



ALEXANDRE GERTSMAN CONTEMPORARY ART



Oleksii Holubov, Consul General of Ukraine in New York, Alexandre Gertsman and Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

2018 was a very exciting year at Alexandre Gertsman Contemporary Art Gallery (AG). Our gallery functions brought much attention and acclaim throughout the year to our artists. We hosted several thematic, group and solo exhibitions, as well as, symposia, fund-raisers and private events to entertain and delight New York art enthusiasts. Using our main exhibition space, an adjacent smaller gallery and a system of moving walls, bar and food stations, surround-sound music and a grand piano, we displayed the artworks in a well-lighted and open space to accommodate exclusive cultural and business events.

The gallery's artists have been seen in the world's best-known venues and exhibitions for the contemporary art scene of 2018. Several artworks from AG Gallery's collection have been 'on loan' to a major exhibition "Varieties of Nonconformism" at the Mead Art Museum and also Amherst College selected the gallery's "Real" by Rimma and Valery Gerlovin for its promotional poster to present and promote their exhibition.



Dr. Leonard Bley and Pia Bley



Michael Gutkin, VOICE OF AMERICA journalist



Boris Gluzberg, SVP & Team Leader, CNB Natalya Gluzberg of GastroCure and Dr. Vitaly Fishbein



Dr. Michael Tyshkov and Gregory Livshen, Product Manager at IHS



Evgene Matveev and Mykola Babak, Donald Kuspit, art historian and art critic, and Alexandre Gertsman

The gallery was featured in the *White-hot* Magazine of Contemporary Art, *Afisha NYC*, *ARTUKRAINE* Magazine, and *Russia Beyond*. Our gallery exhibitions and events were also covered by the *Voice of America*, *INTER* TV Channel, *Prymoi* Live TV Channel, and *UATV* media, among other outlets. AG Contemporary Art also published a major exhibition catalogue entitled “BM: Mykola Babak – Evgene Matveev”, accompanied by several essays written by art historians, curators, diplomats, art critics and philosophers from USA and Ukraine, which received high professional acclaim.

In 2018, the contemporary Russian art market has shown an increase in prices and sales at the major international auctions, after a slower market in the previous years, while the international art market has done quite well in general. *The Wall Street Journal* in its December 31st article “The Best Investments of 2018? Art, Wine and Cars” has written that the luxury assets have outperformed stocks and bonds and noting that “people are looking for a place for their cash, and the security of holding something physical is appealing.”

The world exhibition premier, hosted by Alexandre Gertsman Gallery, brought to American shores the first series of works by the newly created Ukrainian art duo, Mykola Babak and Evgene Matveev. It is rare that two accomplished artists, who previously had received all possible national honors and international recognition as individuals, decide to join forces combining their ideas and artistic expressions. The artists, individually, had represented Ukraine at arguably the most prestigious world’s art event, Venice Biennale, and participated in the International Photobiennale in Stockholm, and at the Graphics Biennale in Bella, Italy. Both of the artists also showed their works at Art-Arsenal, Ukraine’s pre-eminent event, and International Photo-Biennale in Kyiv.

What are the roots of Babak-Matveev? One must look to Gorbachev's *Perestroika* and the transformation of the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s which culminated in Ukrainian independence in 1991. The resulting new social and political order unleashed a variety of philosophies and individual freedoms, some of which showed up in artists' paintings and other art forms. Fast forward to the tumultuous events of 2013 - 2014 in Kyiv: The Ukrainian revolution, known as *Euromaidan* spurred the creation of Babak-Matveev. The artists unite around the belief that only through Ukrainian identity, through modern transformation and the modernization of Ukrainian artistic thought and through the integration of the national philosophy into an international process can a path be paved for their country's future. The creativity of Babak-Matveev stretches across multiple disciplines and involves work in different media, book design, literature, poetry and philosophical conceptualizations. As Donald Kuspit wrote in *Whitehot* magazine, "Babak-Matveev 'Family Album' ('Transgression of a Double Reflection') is dialectically absurd digital *masterpiece*."



Artists-duo Mykola Babak and Evgene Matveev in front of their painting TODAY'S EXCLUSIVE

To honor the artists and to celebrate Ukrainian arts and culture and its place on the world map, the gallery organized a special reception, which was supported by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations and the Consulate General of Ukraine in New York, with special guests Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN Volodymyr Yelchenko and Consul General of Ukraine in New York Oleksii Holubov.

