the metadata about the canvases' protagonists, as to who they are and why they are depicted, break away from the carrier and settle in the archives and in the heads of experts. What's left is the visual images that acquire multiple interpretations depending on the background of the beholders. Portrait, as a prototype of infinite interpretation, is acquiring new forms nowadays.

There is a vague image on the flickering screen. The spellbound Narcissus looks at the device and, with a whisking gesture to-the-left-to-the-right, choses his reflection for today. However, is he the only one who determines his choice? When he looks at the screen he watches the others and accepts, as a game rule, the fact that he himself is being watched at this moment. The glance of the others, much like one's own glance at the others, is capable of transforming the process of image-building into the infinite roaming in a mirror gallery.

Now one can compose one's own infinite portrait gallery of avatars for all of the life's intents and purposes. One is able to clarify and to update the image or, the other way around, to freeze the moment and to change nothing for years, to speak about the one thing and to keep silence about the other, not to reveal oneself at all, to blend in, to create simulacra, to steal the accounts and to generate doppelgangers. The image yields both to a slight correction and to a transformation beyond all recognition. To achieve all this, one needs not to be famous, well-to-do or socially significant.

The ultimate truth becomes the body that serves as an evidence of the existence and a unique characteristic. Biometrics turns into a document. For now, one cannot relinquish the body. This reaches an absurdity – the body is necessary because it interacts with the device.

The thing-device itself has its ID and serves as its keeper for the human being. Both the thing and the person have their own set off numeric characters. People have the TIN, passport and Social Security Number. The things have their own ID – the identifier, barcode and IMEI. The entrance through a fingerprint or face recognition becomes a point of interaction between the machine and the human being. ID turns the unknown into the known, named and attributed. The authorization through the ID provides an access and prevents an entry for strangers. Logins and passwords are simultaneously a lock and a picklock.

The integrity of being and of presence in the world gets disintegrated. That which determines and forms the human being took up its residence in the number as well. One can simultaneously be in two of here and now – in the real and in the virtual. The existence gets split into a multitude of the accounts in all forms of virtual communication with the world (from the accounts in social media, mail clients, services and games to mobile phones and bank accounts). The ID freezes between the virtual and the real, the invented and the real, the body and the thing.

A lifestyle that excludes an access to the internet looks more and more like a hermit's life. Nevertheless, to be in the internet is still useful rather than essential. An encounter with the articulated position of an internet hermit or a technoluddite who refuses to get the new version of a yet more user-friendly gadget or to have it at all reflects how the notion of day-to-day existence has changed. The reluctance to be represented or to leave a minimal footprint in the internet gains momentum while turning into a radical position bordering on marginalization. The younger the generation, the more noticeable this is. This places emphasis on how the boundary of what's normal or conventional has shifted and on the change of how we perceive the comfortable existence whose day-to-day set of daily routine actions includes regular plunging into the internet with a secure and nonstop access to it. "ID" has a wide scatter of meanings – from the term in psychoanalysis (id) to the document that certifies one's identity (ID).

We are interested in what ID represents in the world of people and things, what new meanings come to life when they interact and what this leads to.

In Chocolate

multimedia installation, 2019

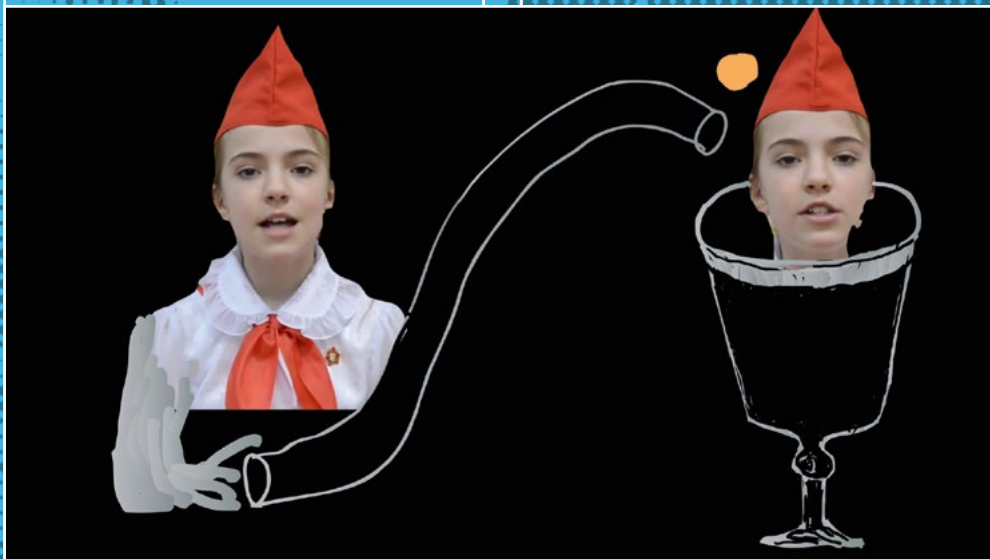
With the technical support of Sergey Karlov

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

In the jets of a chocolate fountain, peeking out from behind the periscope-like pillars that surround the installation, various characters from Soviet media reality (from newsreels, films and television) go on a rampage – Secretary Generals, national and honored pop singers and ballet dancers, the Beryozka Ensemble, the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army, outstanding workers, agricultural laborers and others. Alien to the vital and aesthetic Venetian environment, the Soviet people, who the authors identify as the inheritors of the Land of Soviets, sing authentic songs about “the Soviet person” or “the Soviet way of life” to music that was composed especially for the work. The phrases themselves – “the Soviet person” or “our Soviet way of life” – are cut out of these texts, and what we have before us are “aliens” that continue to maintain their exclusiveness in song with a categoricalness that is both schizophrenic and positivist. They crawl out of dishes and chocolate, interact with the figurines Murano Glass, while they keep singing, and singing, and singing. Who are they? How did they end up here? Where did these guests of Venice come from?

**Marina
Alekseeva
& Vladimir
Rannev**
(Russia)

4



Karin Andersen

(Italy)

Naughty Messy Nature

lambda print, 2014–2018

Naughty Messy Nature (N.M.N.) is a participatory project. The co-authors of the works are not humans, but infinitely tiny microorganisms: fungi of mold.

5

The project is based on experiments carried out with a simple scientific method. Small sculptures made of vegetal materials are placed in a self-built custom container in special ambient conditions. The output of the experiments is freely determined by the mold that will eventually grow after some time. Photographs of the process are taken at least once a day. In some of the selected pictures I apply small, non-invasive digital post production, as a further elaboration of visual details proposed by the mold's sculpting process. Each experiment's result takes research to a further step, as I gradually learn about the mold's preferences and sensitivity to temperature, light and air moisture.

Individuals portrayed in the N.M.N. series reject any kind of traditional definition in terms of gender, race or species. Identity is viewed as the result of the collective and interactive process, and as transitory concept: every image captures a special and unrepeatable moment of the figure's constant transformation.

The N.M.N. portraits are not meant as a work about decomposition and vanishing, but as a celebration of the wonderful creative disorder generated by biological and natural



processes, regardless of human efforts to establish harmony, symmetry and order in their material or mental constructions.

– Karin Andersen

Photography: Courtesy Traffic Gallery, Bergamo

Alternative Miss World

collage, 2019

Alyonka Soup in a jiffy!

5 anti-ID recipes

Recipe 1:

To make Alyonka supple and easy to chew after a 15-minute boil, she needs to do 25 sit-ups before cooking. Liberally sprinkle the muscles warmed up by the workout with salt and dark red wine. Serve steamed with softly fluffed pasta.

Recipe 2:

To partake of Alyonka's most tender mellowed brain, talk Alyonka into doing a breathing exercise (she'll agree to it) before cooking: she should breathe for 12 minutes on a freshly baked apple. The brain heated by the breathing gymnastics should be added to a broth to taste. Serve with slices of pre-chilled baked apple.

Recipe 3:

Various forms of industrial gymnastics are incredibly good for you! The most effective equipment is the wall bars! What's the advantage of this equipment? It gives us highly nutritious Alyonka juice! During the Swedish drill on these bars Alyonka's fatty diffusive-focal degenerations protrude – the venous ducts are freed up and get acquainted with vectors of increasing gravity – which will give us two or even two and a half cups of Alyonka juice enriched with Vitamin D. Drink it to the last drop! Each milligram of Vitamin D adds years to your life.

Recipe 4:

In the morning your face demands lots of attention! That's a fact... And what to do when you are on the road? The best thing is the "Minced Alyonka" in a jiffy! Densely pack in each folder of your layer... After this procedure, your facial skin will be as supple

as a soccer ball. When going on a long trip, don't forget to invite your girlfriend – Alyonka – to come with you... And, while nobody is looking, pack a mincer in your luggage... I did.

Recipe 5:

The most mysterious secret of ancient people! When your feet are tired of touring Venice, Alyonka's lips will come to relief! Pull them up carefully, like silk stockings, slowly covering toe after toe with layers of the smiling mouth. As soon as the foot volumes are compressed up to the ankle by Alyonka – you'll take a breather: swellings are coming down; blood circulation is normalizing. Which, in fact, will affect your vision – your glance will acquire focus and glint! You will have a chance to secure a victory in flirting! Supplement the effect of sparkling eyes with a faint smile...

P.S. Alyonka is a milk chocolate that was manufactured in the USSR from 1965 (the year Andrey Bartenev was born). Its

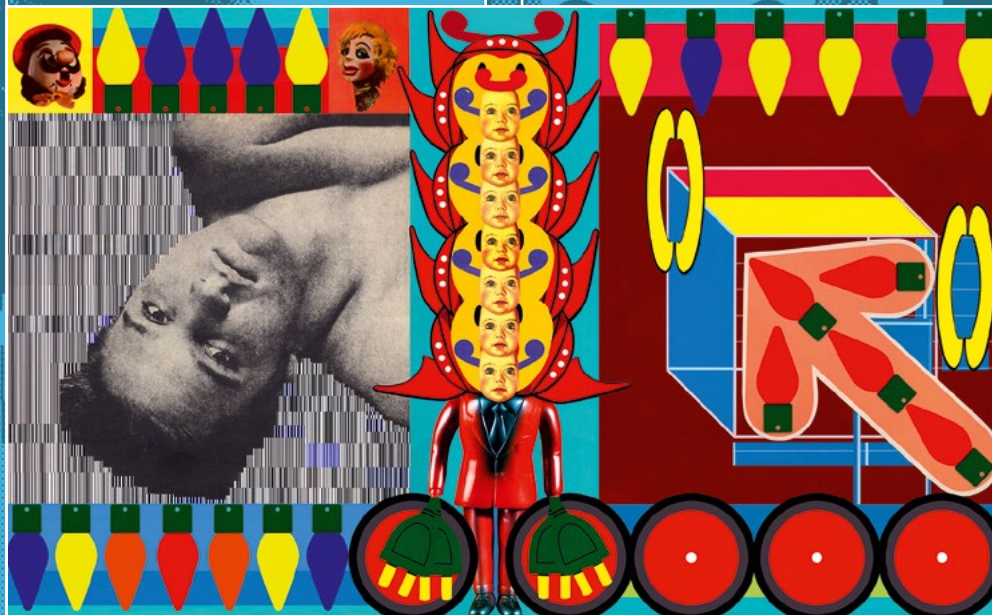
Andrey Bartenev (Russia)



distinctive feature is the creamy rich taste. The chocolate was named after the daughter of Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space. The photograph for the wrapper was taken by Alexander Gerinas in 1960 – it depicts his eight-month old daughter Alyonka Gerinas. It was redrawn for the wrapper in 1965 by the artist Nikolai Maslov who changed the eye color, facial oval and the direction of the gaze.

Advertisement: I'll repair broken chocolate!

6



The Last Argument

*digital photography, photo-paper printing,
2009–2017*

In the modern world, we constantly doubt the authenticity of images and information, which follow people everywhere, from the TV news to the Internet. Banks, businesses and government structures increasingly resort to the last method to identify human beings – their biometrics.

With the advent of the digital era, the obligatory set of identification documents were supplemented by the traces of virtual presence: everyone will sooner or later be “counted” and provided with a personal ID. But if in the real world the passport is destroyed after death, nothing ever disappears from the digital one, as we know, and an avatar can live forever unless friends or relatives delete it.

“The Last Argument” examines the topic of the evidence which people could provide to authenticate their existence, when the last thing they have left is their biometrics, their DNA.

Photographs of the faces of people who may be alive or dead, evoking associations with death, are actually taken at a perfectly pleasant and very human place – a beauty parlor. Images of beauty masks that combine elements of both the living and the lifeless are a unique illustration of a hybrid world, where an existence is possible in which the beauty of portraits will probably be judged by other aesthetic norms – if such norms exist at all.

Ludmila Belova (Russia)



A-13-40-25

installation, 2019

old telephones, wood chip board, nitrocellulose enamel

An old telephone as the start of a big game, where the voice has for the first time separated from the human being, and turned into a number. Blurred contours of the identity – who is crying into the receiver hundreds of miles away? The metaphysical state of words that have forever fallen silent, compressed by time, seeps through the earpiece of a silent phone as a thick black ooze, a stream of memories of long-departed subscribers. The conversation that seemed endless is over.

I scarcely guessed I'd ever need

A catalog of stars to read

Ten million phone numbers, each one

A world, mirage, or dying sun

A list of glow and scintillation,

Subscribers from each constellation

But there's one star I've always known

And I will find its telephone.

An endless line won't quell my zeal –

I'll turn the alphabet of steel

A-13-40-25

I don't know if you're still alive

The earpiece sings into my ear:

"This is Alpha Orion here.

I'm travelling, I am now a star

I have forgotten who you are

I am the sister of the dawn,

Don't dream of me, and do not mourn.

This star for you now disappears.

Ring me in three hundred years."

– Arseny Tarkovsky, Star Catalog, 1945

**Peter
Belyi**
(Russia)



Alexandra Dementieva

(Belgium)

9

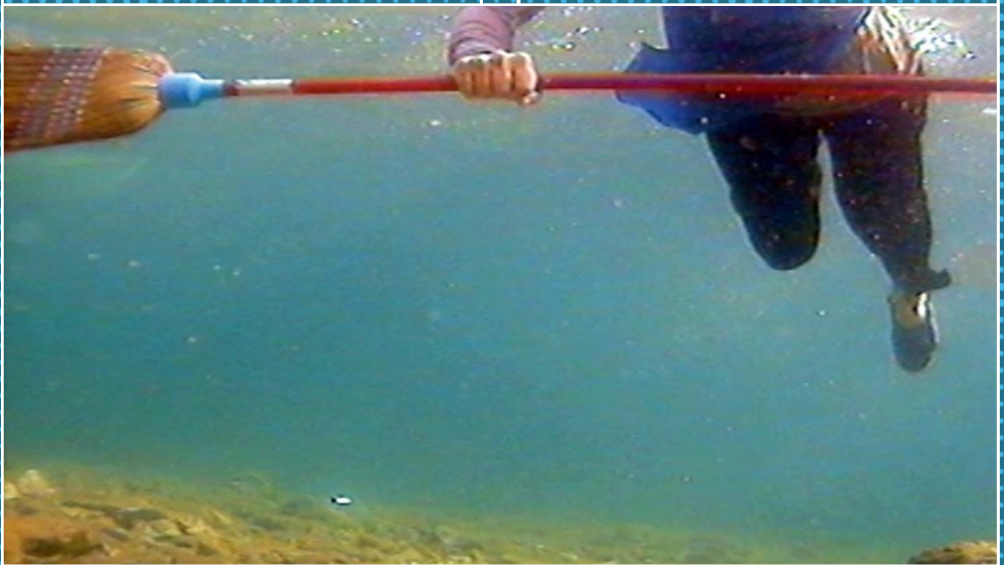
Twin Depths

media installation, 2018

Most of the Earth's surface is covered with water. Water constitutes 60% of the human body and 80% of the brain. We all "emerged" from water, and this fact is stored in the depth of our genetic memory. In her media installation *Twin Depths*, Alexandra Dementieva invites us to become explorers and return with her to "our element" and, taking familiar objects with us, settle in the watery realm, forgetting about millions of years of the evolution of the human species.