Volodymyr Yelchenko noted in his speech that "the work of art-tandem Babak-Matveev is an excellent example of aptitude, ambition, hard work and belief in the significance of the past, as well as the inevitable opportunities which the future holds. The world should further reveal the inexhaustible potential of Ukraine". Oleksii Holubov accentuated the significance of such events for Ukraine and the value of the work of Babak-Matveev and other Ukrainian artists

promoting Ukrainian art and culture in the US. The highlight of the exhibition was the Project “Sacrifice”, based on the events of the Ukrainian *Revolution of Dignity* during November 2013 – February 2014. Babak-Matveev have dedicated this project to Ukraine and its people. Works by other Ukrainian-born artists, represented by the gallery: Oleg Dergachov, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Igor and Svetlana Kopystiansky, Violetta Livshen, and George Pusenkoff were also proudly on display.

At another special event, Ilya Popenko presented his new series “Vlad and John”, created between New York and Moscow, which tells fictional stories of two people, representing two revolutions: the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, led by Vladimir Lenin, and the cultural revolution in the Western world which arrived with the 60’s British Rock Invasion of *The Beatles*



Alexandre Gertsman and Dr. Alexander Lev



Pianist Jason Laney and composer-singer-artist Ilya Popenko, members of MAD MEG band



Lorraine Oler, Board of Trustees, Martha Graham Dance Company

and in particular, John Lennon. Popenko, who prefers to photograph an archetype or an idea rather than a nuanced individual, obstructs or falsifies the identity of the person depicted, by using custom made latex masks. In this tantalizing series, phrased by many as the artist’s ‘best yet’, the masks, breathing paganism and death, represent a brand rather than an individual: brands of Vladimir Lenin and John Lennon. The artist, whose photos have been published by *The New York Times*, *Village Voice*, and *Time OUT New York*, is also a composer and singer. To the delight of a large crowd of guests, Popenko performed along with the pianist Jason Laney of his art-rock band, MAD MEG, right in front of the “Vlad and John” installation.

The Ecuadorian-American performance artist Carlos Lolito Vargas created for the gallery a new performance piece, “The Golden Disproportions”, which was received by the guests with great enthusiasm. The performance was his artistic response of a Latin emigre artist currently living in the multicultural world of New York. As a connoisseur of European literature and film, he toys with images and symbols. In his trademark playful and provocative way, he plays with adolescent sensuality of Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita and creates her male-version – Lolito, a non-aging persona trapped in his era/Eros. In his “Disproportions” piece, Vargas asks people to find imperfections or “accidents of his body”, which he changes into shiny decorations. By provoking viewers to critique him, he is able to convert what they think could be improved into accessories that transform him into King Midas, a golden divinity.



Performance by artist Carlos Lolito Vargas - with poet Gena Gruzglin drawing / The Golden Disproportions.

Alexandre Gertsman continues his tradition of showing his appreciation for his clients and friends by hosting private cocktails and dinners at the gallery. Sitting amid works by some of most promising and celebrated contemporary artists takes wining and dining to another level. Mr. Gertsman enjoys presenting the most highly regarded musical talents at the gallery, and in 2018 there were recitals by renowned Lenny Bord piano trio - Masha Tyshkov and Marina Bord along with Mr. Bord himself - which performed for the guests their classical repertoire, while the Bravura trio, featuring Andrew Grossbard, entertained with selection of Broadway shows’ masterpieces, and Eva Garcia Novoa, a jazz composer and pianist, performed several of her own works from her newly released album. As usual, at the private events, chefs from different companies dazzle the guests with their finest examples of international cuisine!



Olga Yelchenko, writer,
and Phoebe Jensen, UN Hospitality Committee Member



Bravura Trio



Restaurateur Boris Lidukhover (center) with Alexander and Svelana Lidukhover



Conversation between artists



Elaine Brooks of NYLASIK, Eva Garcia Novoa, jazz composer and pianist, and Marsha Tyshkov, pianist and singer



Paul Marra, actor and Executive Director of Dark Ash Films, and Alexandre Gertsman



Installation of paintings by Andrey Volkov

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