With the aid of live video from a camera installed in the sea, all the attempts to return under the water were recorded and displayed in real time.

The video was recorded during the residence/exhibition at Alexander Gallery, Roze, Montenegro.



CUSP

video installation, 2019

4K digital video, audio, 13 minute loop

In CUSP, the artist's familiar childhood location on the Essex marshes is reframed by inserting images randomly generated by a neural network (GAN*) into this tidal landscape.

Initially trained on a photographic dataset, the machine proceeds to learn the embedded qualities of different marsh birds, in the process revealing forms that fluctuate between species, with unanticipated variations emerging without reference to human systems of classification.

Elwes has actively selected a series of images from among those conceived by the neural

network, and then combined it into a single animation that migrates from bird to bird, accompanied by a soundscape of artificially generated bird song. The final work records these generated forms as they are projected, using a portable perspex screen, across the mudflats in Landermere Creek. The work both augments and disrupts the natural ecology of the location, as flocks of native birds enter a visual dialogue with these artificial ones.

**Neural networks are programming models which are biologically inspired and learn from observing data. GANs (generative adversarial networks) are neural networks which learn to mimic through generation and refinement.*

Jake Elwes (UK)

10



Elena Gubanova & Ivan Govorkov (Russia)

The Enlightened One

kinetic installation, 2019
rowing machine, metal lotus, mechanics, mirror,
projector, computer programming

Engineer: Alexey Grachev

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

11

*I am the light which is over them all.
(Gospel of Thomas, 77)*

For those who strive for self-knowledge

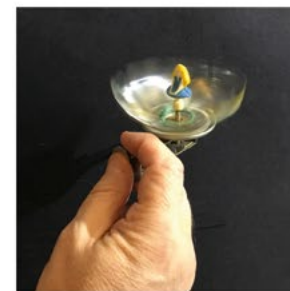
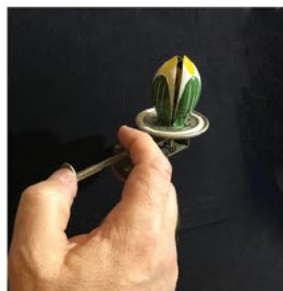
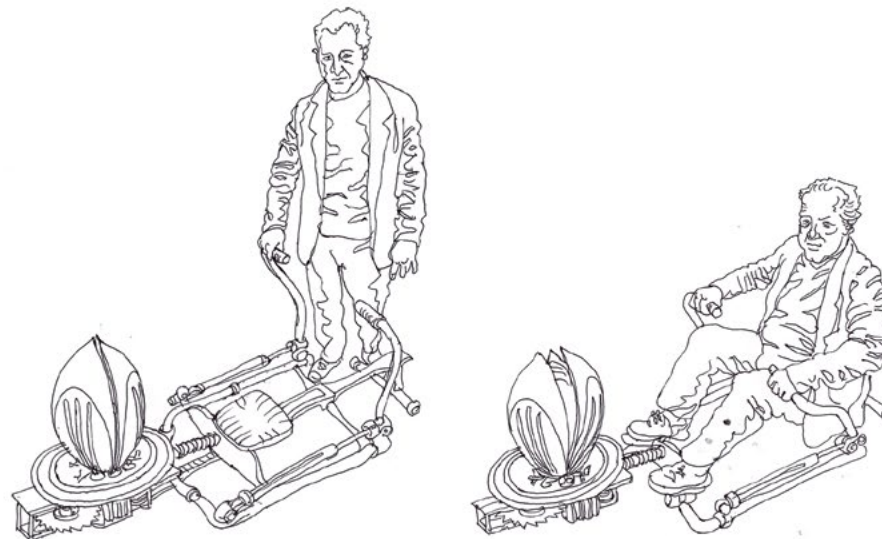
The way it should ideally be

First act

The "Seeker" tries to see the "sought-for" through the effort of his action. The action results in the unlocking of the "mystery" (lotus) where the "Seeker" appears before his reflection in the mirror and understands that the seeker is, in fact, the sought-for.

Second act

Suddenly blinded by a flicker of light from the mirror in which he has just seen his reflection, the "Seeker" senses that he is in fact the light. A connection takes place with the "Light Source" through an emotionally blinding flash that annihilates the former illusory personal identity.



Venetian Reflections

intermedia installation for 2 video projections and 2 mirrors, 2019

Until the possibility of instantaneous selfies via smartphones and digital cameras, mirror was the most important apparatus by which the individual could construct visual identity. Water was humankind's first mirror. Venice, for its part, a city entirely built on water, was renowned since the 15th century for the production of the purest mirrors in the world. They became known as Venetian Mirrors. Venice also lends its name to window shades made of horizontal slats: Venetian Blinds. Blinds cover windows making us blind to the outside. *Venetian Reflections* reflects upon mirrors, windows, Venice and (self-)identity through an interplay between video and looking glass.

The installation consists of 2 Venetian-style mirrors and 2 video projections (*Venetian Watercolors* (produced during a residency in Venice at the Emily Harvey Foundation) by Katherine Liberovskaya and *Venetian* by Phill Niblock). *Venetian Watercolors* consists of a succession of extreme close-up sequences of the colorful reflections of different details of Venetian architecture in the waters of the many canals of the city. *Venetian* is a single shot of a close-up of the changing play of morning sunlight reflected on a triple window with closed metallic Venetian blinds seen from the outside (captured from the inside of Niblock's NYC loft).

These large-scale projections immerse viewers in their worlds, while mirrors allow them to see their likeness surrounded by one or the other projection, all fused with the Venetian Reflections...



Katherine Liberovskaya
(Canada-USA)
& **Phill Niblock**
(USA)

Unforeseen Obligation YX7913XY

video installation, 2019

*video projection on the surface of moving water,
digital print on a transparent polymer*
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

According to many cognitive theories, creativity is the only human, personal and mysterious component of our “Self”. Hypothetically, the psychological “Self” is a combination of conscious and unconscious ideas about reality; intuition, dreams and associations are windows into the unconscious “Self” and source of creative impulses. Perhaps these are our personal paths, orienting us to the elusive modern labyrinths of virtual revolutions. The density

of social networks as well as the quantity and quality of virtual dimensions are rapidly increasing; news streams in which reality and facts do not differ from the fake; rating systems that change familiar social connections are all absorbed by the modern “Self”, transforming the relations between the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the irrational.

The video installation *Unforeseen obligation YX7913XY* is a reflection on the possible inequality of these two cognitions – that of the real world and that of the virtual world. In both cases we quench our thirst for knowledge. Cognition of contemporary virtuality might not engage all our sensory systems. Could it be a stimulus for that deep unconscious association, which perhaps is the impulse for our creativity?

Nataliya Lyakh (Russia–France)

The virtual has become our second form of oxygen, and a very comfortable one. Do we still choose the proportion between virtuality and reality in our life? What role does creativity play in interpreting the life process in the era of virtual revolutions? Does it still reveal our unconscious to interact with outside worlds? Is it the very goal of our many-sided all-powerful “Self” that transforms any reality?

13





Sergey Komarov (Russia) & Alexey Grachev (Russia)

Exaltation

interactive installation, 2019
iPhone, monitor 16:9, PC, Instagram live stream
Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

The basis of the project is live streaming. It takes place on the social network Instagram with two accounts that the artists created specifically for the exhibition.

The installation consists of a smartphone and a Liquid-Crystal Display (LCD). The smartphone is attached to the counter, and the LC display is situated in front of it. The first account is opened in the phone; it is streaming live. The second account transmits a connection to the broadcast of the LC

display. The account names were generated randomly.

One device looks at another; the screen for live-stream viewing repeats endlessly. An endless digital tunnel appears that stretches off into the distance. All the visitors of the exhibit end up in this tunnel – those who pass between the phone and the monitor and those who connect to the broadcast from their gadgets.

The virtual abyss with an intuitively comprehensible interface feeds on what goes on in reality. A person who appears before the camera for a moment eclipses what has been streaming a split second ago. The deeper the corridor, the poorer the image quality,

until it turns into a blurry picture of the past. Random passers-by captured by the camera replicate ad infinitum, get blurred and fall into nothingness. The same abyss is the destination of people who have connected to the broadcast – with all the comments, notifications, likes and emoji.

The bottomless digital tube of Instagram is completely autonomous. It revels in itself. It indiscriminately devours everything that comes into its field of vision. It does not care about recognition, traffic or number of active participants. The abyss is immune to the desire to create a happy moment that is legitimized by other people's likes and the view counter.

The live broadcast is on every day, and it lasts for an hour. For the rest of the time, viewers see a recording. On the next day, the previous streaming is forgotten for the sake of a new live transmission.

To join the streaming, go to the user's Instagram @tjhfsythwreg.

The time of broadcasts is indicated in the account's profile.

Psychedelic Lock

video installation, 2016

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

Two connected LED monitors appear in a space defined by two angular walls.

An image is passed instantly from one monitor to the other accompanied by a forceful rhythmic sound that is both sustained and hypnotic.

In the passage from one dimension to the other, the image projected acquires a double physicality, thus defining the very space between the two dimensions – the architectural (physical) and the extreme limitations of movement.

In the juncture between the two monitors, passing from one temporal dimension to another, a new image, a new space for

**Daniele
Puppi**
(Italy)

perception is created establishing a relationship between two distant realities.

A sort of “door” which offers similar stories of two diverse periods in time to coexist.

15



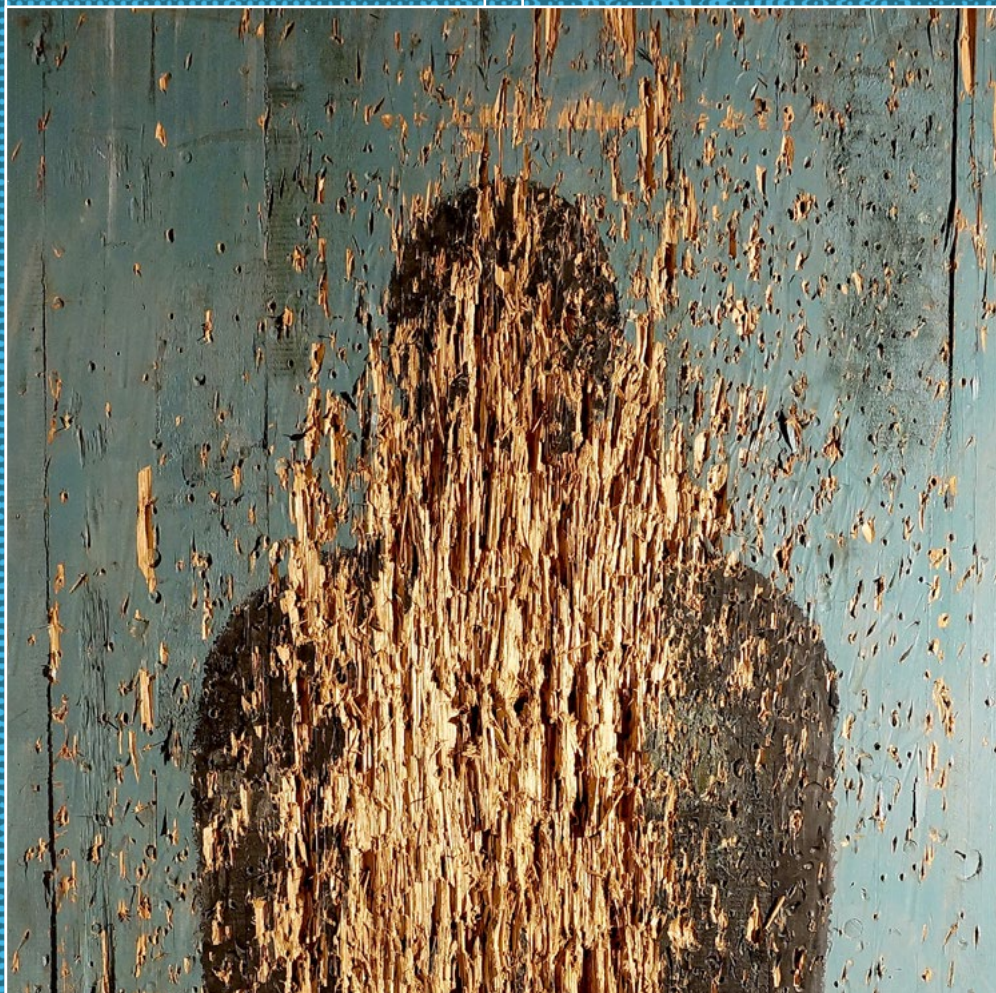
Alexander Terebenin (Russia)

St. Sebastian 24 Hours a Day

installation, 2019

wooden board, LED panel

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab



One of the priority fields in the art of Alexander Terebenin is his work with ready media. A board for knife-throwing in the shape of a person was found in the abandoned and crumbling building of a military academy. The artist identifies the object with the martyr image of Saint Sebastian who lived in Rome, served as a captain of the guards and secretly professed Christianity, for which he was executed. "Emperor Diocletian ordered Sebastian to be tied to a tree in the center of a field, and for soldiers to shoot him until arrows covered his body, and it began to resemble a porcupine..." wrote the Dominican monk Jacobus da Varagine in the 13th century.

In time, the image of Saint Sebastian became notably younger and more attractive: while on the 6th century mosaic Sebastian appears as an aged bearded man, in Renaissance paintings he is a beardless youth. The artists focused on the beauty of Sebastian's body and not on the number of his wounds. In the 15th century, Antonello da Messina depicts the saint tied to a tree in the middle of a Venetian piazza, while the execution scene by no means disturbs the leisurely calm of the city: a guard sleeps and townspeople take a stroll. A martyrdom against the background of a serene landscape.

The metal pierced the flesh hundreds of times, causing unbearable pain and suffering to the saint tied to a tree. In his poem "Postcard from Lisbon" Joseph Brodsky writes of the "crossbreed of a nude body with a fir tree that produced St. Sebastian". The history of human civilization is a story of wars and violence which does not stop for a single day. A pine board covered with wounds. A primitive LED display that is mainly used for advertising cheap stores cheerfully announces that the show of St. Sebastian's tragedy takes place non-stop, 24 hours a day.

The Invisible Handjob of the New Economy

*43 channel video installation, 2017
each channel is displayed on a smartphone.
The phones are stacked on a rack and the
installation borrows the setting and the
aesthetics of click farms*

What is it if not the human aspect that makes hands so familiar yet so cunning? Even though much has been said about the brain's function being responsible for labor, some would agree it is the hand's own kind of intelligence that orchestrates seemingly rudimentary actions. Engels famously claimed it is labor that created the human, but if the hand is the main element behind this creation, then what is more human than the hand itself? And what is left to the hand in the age of technological symbiosis?

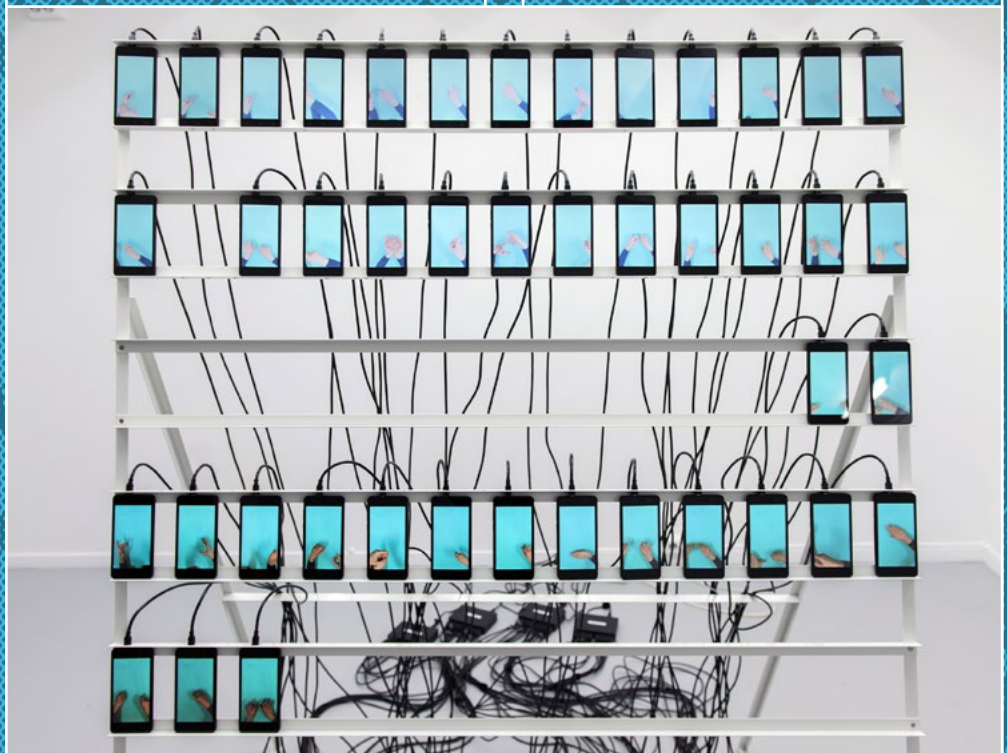
One of the odd occurrences of symbiotic relationships between the hand and tech are click farms. Click farm enterprises hire large groups of people from developing countries to click on advertising links, generate likes and at the same time simulate the usual online activity to pass through spam filters. However, the simulation of the human activity is yet another process which has recently begun to be automated. In order to pass unnoticed by recognition systems preventing such fraud, these automated systems control thousands of devices, mainly smartphones, which replicate normal human behavior online.

Such intermingling of roles is a common occurrence within the regime of cloud computing and machine automated systems. The confusion arises in the medium carrying the information itself: a machine simulates human activity so that another machine sees it as a human. All of this occurs using human mediums: text for search engine optimization, image recognition systems, and even cognitive behavior – clicking and dragging the cursor.

*Photo: Installation
view at Studio 17, Stavanger (Norway)*

**Ayatgali
Tuleubek**
(Norway)

17



Reflection on Life No. 125082

installation, 2013

metallic conveyor belt, 3D print,

arduino, hand-knitting

Robotics and Computer Programming:

Alexey Grachev

Supported by CYLAND Media Art Lab

Yuz Aleshkovsky is said to have made the following schedule for his son's edification:

8:00 wake up

8:05 brush teeth

8:15 reflect on life

8:30 have breakfast

And so on.

In the work Reflection on Life No. 125082 the numbering is provisional; let's say that it starts from the date of birth No. 0, and the image in the Reflection on Life No. 1 should probably be seen upside down, the way a baby is supposed to see it...

Do the "exercises of reflection on life" make us better, wiser or kinder? I don't know. Let's leave that to Aleshkovsky's son.

I still think that Reflection on Life No. 1 is akin to Reflection on Life No. 125082; needless to say, this is true if one doesn't delve into the RULES OF THE GAME that by now have been committed to memory.

— Anna Frants

**Anna
Frants**
(Russia-USA)



The Earthly Paradise

installation, 2008–2010

mixed media: silk screen on Persian carpets and textiles, wire, nails

The Earthly Paradise series is a homage to the Persian carpet and an exploration of its role as a medium of spatial transformation. Carpets both reflect and generate space. They do so through their texture – a complex array of knots, wefts and warps – and through their intricate designs, such as the garden design, whose motifs and patterns draw on the actual layout and details of Persian gardens. To those familiar with these gardens and with the religious and poetic tropes associated with them, carpets have traditionally served as a refuge from the often arid and harsh climate of Iran and as a symbol and earthly embodiment of paradise. This series' artistic intervention draws attention to these cultural, historical and spatial contexts, which often no longer exist or have been destroyed or forgotten, and are therefore sometimes lost on contemporary viewers.

19

**Farniyaz
Zaker**
(Iran–UK)



Portraits: Glimpses into History

Natalia Kolodzei

The selection presented explores the artistic, social and political function of portraits in the development and continuity of Russian and Soviet Nonconformist art by both well-known artists and others who deserve greater recognition. Admired for their revelatory nature, portraits bring insight into both the appearance and the essence of the sitter, revealing deeper truths about the human condition as well as the relationship of artists to society.

The list of artists is as kaleidoscopic as the country of their origin, including Tatiana Glebova, Vladimir Sterligov, Rikhard Vasmi, Valentin Gromov, Vladimir Yashke, Victoria Belakovskaya, Tatiana Kuperwasser, Rodion Gudzenko, Igor Ivanov, Victor Proshkin, Leon Nissenbaum, Alexander Samokhvalov, Solomon Rossin, Petr Belenok, Vagrigh Bakhchanyan, Erik Bulatov, Asya Dodina and Slava Polishchuk, Eduard Gorokhovskiy, Vyacheslav Koleichuk, Vladimir Kupriyanov, Leonhard Lapin, Samuil Rubashkin, Oleg Vassiliev, Sergei Volokhov, and Alexander Yulikov.

The exhibition uses portraiture to gain insights into the lives of artists, as well as into personal and cultural memory, public and private spaces, plus the themes of life, death, displacement, loss and hope during the times of turmoil. As people continue to examine the fluidity of contemporary identity, this is an opportune time to reassess the significance of portraiture in relation to the country's history, and its intellectual and cultural life.

To establish the historical and cultural context for the *ID: Art:Tech* exhibition, we should outline some aspects of the history of the Soviet Union and Soviet Nonconformist

art that emerged during the post-Stalin "Thaw" of the 1950's, championing an alternative to Socialist Realism. In the arts, it was a spiritual awakening with some traces of utopian hope for freedom. Denunciation of Stalin, the return of political prisoners, and the easing of aesthetic restraints provided an environment for the encouragement of artistic creativity. Nonconformist artists did not share any particular platform or aesthetic purpose, but were united by friendship and the struggle for their rights as individuals. Many of the Nonconformist artists were inspired and engaged in their own search for new forms of expression, choosing to "embrace" Western modernism, and to escape the ideological confines of the Soviet system, not by confronting that system directly, but by exploring spiritual dimensions within the self, as if they lived in a void. Formalism was their escape from the ideological reality of everyday life, but at the same time it was their means of protest against the pressure of the Soviet ideological system.

At the same time, in the late 1950's and 1960's some of the artists became interested in the heritage and continuity of early 20th-century Russian avant-garde practices in their art. In this period, the art of Rodchenko, Malevich, Popova and many others was locked away in museums' storage rooms. The only source of information was from private collections, including those of George Costakis, Yakov Rubinstein in Moscow; Abram Chudnovsky in Leningrad, as well as some heirs and students of Russian avant-garde artists. Works by these artists were not displayed in any official museum. They were kept in storage facilities closed to the public. These facilities were treated as if they were secret military sites. One could not even say the word "abstraction" out loud; it was a derogatory term when used in print.

In Leningrad several artistic groups formed around artists and teachers, such as Vladimir Sterligov (1904–1973), Pavel Kondratiev (1902–1985), Osip Sidlin (1909–1972), Nikolai Akimov (1901–1968), and others who self-consciously continued early 20th-century Russian avant-garde artistic practices.

In Leningrad, the efforts were led by the charismatic painter and teacher, Vladimir Sterligov, his wife, Tatiana Glebova (1900–1985) and their students, who sought to convey their perception of the world as a non-representational reality, “a visible invisibility, and a visibility unseen.” These artists based their approach on Kazimir Malevich’s Suprematism and Mikhail Matiushin’s Organic Culture. Earlier on, from 1924–1926, Tatiana Glebova was a student of Alexei Savinov, before becoming Pavel Filonov’s student in 1926 and joining the Masters of Analytical Art, where she contributed to all their projects until 1932. Pavel Filonov (1883–1941) believed analytical art to be the only true revolutionary system. He shaped his followers’ style of painting from a combination of several sources, including strict academic training, interest in Symbolism, Neo-Primitivism, and the Northern European Renaissance. Filonov inspired in his followers the need to master their trade and appreciation for Russian painters of the 19th century, as well as the technical precision of Cranach and Dürer and the allegorical world of Bosch. In the summer of 1942, Glebova was evacuated to Alma-Ata where she painted *Portrait of Kazakh Women* exploring the combination of realistic and abstracted forms. A contemplative gaze highlights the inner life of the two women, and may allude to the artist’s own state of mind with the loss of her teacher Filonov and her mother, as well as the overall

hardship caused by the war. Glebova worked extensively in evacuation and participated in several exhibitions. There, she married Vladimir Sterligov and returned to Leningrad at the end of 1945.

Another early group to emerge in Leningrad was ONZh (Association of Impoverished Artists) or Aleksandr Arefiev’s (1931–1978) circle, including Rikhard Vasmi (1929–1998), Valentin Gromov (b. 1930), Sholom Shvarts, Vladimir Shagin and others. This circle of talented artists was inspired by the works of the Circle of the Artists Group (1926–1934) and synthesized many of the leading European Art trends from Cezannism to Cubism. In their works, the artists often depict the depressing nature of everyday existence: intense, passionate street and café scenes, wide-open and dynamic landscape, and portraits. Stylistically, Rikhard Vasmi’s portraits are characterized by stylized and simplified forms, areas of intense flat, decorative colors separated by heavy outlines; beyond biography, they allude to broader psychic landscapes. Expressionistically painted, Valentin Gromov’s *Portrait of Rikhard Vasmi* very precisely reflects the reclusive silent type of the artist. The dynamics are created by the character of lines and the prevalence of diagonals which was common to Gromov’s works. Gromov was one of the few of the artists in the group with higher education – he graduated from the correspondence department of a polygraphic institute, majoring in graphic arts.

The Circle of the Artists Group (the Krug Art Group) was founded in 1926 by 18 graduate students of VKhUTEIN, and at first combined mostly classmates. Until 1932 the overall membership included 50 artists. In their declaration, young artists define the goal of their creative efforts: “creating the style of

the epoch.” They believe that “Collectivism” and “unity of views” will guarantee future success. The main three exhibitions of the group took place at the Russian Museum in 1927, 1928, 1929. The group included Vyacheslav Pakulin, Tatiana Kuperwasser, Alexander Rusakov, Alexei Pakhomov, Alisa Poret, Alexander Samokhvalov, and others. Victoria Belakovskaya (1901–1965) and her husband Victor Proshkin (1906–1983) represent another dynasty who started their carriers with cultural heritage and the artistic tradition of pre-Revolutionary Russia, and later on Proshkin became a founding member of the Leningrad branch of the Union of Artists (1932). Belakovskaya and Proshkin studied under Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin. Belakovskaya graduated from Vkhutein in 1927. Petrov-Vodkin (1878–1939) saw art as one of the life cognition forms. His works were attempts to synthesize Eastern and Western painting traditions. The artist developed a new theory of “spherical perspective,” concerning a new technique to depict space. He used the incline of the vertical axes of the composition to turn planes towards the viewer of his picture. Petrov-Vodkin sought to achieve panoramic effects and experimented with colors, uniting all forms and grounds with the three primary colors – red, yellow and blue. In portraiture he emphasized color gradation and contrast to highlight the sitter’s features; this can be traced in early works by Victoria Belakovskaya.

Vladimir Yashke (1948–2018) was one of the senior members of *Mitki* group. The *Mitki* started in 1983 and included Alexander and Olga Florensky, Dmitry Shagin, Vladimir Shinkaryov, Viktor and Vladimir Tikhomirov, Vasily Golubev and Vladimir Yashke who gathered to discuss artistic ideas. The group took its name from the novel *Mitki*, which

Shinkaryov published in samizdat in 1985. The Mitki created, along with their artistic works, a definite, memorable lifestyle and easily recognizable social image: striped sailors' shirts, untranslatable slang and a slew of inside jokes. Stylistically Yashke's very recognizable original pictures are inhabited by smiling characters, the most important of which is the fictional Zinaida Morkovkina.

Another self-taught artist was prominent camera operator Samuil Rubashkin (born 1906 in Vitebsk, Belarus; died 1975 in Moscow). Rubashkin explored Jewish identity in his art. In 1975, his paintings *Jewish Holidays* (currently in the permanent collection of The Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Soviet Nonconformist Art, Zimmerli Art Museum, New Jersey, USA), were torn off the walls by the representative of the Moscow government during the installation of the exhibition at the Palace of Culture Pavilion at VDNkh, Moscow, 1975. *Self-Portrait in Time*, 1970 reflects the artist wondering about the past, present and future.

In 1962 an exhibition marking the 30th anniversary of the Moscow Section of the Artists Union took place in the Manezh Exhibition Hall. Khrushchev visited the exhibition and condemned dissident art. The Manezh exhibition and the renewal of censorship in 1962 were followed by the overthrow of Khrushchev and his replacement by Leonid Brezhnev. In the following decade of the 1970's, Soviet non-conformist artists sought to make the world aware of Soviet censorship and harassment. The breakthrough was the first open-air show, commonly known as the "Bulldozer" show of 1974 (so-called because the authorities ordered bulldozers to destroy the exhibition), followed by the Second Open-Air

Exhibition in Izmalovsky Park, Moscow, Gaz Palace of Culture, Leningrad in 1974, Nevsky Palace of Culture, Leningrad in 1975, Twenty Moscow Artists at the Bee-Keeping Pavilion of the Exhibition of Economic Achievements, Moscow in 1975, Palace of Culture Pavilion at VDNkh, Moscow, 1975, and many apartment exhibitions in Moscow and Leningrad, which served to reignite hope.

The 1970's in Moscow brought the rebirth of the avant-garde spirit, as well as the beginning of new tendencies in art, conceptual art, Sots Art, performance art, and visual poetry emerged, including artists such as Ilya Kabakov, Victor Pivovarov, Erik Bulatov, Komar & Melamid, Leonid Sokov, Vagrich Bakhchanyan, and the Collective Action group.

Many artists oriented their art not to the future but to the varied spaces of the past or to the existing Soviet environment. Moscow Conceptualists were interested in the reworking of the Soviet language and in examining the social and political context of the Soviet regime in their art. This sense of the perpetuity of the Soviet system brought a particular Soviet and political discourse to some artists' works. Another important point for understanding the relationship of Soviet reality to the arts can be found in the discussion by Erik Bulatov (b. 1933) of the two crises experienced by unofficial art. The first crisis occurred when the artists confronted the lies of Social Realism and rejected them. The majority of artists in the unofficial circle were interested in defining their identity within the "true" art of Western modernism; formalism was their escape from the ideological reality of everyday life. The second crisis was the understanding that neither Social Realism nor Western modernism had anything to do with

reality. Ilya Kabakov, Erik Bulatov, Eduard Gorokhovskiy and others were concerned with the destructive Soviet reality on the individual and with examining the social and political in their art.

In the late 1950's, Bulatov and Oleg Vassiliev discovered and were inspired by works of the generation of avant-garde artists such as Vladimir A. Favorsky (1886–1964), Robert R. Falk (1886–1958), and Arthur V. Fonvizin (1882–1973) (known as the "three F's – Formalists"). In their early works, Bulatov and Vassiliev studied the principles of interaction between a painting's surfaces and space as a philosophical concept. In the early 1970's, Bulatov started developing a personal style, analyzing the interplay of contrasting symbolic systems, such as language and images or abstraction and illusion – a theme he is still concerned with today. The meaning of his work and the symbolic codes he uses are products of his cultural background. For Bulatov, space was always many-layered: either texts from slogans or recognizable symbols were juxtaposed with images. His main goal remains studying the border between the artistic space and the social space. In *Entrance*, 1973, Bulatov incorporates and integrates figure, design and text to map the relationship between word and image. The word *Entrance* and the bullet-like hole in the man's face set against a red-gridded background invite the viewer to become a participant in the artwork.

Oleg Vassiliev (1931–2013) contributes a personal view to the topic. An important and fascinating feature in Vassiliev's art is the profound intimacy in his work, where personal memories have universal appeal. The division between the personal and political, between the private and public had been ideologized in Soviet Russia.

Vassiliev escapes ideology to capture very personal memories of art and life. *Self-portrait with Taratorkin* is an example of the collision between art and popular culture. *The Anniversary Composition* alludes to the disappearance of individuality in a totalitarian society. Moving between figurative, abstract, and linguistic modes, Vassiliev occupies an imaginative space that is both within and without the conventions of portraiture. By extracting and elevating a personal, almost intimate selection of visual images from the past transformed into the future, some of them intensified, some dramatized, Vassiliev captures something more universal, something common to all human memory.

Eduard Gorokhovskiy (1929–2004) was one of the first Soviet Nonconformist artists to use photographs including found family albums and various archives, as the main source for his prints and paintings, creating intentionally unresolved serial images symbolizing the diametrically opposing forces that shaped the Soviet Union. Gorokhovskiy's works usually consist of two elements: photographic imagery, acting as a basis for his photo-silkscreens, and a second element that intrudes upon the photographic space: a geometric figure, a silhouette, a text, or another photograph. Many of Gorokhovskiy's works convey a sense of history or the process of change, often alluding to the disappearance of individuality in a totalitarian society.

The Estonian artist Leonhard Lapin (born in 1947 in Rāpina, Estonia, lives and works in Tallinn) has been at the forefront of the Estonian avant-garde ever since he was a student at the Estonian Academy of Fine Arts. Trained as an architect, Lapin's work carries an architectonic quality that shows

the influence of the Russian Constructivists. Lapin was associated with several Estonian artists' groups, including SOUP '69, which he formed with Ando Keskküla and Andres Tolts in 1969. This group advocated Pop Art, as could be gathered from the name with its reference to Andy Warhol's paintings of Campbell's Soup cans. They adopted a Pop mode of painting, including bright colors, yet altered the style to fit their local conditions, drawing their subject matter from everyday life in Estonia. *Head of a Man*, 1972–1973 from the series "Head" later developed into two machinery series, "Woman-machine" and "Man-machine". In many ways, they metaphorically question the relationship between technology and humanity, one of which is often filled with conflict. Lapin composed these works with abstract forms, unified by broad, heavy lines and other geometric shapes. Though the initial preoccupation with the machine ideology comes from both Futurist and Russian Constructivist sources, Lapin's attitude is different. It is impartial and there is no longer a glorification of the machine. For Lapin, man has become dependent on the machine that he originally created, and has become a part of the machine himself.

Alexander Yulikov (born 1943) was inspired by the traditions of the early Russian avant-garde and the legacy of Malevich's Suprematism. Yulikov perceives the world as a rational mathematical structure potentially undermined by irrational elements. The tension between the two forms is the basis for his art: pure geometric shapes represent the harmony of the world, and irregularities (such as the distortion of symmetry) produce irrational elements. *Road to Ferapontovo* alludes to the spiritual search through abstract forms. Ferapontovo Monastery near Vologda and the famous Dionisius frescoes

are part of Russia's cultural heritage and important examples of Russian medieval art; as such, they were considered to be a Mecca for many generations of Russian artists.

Individuality was important to Petr Belenok (1938–1991) born in Korogod, Ukraine in 1938 (a village so close to Chernobyl that it was abandoned after the 1986 disaster). His main theme, alienation of the individual confronted by immeasurable forces, was something that he experienced in his own life. Belenok studied sculpture at the Kiev Art Institute, graduating in 1963. He moved to Moscow in 1967, joined the official USSR Union of Artists (as a sculptor), but at the same time became friends with many unofficial artists. Belenok's first solo exhibition was in 1969 at the Bluebird Café (Moscow), where a number of Russian nonconformist artists, including Komar & Melamid, Ilya Kabakov, Eric Bulatov, Oleg Vassiliev, Vagrigh Bakhchanyan and Sergei Volokhov also had their first semi-official shows and discussions. Using collage and Indian ink with the virtuosity of calligraphic brushstrokes, Belenok transcribes Soviet reality by evoking a sense of conflict and complicated human interactions. He limited his palette primarily to black and white, as if balancing two opposing forces of nature.

Sergei Volokhov (born 1937 in Moscow; lives and works in Brussels). He graduated from the Graphic Arts department of the Pedagogical Institute in Moscow. In 1969, Volokhov had his first solo exhibition at Café Blue Bird in Moscow with Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid. These imaginary drawings on a specially prepared paper, *Leader in My Room*, from the series "Theory of Reflections" is a contemplation by the artist on Russian history and his personal memories.

Vladimir Kupriyanov (1954–2011) has chosen

photography as his medium, which has the status of a historical document regardless of its aesthetic virtues, as he reconstitutes vivid experience from the past. Often Kupriyanov used images from private family albums and archives, deprived of any distracting authorial origins. Thematically and typologically this material is extremely multi-faceted and concerned with everyday experience – picnics and walks in the country or socializing between friends or family. In his works Kupriyanov juxtaposed photo-images and abstract forms and order. The viewer is required to vibrate between these two different surfaces, switching from one to the other. The photograph relies on a thematic interpretation of its content, whereas the ornamentation is open to a pure visual game of the imagination.

Vyacheslav Koleichuk (1941–2018), a kinetic artist, has 6 patented inventions, and has written several books, including: *Mobile architecture* (1973); *New Architectural Structures* (1978); *Kinetism* (1994) and over 40 scientific articles in magazines, catalogues, and books. His kinetic structures draw heavily from the historic works of the Constructivists as well as his own background in architecture and science, including his reconstructions of the works by the Russian Constructivists Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, Karl Ioganson, Naum Gabo. He also produced a detailed reconstruction of the exhibition of OBMOHU (Association of young artists) (1921) at the State Tretyakov Gallery in 2006. In his art Koleichuk concentrated on experimental and theoretic development of form-formation issues, “material overcoming”, kinetic and programmed art, on the creation of paradox kinetic, constructive and visual models and images; and the search for new means of artistic expression (collage,

hand-made holography, light stereographics, photo painting). *Grandmother and Grandson* (1973) was created in the medium of self-collage from a single image source by kinetic transformations inside the original image. In the self-collage, Koleichuk created new visual structures from a single image by extracting (cutting out) elements with a certain symmetry, and then combining them with each other (permutations, turns, combinations, etc) and by using the game of light and shadow from different angles where the image of the boy or grandmother emerges to create optical illusions of movement.

The question of identification is important to many artists, especially those who emigrated to the West. Vagrish Bakhchanyan (1938–2009), a conceptual artist and writer, was born to an Armenian family in Kharkov (Ukraine), moved to Moscow in the mid-1960's, and lived in New York from 1974. As is the case with many artists who left their homeland for the West, Bakhchanyan had to confront questions of identity and authenticity. Through collages, artists' books, and other mixed media objects, he experimented and developed creative artistic strategies balancing banality and absurdity, platitude and blasphemy. Vagrish Bakhchanyan examined the cultural and language barriers he encountered in New York in his *New American* series by juxtaposing created stationary of America's only Jewish Russian-language weekly and schematically drawn faces on prominent artworks from Western art history.

Other Russian-born American artists are the husband and wife team Asya Dodina and Slava Polishchuk. Dodina was born in Moscow and Polishchuk was born in Klinty (Russia), both received an M.F.A.

from Brooklyn College, CUNY. Dodina and Polishchuk have worked in collaboration since 2003 and bring a dual vision into their work on several levels: gender, family and cultural identities. Personal and cultural memory, displacement, loss and hope acquire a spatial embodiment in their works alluding to the ephemeral nature of contemporary society and to the passage of time. In *In Your Eyes*, multiple black-and-white hand-drawn eyes are juxtaposed with the remnants of technological progress to appeal to the viewer on both analytical and emotional levels. As archeologists, the artists carefully choose their objects; borrowed elements of technology and mass production, such as computers, TVs and cell phone parts found by the artists on the street of New York, and hand-drawn eyes. In the 21st century, personal identification by eyes plays an important role in biometrical science. The artists construct their artworks on the intensity of coexistence of opposite extremes, playing on the ambivalence of meaning, encouraging discussion of their work.

Although there is no single unifying factor linking all the artists represented in this exhibition, this selection is just a sample of the enormous repertoire of 20th century Russian art. The broad variety of themes, interpretations, and techniques visible in these works provide a wealth of cues for understanding turbulent times, and carry the marks of an era. One senses in them an anxiety and an expectation which gives them a great expressive quality. The works are an outlet for affirmation and celebration of the creative spirit for the artists. The selection alludes to the psychological portrait of an era of turmoil and reflection of the time, and contributes to our understanding of the epoch.

About the collections: Frants Family Collection

Leonid and Anna Frants collection was founded in the late 1990's and initially focused on Leningrad nonconformist art of the post-war period represented by such artists as Valentina Povarova, Vladimir Volkov, Pavel Kondratiev; artists of Arefiev's Circle (Rikhard Vasmi, Vladimir Shagin, Aleksandr, et al.); Sterligov's Circle (Vladimir Sterligov, Aleksandr Baturin, Sergei Spitsyn, et al.), among many others. Over time, the Frants' collection grew to include numerous works of the first half of the 20th century (Aleksandr Rusakov, Tatiana Kuperwasser, Aleksandr Samokhvalov, Victoria Belakovskaya, Vladimir Grinberg, Aleksandr Vedernikov, Nikolai Evgrafov, Tatiana Glebova, Vasily Kaluzhnin, et.al.), as well as works by contemporary Russian artists. In addition to paintings and graphics, the collection also features installations (Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai, Petr Belyi, Arefiev, Vitaly

Pushnitsky, Petr Shvetsov), new media art (Alexandra Dementieva, Elena Gubanova and Ivan Govorkov, Ludmila Belova, Mikhail Krest), sculpture and mosaic (Vladimir Volkov, Galina Pisareva, Viktor Molev, Lev Smorgon, Grigory Molchanov), ceramics and glassworks (Anatoly Kaplan, Boris Smirnov).

The growing collection currently contains around 2,000 pieces and covers an extended period of time, from the 1920's to the present. It includes a wide range of artistic styles and techniques (from painting, drawings, and sculpture to new media art created at the crossroads of art and technology). This makes it an invaluable resource for studying Leningrad/St. Petersburg art of the last 100 years.

The Kolodzei Art Foundation

The Kolodzei Collection, which was founded by Tatiana Kolodzei in Moscow during the height of the Cold War in the 1960's and continues today with her daughter, Natalia,

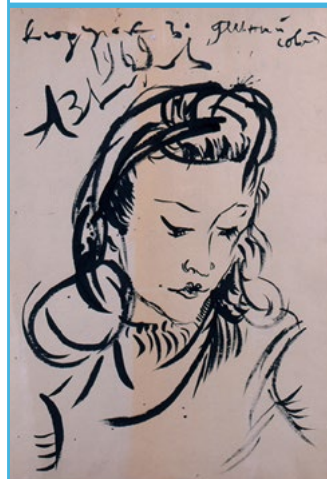
is one of the country's largest private art collections, with over 7,000 pieces, including paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, photography, video, new media and interactive installations by over 300 artists from Russia and the former Soviet Union of the 20th and 21st Centuries, and chronicles four decades of Nonconformist art from the post-Stalinist era to the present. The Kolodzei Art Foundation, Inc., a US-based not-for-profit public foundation started in 1991, organizes exhibitions and cultural exchanges in museums and cultural centers in the United States, Russia and other countries, often utilizing the considerable resources of the Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art, and publishes books on Russian art.

For additional information visit www.KolodzeiArt.org

Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art, Kolodzei Art Foundation, USA, www.KolodzeiArt.org

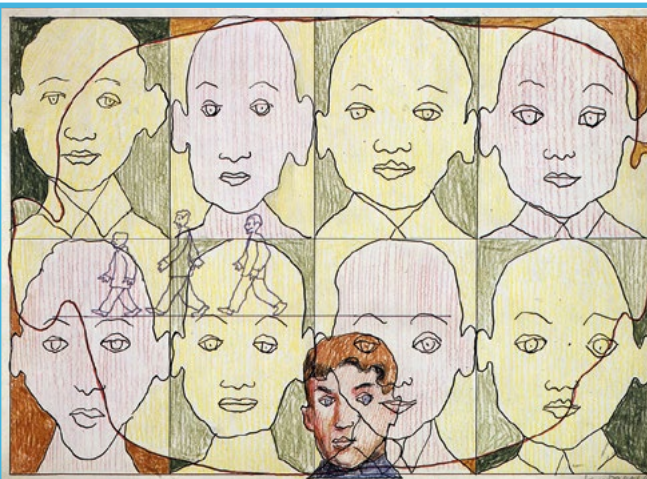
Anatoly Zverev

Portrait of Tatiana Kolodzei
Indian ink on cardboard, 69.3 x 49.5 cm
1969



Ilya Kabakov

Composition
Colored pencil on paper, 20,5 x 28,8 cm
1968



Valera Cherkashin

Portrait of Natalia Kolodzei
Mixed media, 33,0 x 33,0 cm
1990



Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art, Kolodzei Art Foundation, USA



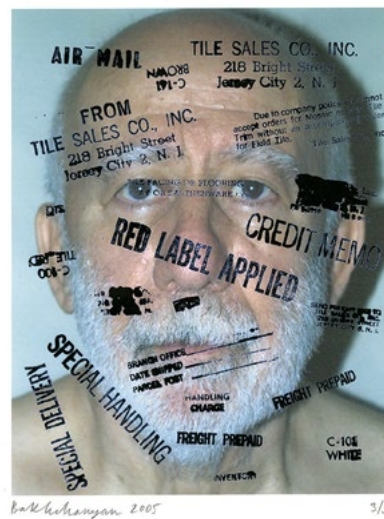
Petr Belenok
Portrait of Tania and Natasha Kolodzei
Indian ink, tempera, collage on paper,
59,4 x 60 cm, 1987



Vagrigh Bakhchanyan
Stalin Face
Stamped card board, 27,9 x 22,86 cm, 1981; 2005



Vagrigh Bakhchanyan
New American
Mixed media on paper, series of 12,
27,9 x 21,6 cm each, 1988–1989



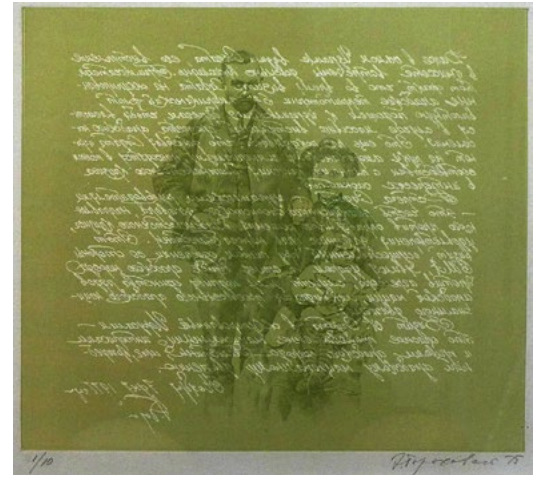
Vagrigh Bakhchanyan
Self-Portrait
Digital print plus stamp, 27,9 x 21,6 cm, 2005



Asya Dodina and Slava Polishchuk
In Your Eyes
Mixed media on canvas, computer parts,
 76,2 x 55,88 cm, 2011



Eduard Gorokhovskiy
Worker
Watercolor on paper, 50,9 x 36,6 cm, 1968



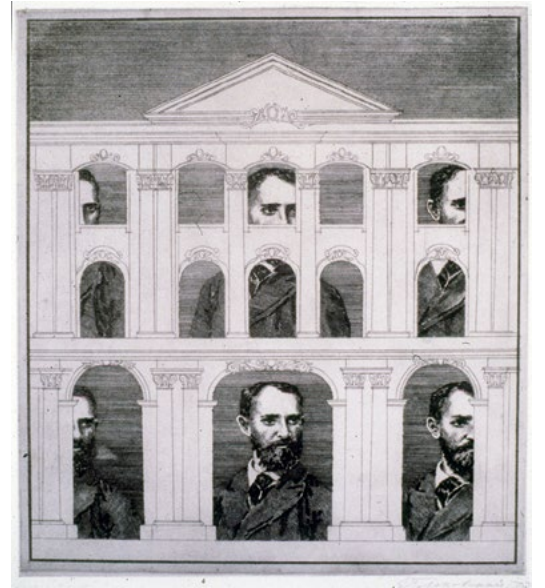
Eduard Gorokhovskiy
Family Portrait with Letter on Reverse Side
Etching, 31,5 x 36 cm, 1975



Erik Bulatov
Entrance
Colored pencil on paper, 22 x 21,8 cm, 1973



Vyacheslav Koleichuk
Grandmother and Grandson
Self-Collage, paper, on board, 29,5 x 20,6 cm, 1973



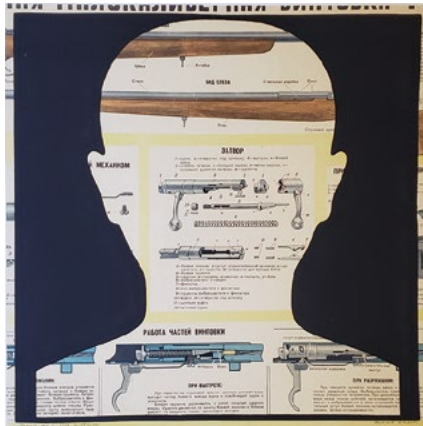
Eduard Gorokhovskiy
Portrait
Etching, bronze on paper, 36 x 32,4 cm, 1977



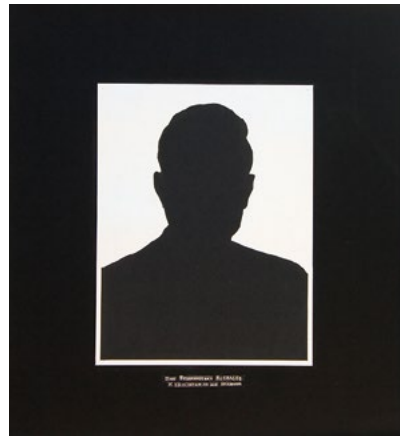
Vladimir Kupriyanov
 From the series Julia 1950s.
 Black and white Fujifilm
 photo paper, edition 2/5,
 50,8 x 55,88 cm, 2009



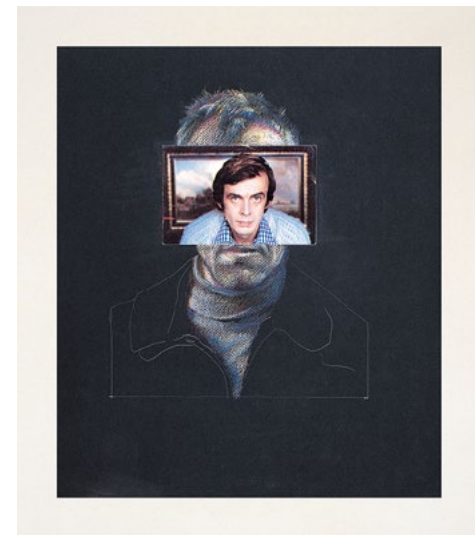
Vladimir Kupriyanov
 From the series Julia 1950s.
 Black and white Fujifilm
 photo paper, edition 2/5,
 50,8 x 55,88 cm, 2009



Leonhard Lapin
 Head of a Man from the series Head
 Mixed media screenprint on paper,
 52 x 51,8 cm, 1972–1973



Oleg Vassiliev
 Objective View
 Photograph, collage on black paper, 53,7 x 52 cm, 1983



Oleg Vassiliev
 Self-Portrait with Taratorkin
 Wax pastel, collage on paper, 53,7 x 52,4 cm, 1981



Samuil Rubashkin
 Self-Portrait in Time
 Oil on canvas, 57 x 69 cm, 1970



Oleg Vassiliev
Anniversary Composition
Photograph, collage, black and white paper,
54 x 52,3 cm, 1983

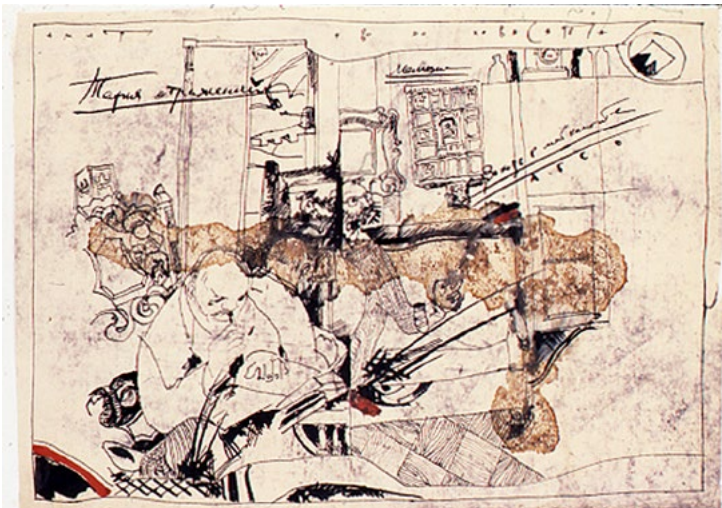


Oleg Vassiliev
Perspective
Black and white paper, collage on cardboard,
54 x 52,1 cm, 1983

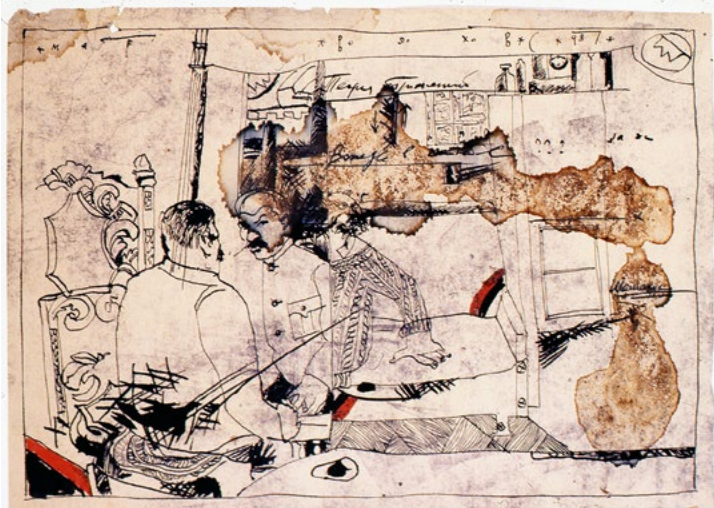


Alexander Yulikov
Road to Ferapontovo
Oil on canvas, 65 x 50 cm, 2010

Sergei Volokhov
The Leader in my Room I, from the series
The Theory of Reflection
Indian ink, mixed media on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 1987



Sergei Volokhov
The Leader in my Room II, from the series The Theory of Reflection
Indian ink, mixed media on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 1987



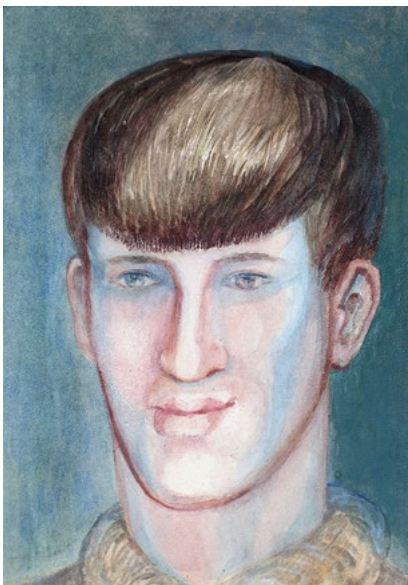
Frants Family Collection



Tatiana Glebova
Portrait of a Kazakh Woman
Plywood, fabric, tempera, 54,6 x 33,5 cm, late 1930s

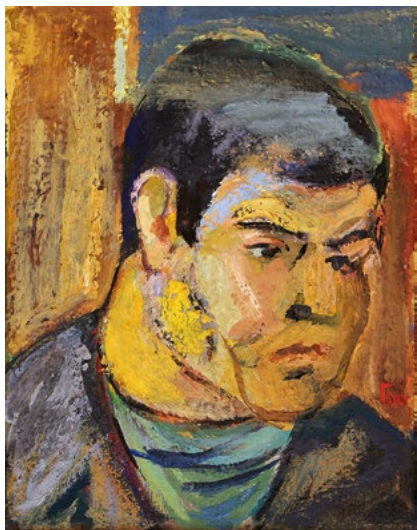


Tatiana Glebova
Portrait of a Young Man
Paper, watercolor, 44 x 30.7 cm, 1960s



Tatiana Glebova
Almaty. Two Kazakh Women
Paper, crayon, watercolor, 29 x 39 cm, 1942-1945

Tatiana Glebova
Portrait of a Man
Paper, watercolor, 44 x 31 cm, 1960s



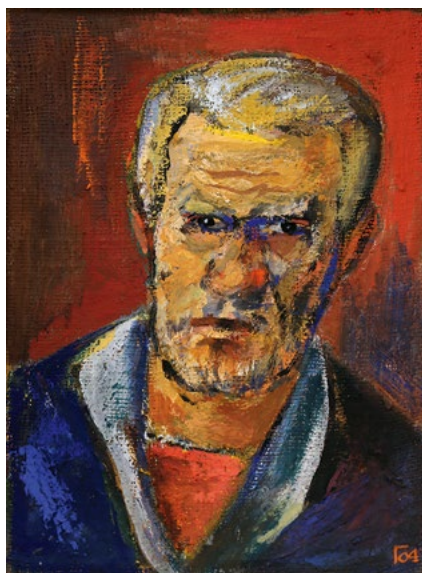
Valentin Gromov
Portrait of Rikhard Vasmi
Oil, canvas, 44 x 34 cm, 2000



Valentin Gromov
Portrait of Leonid Frants
Oil, canvas, 28 x 41 cm, 2009



Valentin Gromov
Portrait of Daniil Frants
Oil, canvas, 39 x 27 cm, 2009



Valentin Gromov
Self-Portrait
Oil, canvas, 52 x 37 cm, 2004



Valentin Gromov
Self-Portrait
Oil on fiberboard, tempera, 38 x 27 cm, 2018



Rodion Gudzenko
Portrait of Mikhail Krasilnikov
Oil, canvas, 54 x 44 cm, 1957



Tatiana Kuperwasser
Portrait of the Mother
Oil, canvas, 100 x 73 cm, early 1930s



Tatiana Kuperwasser
Portrait of Young Woman with a Hat
Oil, canvas, 72 x 60 cm, early 1930s



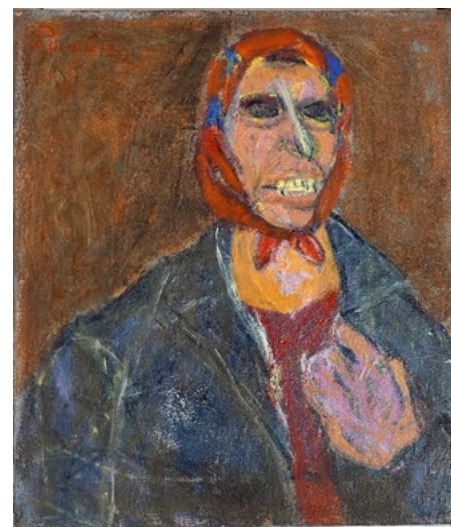
Igor Ivanov
Armenia. Ejmiatsin
Cardboard, oil, 71x 54 cm, 1964



Leon Nissenbaum
Smoker
Cardboard, oil, 60 x 45 cm, 1988



Victor Proshkin
By the Banner
Oil, canvas, 58,5 x 52 cm, 1931



Solomon Rossin
Street-cleaning Woman from Veliky Ustyug
Oil, canvas, 45 x 39 cm, 1976



Alexander Samokhvalov
Nude
Oil, canvas, 43 x 30 cm, 1960



Mikhail Shapanikov
Parents Visiting Day
Oil, canvas, 103 x 93 cm, 2006



Rikhard Vasmı
Portrait of Tamara Klochikhina
Oil, wood panel, 41 x 31,5 cm, 1995–1996



Rikhard Vasmı
Portrait of a Young Man with a Pink Band
Oil, canvas, fiberboard, 41 x 31.5 cm, 1994



Vladimir Yashke
Zinaida with a Bouquet
Oil, canvas, 61 x 46 cm, 1996–2000

What's the point of being human?

Valentino Catricalà

"I have spent these last two days in concentrated introspection,' said Cutie, 'and the results have been most interesting. I began at the one sure assumption I felt permitted to make. I, myself, exist because I think.'"¹

It was in 1941 that Isaac Asimov drew on Descartes to write these words spoken by the robot² in his story *Reason*. The period saw developments in spheres of crucial importance to the present day, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, genetics and surgery. While apparently distant from one another, these spheres share the feature of calling into question our concept of the human species and reformulating the fundamental principles on which we have based our idea of humanity.

With thinking machines, technological prostheses and genetic modifications, our collective imagination is full of scenarios for the enhancement of our physical and intellectual powers, as reflected in the concept of *Homo deus* put forward by the Israeli philosopher Harari in a recent book.³

Theories on the possible mutation of mankind now appear to be moving in two different directions. On the one hand, technological development is seen as augmenting the capabilities of the body to foster a new idea of humanity, thus giving rise since the 1980s to terms like *cyborg*, *postorganic* and *transhumanism*. On the other, recent years have seen a trend to focus on decreasing rather than increasing power, on the development of new sensitive parts of our prerational being, as expressed through concepts like *animality* and *the posthuman*.⁴ Both foresee a change in human nature, but from two different viewpoints.

Potentiation

The trend born in the 1980s takes a flaw or failing as its point of departure. With the development of increasingly complex technologies, the biological body becomes flawed, inadequate, no longer capable of coping with the great challenges of the 21st century. This imperfection can be eliminated through technological augmentation of the organism, no longer simply *organic* but increasingly *post-organic*. The body is thus seen as an organism capable of keeping up with technological progress only through hybridization with technology to become post-organic. As the artist Stelarc puts it, "It is time to

question whether a bipedal, breathing body with binocular vision and a 1400cc brain is an adequate biological form. It cannot cope with the quantity, complexity and quality of information it has accumulated; it is intimidated by the precision, speed and power of technology and it is biologically ill-equipped to cope with its new extraterrestrial environment."⁵

These are assertions that served to foster a different view of our existential condition in an age of great technological development, theories that helped to understand or reinterpret numerous pioneering artistic practices, some of which are included in this exhibition.

Though extremely interesting, these theories contain, however, a covert determinist attitude whereby the flawed body is seen above all as an element of calculation. The need for potentiation is related above all to the individual and aimed at the creation of a *super-self*, the perpetuation of an anthropocentric vision of the cosmos.

This is also the determinist perspective developed by transhumanism in the 1980s and '90s, which still predominates today in many academic and non-academic fields, one based completely or almost completely on an idea of progress as technological improvement. The human being is thus seen as a set of data to which information can be added or subtracted.⁶

A starting point for reappraisal of this vision is offered by the artists featured in the Italian section of the exhibition, selected above all with a view to taking a new and more contemporary look at these phenomena.

This is what we find in the work of Donato Piccolo. Technology is seen as a tool of investigation and knowledge to assist human beings in their lives rather than a means serving solely to improve the body and its performance. This reversal of perspective is evident in the sculpture *Sebastiano*, which shows small robot arms drawing on the back of a man in a white coat. The man lets the robots play on his back like children and draw artificial forms generated by algorithms. The man is a dummy with a serene expression that reappears in the other work by Piccolo on show, namely *Leonardo Dreaming of Clouds* (*Leonardo che sogna le nuvole*): an upturned face anchored and maneuvered by a structure of piping that emits small artificial clouds. Technology is the driving force for the creation of a new poetics, the imaginative possibility of new worlds.

For over 50 years, artists have approached these issues, with a strong surge in recent years. Themes such as artificial intelligence, posthuman and robotics, are very common in contemporary art today. It is evident in the success of artists such as Hito Steyerl, Ed Arkins, Cecil B. Evans; Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, etc.

The work of Ian Cheng, today displayed in the most important galleries and institutions in the world, is now famous. Ian Cheng is the creator of the concept of “worldliness”: “the unnatural art of creating an infinite game, a story that tells its past, simulates its future and fuels its changes”. With the videogame technique, Ian Cheng creates installations that feed themselves, continuously talking about ecology and new humanity.

Ian Cheng’s work leads us to a second trend. The second trend addressed here focuses not so much on reversing the transhumanist premises as on depotentiation of the same in accordance with a new vision of humanity in which technology is seen as a tool for knowledge of the innermost parts of the body, as the driving force for attainment of a new humanity outside of the anthropocentric potentiation discussed above.

Often identified with the concept of *animality*, it seeks to go beyond the self, the anthropocentric subject. Becoming animal in this sense means opening up “vital and wholly unthought-of possibilities, combinations that go beyond the corporeal boundaries, forming flows in which it makes no sense to draw any distinction between actor and the acted-upon, subject and object, human and non-human. It is therefore a combination of two processes, of *deterritorialization*, whereby frontiers opened up and territories intermingled, and *territorialization*, in which new territories, new aggregations and new flows are born.”⁷

By becoming animal, going beyond the body is no longer the potentiation of an individual body but rather an understanding of corporality as a continuous presubjective flow in which the body becomes multiple and is determined through the constant relations between bodies: the bee that becomes an orchid on settling upon it while the orchid becomes a bee. Bodies based only on their potential: the possibility of being one form and all forms. A new idea of the posthuman based on depotentiation the subject, of making us see our bodies as presubjective, prerational, pre-self, as living and surviving in the whirl of a timeless space.

In this way we lose our anthropocentric point of view in order to become an element of the elements, called Gaia.

“What happens when the best biologies of the twenty-first century cannot do their job with bounded individuals plus contexts, when organisms plus environments, or genes plus whatever they need, no longer sustain the overflowing richness of biological knowledges, if they ever did? What happens when organisms plus environments can hardly be remembered for the same reason that even Western-indebted people can no longer be figures themselves as individuals and societies of individuals in human only histories?”. As Donna

Haraway wrote in her latest book: “Surely such a transformative time on earth must be named the Anthropocene!”

Again, artists can open up a new vision. Such as in Daniele Puppi’s “Naked”, in which the transformation into a wolf taken from the film “An American Werewolf in London” becomes the torture of a man who loses all his categories and rational, social and cultural intermediations, to become an animal, a naked body.

Or in the work of Jakob Kudsk Steensen, where human power becomes the search for a new world. These works appear to open up a new horizon, the possibility of finding a new existential condition not in the deterministic potentiation of technology applied to the body or the machine, or in the creation and development of the self to the nth power, but rather in depotentiation, in reciprocal exchange: not in potentiation but in a knowledge of ourselves and our innermost layers of feeling.

“I, myself, exist because I think,” says Asimov’s robot in the story quoted previously. We now have to understand where this assertion will take us. Perhaps we should pause for a moment and try to see these changes as an important opportunity to reflect on our future.

This is precisely what the selected artists want: to make us think, and once again to ask us a fundamental question. As in the dialogue between a robot or artificial intelligence and a human philosopher called Barnabooth:

“What’s the point of being human?”

Barnabooth smiled: “To cultivate the mystery of existence, to reduce violence, to experience new forms of joy. What do you think?”

“Sorry, no idea. You’re the philosopher with thirty years of experience. Let’s not switch roles.”⁸

¹ Isaac Asimov, “Reason”(1941), a story included in the collection *I, Robot* (1950).

² Regarded as “nuts” by the human characters in the story.

³ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, Harvill Secker, 2015.

⁴ *Posthumanas* understood by Leonardo Caffo in his book *Fragile Umanità*, Einaudi, Turin, 2017.

⁵ See the artist’s website: <http://stelarc.org/?catID=20317>.

⁶ Transhumanism has been defined as “The intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities,” Nick Bostrom, *The Transhumanist FAQ*, <https://nickbostrom.com/views/transhumanist.pdf>.

⁷ Felice Cimatti, *Filosofia dell’animalità*, Laterza, Bari, 2013, p. 150.

⁸ Pascal Chabot, *ChatBot le robot. Drame philosophique en quatre questions et cinq actes* (PUF, 2016).

Creative Identity in the era of virtual revolution

Nataliya Lyakh

The ancient maxim of the Delphic Oracle “Know thyself” remains one of the main touchstones of philosophy, anthropology and psychology. “How can a human being know himself? He is an obscure and veiled thing. If a hare has seven skins, man can cast from him seventy times seven skins, and still not be able to say: ‘Here you truly are; there is skin no more.’” (Nietzsche). Theoretically, our identity has a conscious and unconscious part. Dreams, intuition and creativity are the windows to our unconscious psyche. Creative breakthroughs are the most personal and enigmatic expressions of ourselves. “It is a highly significant, though generally neglected, fact that those creations of the human mind which have born preeminently the stamp of originality and greatness, have not come from within the region of consciousness. They have come from beyond consciousness, knocking at its door for admittance: they have flowed into it... often with a burst of overwhelming power.” (George Tyrrell)

Numerous neurophysiological studies of the creative process have shown neural activation of many areas of the brain simultaneously, indicating that generally unused parts of our personal potential come into use – raising the possibility that we only become fully ourselves while in the process of creation. We might therefore consider creativity as a neuro-massage, self-stimulation or self-actualization. “It turns out that the neurons of the brain are multifunctional. The same neurons switch from creativity to regulating the work of the heart, liver and other organs. This means that when you create, you essentially train the organs. They are constantly kept in good shape during the process of creation. Therefore, creative people usually live longer.” (S. Medvedev)

How can we find out our creative “Self”? What are the creative breakthroughs that we can use to find ourselves?

*But actually,
before the singing can start
you walk, beblistered with fermentation,
while softly wallows in the silt of your heart
that silly haddock, imagination.*

Mayakovsky

Imagination and associative processes are a basic part of cognition – how to find, to learn, to understand, to be focused, to create in your own field of interest. The Greek philosopher Aristotle first drew attention to the difference between consciously chosen associations and involuntary ones. Rachmaninov believed that several of his compositions were inspired by the taste of the morning dew on a branch of lilac when he touched it with his lips. Many great writers, poets, musicians, artists, and scientists have recorded using deep unconscious association to situate a creative impulse. It is very likely that such associations are the key to our most personal, hidden and creative “Self”. It is perhaps much more personal than our conscious view of reality, which is influenced by our social background, education, and the opinions of others.

How do we choose our personal cognitive reality in this age of unlimited information resources? The multiplicity of social network signals as well as the quantity and quality of virtual dimensions are rapidly increasing. News streams abound in which reality and facts are so easily confused with fake news. Social ratings systems, usually implied, are changing the basis of our former social connections. But our ability to focus on cognitively demanding goals remains a key a part of our creative processes. Modern technologies optimize the search for information. But limitless social networks and news feeds are not deep enough to activate or to fundamentally challenge our brains. They only superficially satisfy our instinct to search for novelty, and interfere with our true personal focus. While we have so many new magic virtual possibilities, we are confronted with far more distractions and interruptions than ever before. Do we still choose our virtual novelties, or does somebody else do it out of more profound insight? Will the restriction of truly personal choices lead to less focus, an erosion of our personality –and ultimately less creativity?

“With this reorientation from knowledge to power, it is no longer enough to automate information flows about us. The goal now is to automate us. Eventually, surveillance capitalists discovered that the most predictive behavioral data comes from intervening in the state of play in order to nudge, coax, tune, and the herd behavior toward a profitable outcome. Competitive pressures produced this shift, in which automated machine process not only know our behavior but also shape our behavior at scale.” (Shoshana Zuboff)

Our new realities are absorbed by the modern Self, transforming the relations between the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the irrational. Cognition of contemporary virtuality may not succeed in engaging all our sensory systems. Can virtual reality then be a source of that deep unconscious association which is the impulse for our creativity?

Are we still in control of the proportionality between the virtual world and reality in our life? What role does creativity play in interpreting our life processes in the era of virtual revolutions?

Is our creative “identity” strong enough to be our personal filter as we swim through modern oceans of virtual information?

Profile of Flickering ID

How ID manifests itself in everyday life and in art forms that reflect this life

Lydia Griaznova

In this profile, we will concentrate on the ID that emerges at the junction of everyday life, art and technologies, and on the characteristics that describe the state of this ID. The phenomenon of ID evades an exact definition. In this text, we do not task ourselves with finding a comprehensive definition of what ID really is. We simply discuss what has changed within us since we discovered that we were sitting on a digital cloud.

ID is public and it lives in the world of people. Life in a modern city implies openness to the outside world – at least on a minimum level.

In order to cohabitate, people have come up with a multitude of conceptual structures: government, money and taxation, alphabets, rituals and superstitious beliefs. This includes the system of signs and signals that help to recognize, classify and organize behavior strategies. Concurrently, all kinds of desires have emerged: to outsmart the system, loudly and unequivocally assert oneself, or mimic the majority.

The clay pots that were once hung on the fence to demonstrate status and prosperity have been replaced by the latest gadgets. And the portraits of generous donors that were painted in religious pictures have been replaced with pages in social media.

ID is a camouflage/disguise/mask. Many people crave attention, but what kind? Definitely not the intent stare of jailers (“I can see you”), and probably not mandatory chipping, with an electronic file on every citizen. Excessive attention from marketing experts also fazes most of us. We shudder when an ad pops up on the Internet that starts with the words: “Do you live near Proletarskaya metro station?” How do they know? What do they intend to do with this information?

It is important for us to be seen and to be thought of. But, at the same time, we don’t want to reveal all our secrets. We wish to know at what moment and under what circumstances we will be looked at. And we want to be able to show our good side to emphasize (or to fake) our virtues and conceal our shortcomings.

ID always can be seen. But do we have the right and ability to be invisible? We protect our autonomy by displaying privacy settings. But we ourselves constantly borrow and enthusiastically observe others, waiting for updates.

Absolute autonomy becomes the horizon of the desirable that can never be attained. The Siberian hermit Agafia Lykova from a family of Old Believers is a radical example. She was born into a family of hermits, and after attempting to live in a monastery, she returned to the life of a recluse, in which she finds salvation for her body and soul. This behavioral strategy is dictated by the desire not to show oneself in the world in any way, but even this fails: there is at least one Wikipedia article in several languages about Agafia.

ID is both the result of a choice and the consequence of a lack of choice. ID depends on its carrier, but is not wholly controlled by the carrier. A carrier does not like everything contained in ID. ID is formed from data that we post voluntarily and data that is posted against our will. For example, when we are tagged in photographs in social media without our permission.

ID can be forged or generated in its entirety. We are surrounded by chat bots and fake accounts in whose name reviews are written and comments are left. However, we should remember that there is always somebody real behind the process of ID generating.

ID is like a quilt. It is woven out of images that have come from different cultures and different times. To draw attention to itself, ID speaks the language that happens to be available. Countless versions of combinations are generated with personality set filters, including special aspects of local culture, life milestones and interests of the user.

ID is an active user of libraries and data bases. It composes itself out of what it sees and learns. Individual parts of the ID are not unique, but together they form a new image. Everything has already taken place, but not yet in *this form*.

The library of visual experience, the “universe of reference”¹ consists of the high and the low. ID forming has been hugely influenced by the mainstream. We instantly read trendy triggers and symbols, notice references to popular memes or identify from of mass culture. And we download them into our own library.

ID has a stable form and it manifests itself in fleeting images. Any image created by somebody might become a part of the personal data base that is clarified and rebuilt all the time. A collection of stable characteristics of “me” intermixes with ephemeral images that live for but one moment. For example, a series of selfies, undistinguishable

from one another against whatever background, that clutter up the memory of our phone.

A stable sign of presence and genuineness changes because of the visual angle. It could be the person’s physical shell, its picture or even its absence. The role of ID can be played by passport information or a fingerprint that unlocks the device.

However, whatever borders define the ID, in reality they prove to be just a temporary layout. One can change style, reconsider opinions and tastes, get a new passport with different numbers. In 10 years, many of us will not have anything in common with ourselves now except for our bodies, which will also be renewed by that time – on a cellular level.

Personality is revealed in ID through what it is not. You can associate oneself with a mirror reflection or with a person from a different epoch depicted in a painting. You can choose different versions of your name: in official documents, a letter to a friend or on a business card. Or even fictitious names.

ID exists in both the real and the digital worlds. ID is us, who live offline, and also our accounts in social media, e-mail boxes, passwords and bank accounts.

The physical body limits the ID and simultaneously provides it with support and resource base. While our body is alive, the dynamic pulsating ID is alive as well. But what will happen with our ID when our body dies? Will it be able to exist absolutely incorporeal? And if so, for how long?

Long ago, humanity learned to give their dead ID. Since the Middle Ages, our cemeteries (cities of the dead) have been situated within cities of the living. In the 12th century they invented Purgatory – the third place in the next world². Today the dead are suspended in digital space. We drag the dead with us by leafing through the profiles of those who are no longer with us. Or by digitizing the information about those who could never learn of the existence of the Internet: Stalin’s political prisoners, victims of war or the siege. We post their biographies and life dates, reprint the pages of their diaries and letters. But what about their right to oblivion? Should we wait for a new clause in wills that states “Nothing about me/created by me is to be published on the web”?

Christiaan L.Hart Nibbrig likens death masks to crustaceans. They imitate a hardened shell and preserve it before the real shell turns to dust³. The death mask shows that it conceals nothing.

In the virtual space we are neither alive nor dead. Profiles in social media are likened to files that can be re-recorded. We do an update

corroborating the fact of existence, breathing life into the digital ID.

ID is financial capital. It is borrowed, stolen and copied. Data leakage is a constant feature of news reports. ID databases are in demand on the black market. And the point here is not just an opportunity for blackmail. The market fights for our money and, in this fight, it resorts to all available methods. Spammers make use of phone numbers and mail addresses, targeted advertising use geolocation data, and context banners use search queries.

The theft of a smartphone with all its apps and intimate photos is equated to a personal catastrophe. Data security is an eternal headache of the modern person. And multifactor identification leads to a different extreme: it is sometimes difficult to prove to a machine that you are indeed you.

ID of the human being can have a coauthor – a machine. Humans create algorithms so that machines behave the way that humans need. If circumstances change, people correct the algorithm and change the line of “behavior”. In this way, selection of reasoning takes place which is imparted to a machine in an artificial manner.

Nowadays, identification tasks are outsourced to machines. A smart buzz decides for us what we want to see in social media. The system has received the right to replace potentially insulting words and expressions with neutral ones, bar texts from publication and remove photographs, even from personal messages.

To a large extent this is dictated by the “new sensitivity”. Hurt feelings are becoming a big issue. Today they can become a trigger for serious conflicts. This spurs on the improvement of algorithms, to train the machine to get a better understanding of human beings better and to anticipate their desires or actions. In response to this, the human being has to take counteractions and resort to Aesopian language, which the machine (for now) cannot recognize.

The trained machine is supposed to have an independent understanding of what exists beyond human capabilities. This process can be stopped, but one cannot turn back what has already been done. Mankind excitedly describes the world through systems and classifications, through “an instrument of self-preservation that normalizes the boundlessness of what transpires according to a small number of governing categories⁴”.

At present, a lot is riding on the development of artificial intelligence. With AI, we are attempting to leap beyond the limits of the human perception of the world. Humans fear the rise of the machines, and are frustrated by dependence on devices and the need to be permanently connected to the web. And yet they continue to search for the

technological limit of perfection and self-improvement.

However, the sum of all features and components of ID (both imposed ones and ones hand-picked of one’s own volition) will still not amount to a human being.

A human being is not a document, not a passport, not a credit history, not a bank statement, not a visa photograph. Between accounts, between lines of source code, in folds of clothing, humanity shines through.

I/ID/not-you is always more than the sum of all parts that are used in an attempt to describe it (and thus to capture it). The multifaceted flickering ID leaves a tail and slips through the gap between times and dimensions.

The light will go out; the Wi-Fi signal will get lost; the bank account will get frozen; the social-media account will be banned. What will remain is the personality as “an individual substance of rational nature”, as it was defined by Boethius.

ID and Art

The world is overcrowded with images. They are alluring. “The power of depiction lies in the ability to absorb the human subject by way of identification”⁵. A personal ID is assembled from images and visualization.

Heinrich Woelfflin wrote: “The Baroque broke completely free from the illusion that a painting could be entirely visual and might one day be depleted in contemplation”⁶.

Today, instead of singular masterpieces, we observe a boundless number of images that circulate inside and outside the web. The images swarm and create infinite interconnected configurations. As David Joselit writes in his book “After Art”, “What now matters most is not the production of new content but its retrieval in intelligible patterns”. The artist manipulates the population of images “through acts of reframing, capturing, reiterating, and documenting”⁷.

“Our everyday life increasingly unfolds in various digital environments. The matter of how to coexist inside the image acquires the urgency of a civic duty, thus imparting a new meaning to the traditional art-historical interpretation of visual codes”⁸. Virtual worlds and social media have become a place for endless creative expression, in which users are their own author, curator and promoter.

A person who winds up in the field of art as a viewer is “a reflective and creative subject”⁹. For the completion of an art object, one needs an active user who completes the art work. The user is like a key that opens the box. The human being “constitutes the existence and development of a work of art”¹⁰.

This project can also be viewed as a swarm of images for which ID has become a force field and tag. For viewers, the exhibition will become a source of content for their own ID. Images showcased at the exhibit will pass through the personal filters of each visitor. They can be swapped, appropriated or reworked. Or vested with a different content – their own – that would enhance and change the viewer. This may last for a long time, if an affect takes place, or for a short time if an image of the exhibition has become the occasion for a photo on Instagram.

In the gallery of images-IDs, humanity shines through, both in hidden hints, and directly. We show the contemporary art and works of the 20th century from private collections together, as a gallery of images that has temporarily acquired a connection. The showcased projects are images of ID that come to life when different meanings collide. Absolutely everything becomes the medium of an art image.

Images from the exhibit which were seen in art are taken away into personal databases. At the same time, user content created on the basis of collectively acquired visual wealth returns to art like a boomerang.

Woelfflin wrote that the world's content does not crystalize for contemplation in one form. "Contemplation is not a mirror that always remains unchanged, but a living cognitive ability"¹¹. In the supersaturated environment, one needs to lay out filters of perception on one's own. Then again, our individual reference points did not appear out of nowhere either, but rather were preassigned by somebody or something.

In the times of curating one's own IDs we cultivate our own contemplative ability. Artworks – ID-shells – turn into dynamic IDs of the viewer. The works that you will see at this exhibition can be grouped and sorted with different filters. Those filters entirely depend on the beholder – you.

In his press release to the 1968 exhibit "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age", Pontus Hulten notes: «Human life shares with art the qualities of being a unique, continuous and unrepeatable experience. Clearly, if we believe in either life or art, we must assume complete domination over machines, subject them to our will, and direct them so that they may serve life in the most efficient way – taking as our criterion the totality of human life on this planet. In planning for such a world, in helping to bring it into being, artists are more important than politicians, and even than technicians. <...> It is obvious that the decisions that will shape our society in the future will be arrived at and carried out through technology. Hopefully, these decisions will be based on the same criteria of respect for individual human capacities, freedom, and responsibility that prevail in art".

Art is like a canary in a mine which is the first to smell gas and warn people of danger. It takes the pulse of all humanity and, through an art image, shows the complexity of human beings in their relationship with their phantasms and the phantasms of people around them. Everything has already taken place; everything is yet to take place.

¹ Peter Weibel, "Media Art. From Simulation to Stimulation", *LOGOS*, vol. 25, no 4 (2015), p. 138.

² Jacques Le Goff, "The Birth of Europe" (Saint Petersburg: ALEXANDRIA, 2018), p. 86.

³ Christiaan L.Hart Nibbrig, "Ästhetik der Letzten Dinge" (citation from Russian edition, Saint Petersburg: Ivan Limbakh Publishing House, 2005), p. 218.

⁴ Heinrich Woelfflin, "Principles of Art History" (Moscow: V. Shchevchuk Publishing House, 2013), p. 267.

⁵ Art since 1900, (Moscow: Ad Marginem Press, 2015), p. 765.

⁶ Heinrich Woelfflin, "Principles of Art History" (Moscow: V. Shchevchuk Publishing House, 2013), p. 232.

⁷ David Joselit, "After Art", (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) p 80.

⁸ Art since 1900, (Moscow: Ad Marginem Press, 2015), p. 768.

⁹ Peter Weibel, "Media Art. From Simulation to Stimulation", *LOGOS*, vol. 25, no 4 (2015), p. 155.

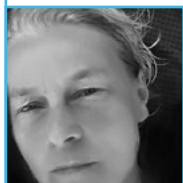
¹⁰ Ibid., p. 154.

¹¹ Heinrich Woelfflin, "Principles of Art History" (Moscow: V. Shchevchuk Publishing House, 2013), p. 266.



Marina Alekseeva (Russia)

Artist. Born in 1959 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Vera Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (Leningrad, USSR) as a ceramist. Works in various media: installation, object, painting. Participant of the Moscow



Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011), Panama Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013). Winner of the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Award (Russia, 2010) in the nomination "Art in Public Space" (together with Boris Kazakov). Her works are in the collections of Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Moscow

Museum of Contemporary Art (Russia), Multimedia Art Museum (Moscow, Russia), Fundació Sorigué (Lleida, Spain), Art Vectors Investment Partnership (Vienna, Austria) and others. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Karin Andersen (Italy)

Visual artist, videomaker and theorist. Born in 1966 in Burghausen, Germany. Holds a degree from Academy of Fine Arts Bologna, 1990. She mainly explores human-animal interactions and the nature-culture dialectic. Her works have been shown internationally in venues like Guidi & Schoen, Genova; Cannaviello, Milan; Traffic Gallery, Bergamo; MUU Gallery, Helsinki; Artists Space, New York; Vendsyssel Museum, Hjørring, Denmark; Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna; Ca' D'Oro Museum, Venice and Haus der Kunst, Munich. Together with Roberto Marchesini she authored the book *Animal Appeal, uno studio sul teriomorfismo* (Bologna, Perdisa/Hybris, 2003). Karin was awarded the Premio Maretti art prize (Galleria D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea San Marino, 2005).



karinandersen.net

karinandersen.net

Giuseppe Barbieri (Italy)

Art historian, curator. Professor of History of Modern Art at Ca' Foscari University (Venice, Italy). Member of the scientific committee of the International Centre for Contemporary Art of Punta della Dogana. He authored and curated more than forty books and organised numerous exhibitions in Italy and Spain. Over the last decade, he has become a reference in the field of multimedia and ICT approaches

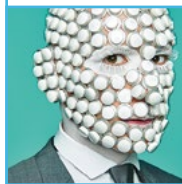


to art and the cultural heritage. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.

Andrey Bartenev (Russia)

Artist, fashion designer, author of a series of renowned sculptural performances. Born in 1965 in the city of Noril'sk, Russia. In his works, Andrey Bartenev combines all the available media; he works with sound, text, dance, theater and visual art. Bartenev actively throws together

shapes, materials and fantasies, continuing the ideas of Russian Futurism and kinetic art.



Works of Bartenev have been extensively exhibited in major museums of modern art, and have been acquired by Russian and foreign galleries, as well as private and corporate collections, such as Paco Rabanne, Andrew Logan, Brian Eno, Zandra Rhodes; Zimmerli Museum Collection, MMOMA, New Academy of Timur

Novikov, Museum of Unique Dolls, Tsaritsyno Museum-Reserve.

Photo by Daniil Golovkin

Ludmila Belova (Russia)

Artist, curator. Born in 1960 on the Kamchatka Peninsula, USSR. Graduated from the Abramtsevo Art and Industry School (Moscow region, USSR). She works with video, sound, painting, photography. Works by Ludmila Belova



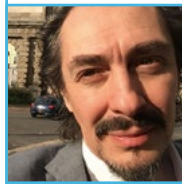
have been exhibited in Europe, USA, Russia and Asia. Participant of the Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art (Russia, 2005, 2011), exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (biannually since 2011), Manifesta 10 parallel program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014). Curated the exhibition study project *Silent Voices*

(St. Petersburg, 2017; Krasnoyarsk, 2018); recipient of the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Award as "Best Curatorial Project" in 2018. Her works are held in the collections of Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Anna Akhmatova Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Erarta Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), The Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA), in private collections in Switzerland, Germany and Russia. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

ludmilabelova.com

Peter Belyi (Russia)

Artist, curator. Born in 1971 in Leningrad, USSR. He holds an MA from Camberwell College, London (2000). His artistic practice is mainly in installations. His works can



be found in museum collections around the world, including the Margulies Collection (USA) and the State Russian Museum. He is a curator of numerous exhibitions from solo shows to major museum expositions such as *The New Blockheads* at the Zurich Kunsthalle. His curatorial practice is focused mainly on

independent art archives and on new artists. He is the founder and curator of LUDA gallery.

He was awarded the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Award (2010) for visual art and the Innovation Prize (2014) for best curatorial project (in collaboration with Alexander Terebenin). He lives and works in St. Petersburg. peterbelyi.com

Silvia Burini (Italy)

Art historian, curator. Born in 1966 in Bergamo, Italy.



Graduated from the University of Bergamo, Italy, with a thesis in Russian Art History and earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Slavic Culture from the University of Milan, Italy. She won postdoctoral specialization at the University of Genoa, Italy. She further specialized in semiotics and history of art in Tartu (Estonia), Moscow and St. Petersburg (Russia). Professor

of history of Russian Art and Russian cultural history at Ca' Foscari University (Venice, Italy); Director of the Centre for the Studies of Russian Arts (CSAR) at the same university. She is currently involved in researches about Socialist Realism in art, and Moscow underground in the Sixties. Lives and works in Venice, Italy.

Valentino Catricalà (Italy)

Curator and scholar. Born in 1983 in Rome. Valentino's work is mainly focused on relationship of artists with new technologies and media. He is a founder and artistic



director of the Rome Media Art Festival (MAXXI Museum), former art projects coordinator at Fondazione Mondo Digitale and curator of the Kunstraum Goethe. He is currently the director of the Art Section of the Maker Faire Rome – the European Edition. Valentino received a Ph.D. from the Department of Philosophy,

Communication and Performing Arts at Roma Tre University.

Valentino has curated exhibitions in major galleries and museums, such as the Hermitage (St. Petersburg), Minnesota Street Project (San Francisco), New York Media Center, MAXXI Museum (Rome), Palazzo delle Esposizioni (Rome), among others. He is the author of "Media Art. Prospettive delle arti verso il XXI secolo. Storie, teorie, preservazione" (Mimesis, 2016) and "The artist as Inventor" (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019).

Alexandra Dementieva (Belgium)

Artist. Born in 1960 in Moscow, USSR. Studied journalism and fine arts in Moscow (USSR) and Brussels (Belgium). Her principal interest as an artist is the use



of social psychology, perception theory and behaviorism in her installations as well as the development of film narration through the point of view of a subjective camera. She has been an active participant of the CYLAND Media Art Lab since 2008. Professor at the Royal Academy of Arts (Brussels,

Belgium). Dementieva received the first prize for the best monochannel video at VAD Festival (Girona, Spain). She is a participant of numerous exhibitions in major Russian and international cultural institutions, including Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art (Russia), Centro de la

Imagen (Mexico City, Mexico) and others. Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.
alexdemientieva.org

Jake Elwes (UK)

New media artist. Born in 1993 in London. His recent works have looked at Artificial Intelligence, investigating the technology, philosophy and ethics behind it. Jake graduated with a BA in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art (UCL), London in 2017, having also attended SAIC, Chicago (Erasmus) in 2016, and is currently working with Steve Fletcher at The Artist Development Agency.



Jake has exhibited internationally, including Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2017, Newcastle & London, UK; Ars Electronica 2017, Linz, Austria; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; City Loop, Barcelona, Spain; NIPS 2017, Long Beach, US; Nature Morte, Delhi, India; ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany and Centre for the Future of Intelligence (CFI), Cambridge, UK. Lives and works in London, UK.
jakeelwes.com

Ivan Govorkov (Russia)

Artist. Born in 1949 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academic Institute of Painting,



Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). Works in the fields of philosophy, psychology, painting, drawing, sculpture and installations. Professor of drawing at the Ilya Repin Institute. Recipient of Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2012) as "Best Work of Visual Art" (together with Elena Gubanova).

His works were exhibited at major Russian and foreign venues, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Moscow (Moscow, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany), Sky Gallery 2 (Tokyo, Japan). Participant of the Manifesta 10 parallel program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014) and several exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (biannually since 2011). Since 1990, he has been working in collaboration with Elena Gubanova. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.
elenagubanova.com

Alexey Grachev (Russia)

Sound artist, engineer, computer programmer. Born in 1983 in Kaluga, USSR. Graduated from the Bauman Moscow State Technical University (Russia). Completed the program "School for Young Artists" at the Pro Arte Foundation (St. Petersburg, Russia). Artist, technical director and chief engineer of CYLAND MediaArtLab. Participant of the World Event Young Artists



Festival (Nottingham, Great Britain, 2012), Cyfest Festivals, special project Urbi et Orbi at the 6th Moscow Biennale (Russia, 2015), The Creative Machine 2 (Goldsmiths, Great Britain, 2018). Participant of The Arts Work of the Future (Tate Exchange, UK, 2018). Since 2015, together with Sergey Komarov, he has developed the sound project Subjectivization of Sound whose basis is the interaction with space and spectators. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Lydia Griaznova (Russia)

Curator. Born in 1988 in Krasnoyarsk, Russia. Earned an MA in Curatorial Studies from Saint Petersburg State University (2016). Since 2013, a member of the International Comics Festival Boomfest organizing committee and Boomkniga Publishing House staff member. Since 2017, Lydia has worked as curator and projects coordinator at CYLAND MediaArtLab. She has curated exhibitions and publication of the anthology Opus Comicum by Georgy Litichevsky (2016) and Harmsiniada by Alexey Nikitin (2017). Co-curator of exhibitions Molds and Kronstadt Stories-3. Slowness (ROSIZO, 2018, in cooperation with Elena Gubanova).



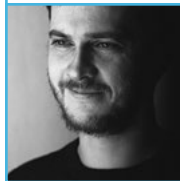
Elena Gubanova (Russia)

Artist, curator. Born in 1960 in Ulyanovsk, USSR. Graduated from the Ilya Repin State Academic Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture (Leningrad, USSR). Works in the fields of painting, sculpture, installations, and video. Recipient of Sergey Kuryokhin Award (Russia, 2012) as "Best Work of Visual Art" (together with Ivan Govorkov). Her works were exhibited at major Russian and foreign venues, including the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Moscow (Moscow, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany). Participant of the Manifesta 10 parallel program (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014) and several exhibitions parallel to Venice Biennale (biannually since 2011). Since 1990, she has been working in collaboration with Ivan Govorkov. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.
elenagubanova.com



Sergey Komarov (Russia)

Sound artist, curator, engineer, computer programmer. Born in 1980 in Kaluga, USSR. Since 2008, he has worked as a computer programmer at CYLAND Media Art Lab; since 2012, has curated audio projects and CYLAND Audio Archive (cyland.bandcamp.com). From 2015, together with Alexey Grachev, he has developed the project Subjectivization of Sound whose basis is the interaction



with space and spectators. Participant of the Cyfest festival in various years, and of the Archstoyanie festival (Kaluga Region, Russia, 2014), The Creative Machine 2 exhibition (Goldsmiths, Great Britain, 2018). Lives and works in Kaluga and St. Petersburg, Russia.

William Latham (UK)

Computer artist. Born in 1961 in Blewbury, England. William studied at Oxford University and The Royal College of Art. He is well known for his pioneering Organic Computer Art project (generating 3D computer models or organic life forms using genetic algorithm based techniques) based on his work on the IBM with mathematician Stephen Todd, which was recorded in their book Evolutionary Art and Computers (Academic Press, 1992).



Latham has created artworks for a number of bands including The Shamen, and worked on computer games development with Universal Studios, Warner Bros and Atari. Since 2007, he has been Professor in Computer Art and Games Development at Goldsmiths University of London. His Mutator VR, a Virtual Reality installation using original software modelled on the processes of evolution, has been exhibited to much acclaim in Linz, Venice and in St. Petersburg. He is Director and co-founder of SoftV Ltd and London Geometry Ltd.
latham-mutator.com

Katherine Liberovskaya (Canada-USA)

Intermedia artist. Born in 1961 in Montreal, Canada. Involved in experimental video since the 80s, and has produced numerous videos, video installations and performances shown around the world. Since 2001 her work has predominantly focused on the intersection of image and sound in solo video-audio installation/environments, often in collaborations with composers and sound artists, including Phill Niblock, Al Margolis (If,Bwana), Keiko Uenishi, Mia Zabelka, Shelley Hirsch, among many others. Concurrently



she curates and organizes the Screen Compositions evenings at Experimental Intermedia (New York), since 2005; the OptoSonic Tea audiovisual NYC nomadic salons since 2006. In 2014 she completed a Ph.D. in the Study and Practice of Art entitled Improvisatory Live Visuals: Playing Images Like a Musical Instrument at the Université du Québec in Montreal (UQAM). Lives and works in New York, USA and Montreal, Canada.

Natalia Lyakh (Russia-France)

Multimedia artist. Born in Leningrad, USSR. Earned her Ph.D. in Neurolinguistics on the subject of Brain Asymmetry and Speech Processing. Since 2000, Natalia has devoted her full-time attention to photography, video art, short films & video installations. Influenced by her former scientific research, she invites spectators to discover the magic dimensions and abstractions hidden in simple objects, as seen through the lens



of a microscope, the prism of binoculars, a periscope or a kaleidoscope. Works with plexiglass, aluminum, video, video installation.

She has taken part in many art shows and festivals around the world, including Paris, Stockholm, Istanbul, Milano, Rome, New York, London. She currently lives and

works in Paris, France.
nlyakh.com

Phill Niblock (USA)

Intermedia artist using music, film, photography, video and computers. Born in 1933 in Anderson, Indiana. Since the mid-60s he has made thick, loud drones of music, filled with microtones of instrumental timbres which generate many other tones in the performance space. Simultaneously, he presents films/videos which look at the movement of people working, details of nature or black and white abstract still images floating through time. Since 1985, he has been the director of the Experimental Intermedia



Foundation NYC. He is the producer of Music and Intermedia presentations at EI since 1973 and the curator of EI's XI Records label. Niblock's music is available on the XI, Moikai, Mode and Touch labels. In 2014, he received the prestigious John Cage Award from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.
phillniblock.com

Daniele Puppi (Italy)

Artist. Born in 1970 in Pordenone, Italy. With an emphasis on video installation, Daniele Puppi has manifested a new attitude towards this medium, emphasizing and radically subverting the use of sound and visual-architectonic reconfigurations that always reinvents itself. The technologies used – video projectors, synchronizers, amplifiers, subwoofers, speakers and microphones – serve to activate and amplify our powers of perception, especially our visual



and auditory ones. An integral part of the work, the viewer is called upon to enter a new and de-familiarized spatial and sensory dimension.

He has held exhibitions at MAXXI, GNAM museum, and Quadriennale in Rome, HangarBicocca and Triennale in Milan, MART in Rovereto, GAMEC in Bergamo, the Melbourne International Arts Festival and MAMBA in Buenos Aires. Lives and works between Rome and London.

danielepuppi.com

Vladimir Rannev (Russia)

Composer, music theorist. Born in 1970 in Moscow, USSR. Graduated from the Composition Department of St. Petersburg State Conservatory in 2003, earned

his postgraduate degree in music theory in 2005. In 2003–2005, Rannev undertook an internship in the field of electronic music at the Hochschule für Musik, Cologne, Germany. Lecturer at the St. Petersburg State University, Russia. The Gartow-Stiftung program recipient



(Germany, 2002), winner of the Salvatore Martirano Award (Illinois University, US, 2009) and the Gianni Bergamo Classic Music Award (Switzerland, 2010). His opera Two Acts took the Grand-Prix of the Sergey Kuryokhin Contemporary Art Award, 2013; the Drillalians opera series was nominated to the Golden Mask National Theatre Award (Russia, 2016). Rannev's music has been performed in Russia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Netherlands, Great Britain, Finland, Poland, Japan and USA. Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Alexander Terebenin (Russia)

Photographer, artist, curator. Born in 1959 in Leningrad, USSR. Graduated from the Architectural College in Leningrad. A professional photographer, Terebenin also creates art objects and installations. He is a participant of over 70 exhibitions in Russia and abroad. His works are held in the collections of the Museum of the History of St. Petersburg (Russia), Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA), as well as in galleries and private collections in Russia, USA, Israel, Germany and Finland. He is the curator of the art projects Conversion (Russia, 2012) and Signal (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014). He won the Innovation Prize (Russia) for the best curatorial project of 2014 (in collaboration with Peter Belyi). Lives and works in St. Petersburg, Russia.



Ayatgali Tuleubek (Norway)

Artist, curator. Born in 1985 in Zhambyl, Kazakhstan. He holds an MA from the Oslo Academy of the Arts (Norway). Co-curator of the Central Asian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2013, together with Tiago Bom). Tuleubek has presented solo exhibitions at UKS (Oslo, Norway, 2011), Malmøgata Fine Arts Project Space (Oslo, Norway, 2011), PODIUM, (Oslo, 2014), No Place (Oslo, 2015). He has also been included in group exhibitions at the 3rd Moscow Biennale for Young Art (Russia, 2012), Delhi International Arts Festival (New Delhi, India, 2010), Internal storage – Not Enough Space? at Garage Museum of Contemporary Art (Moscow, 2017) and Participation Effect at Stieglitz Museum (Saint Petersburg, 2017). Lives and works in Oslo, Norway.
ayatgali.com



Anna Frants (Russia–USA)

Artist, curator in the field of media art. Born in 1965 in Leningrad, USSR. She graduated from the Vera

Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design (Leningrad, USSR) and Pratt Institute (New York, USA). Cofounder of the nonprofit cultural foundation St. Petersburg Arts



Project, CYLAND Media Art Lab and Cyfest festival. Frants' interactive installations have been showcased at Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (Russia), Video Guerrilha Festival (Brazil), Manifesta 10 Biennale (St. Petersburg, Russia, 2014), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Chelsea Art Museum (New York, USA), the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Kunstquartier Bethanien (Berlin, Germany) and at other major venues all over the world. The artist's works are held in the collections of the Russian Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), Museum of Art and Design (New York, USA), Sergey Kuryokhin Center for Modern Art (St. Petersburg, Russia) and Kolodzei Art Foundation (New York, USA) as well as in numerous private collections. Lives and works in New York, USA, and St. Petersburg, Russia.
annafrants.net

Farniyaz Zaker (Iran–UK)

Artist, writer. Born in 1982 in Tehran, Iran. Zaker's multidisciplinary practice engages mediums such as video, sculpture/installation, drawing and print. Much of her practice explores how bodily practices and spatial awareness define our sense of identity, belonging and the very concept of knowledge.



Zaker has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards. In 2011 she was awarded the Lamb and Flag scholarship from the University of Oxford, which enabled her to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Art. She has exhibited at Sharjah Art Museum; the Ashmolean Museum; Etemad Gallery, Pi Artworks Gallery and Laing Art Gallery. Her works can be found in private and public collections, including The Arter – Space for Art, an initiative of the Koç Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey; Video Insight Foundation Collection, Bologna, Italy; and the Mark Rothko Art Centre, Daugavpils, Latvia. Lives and works between London and Berlin.

farniyazzaker.com