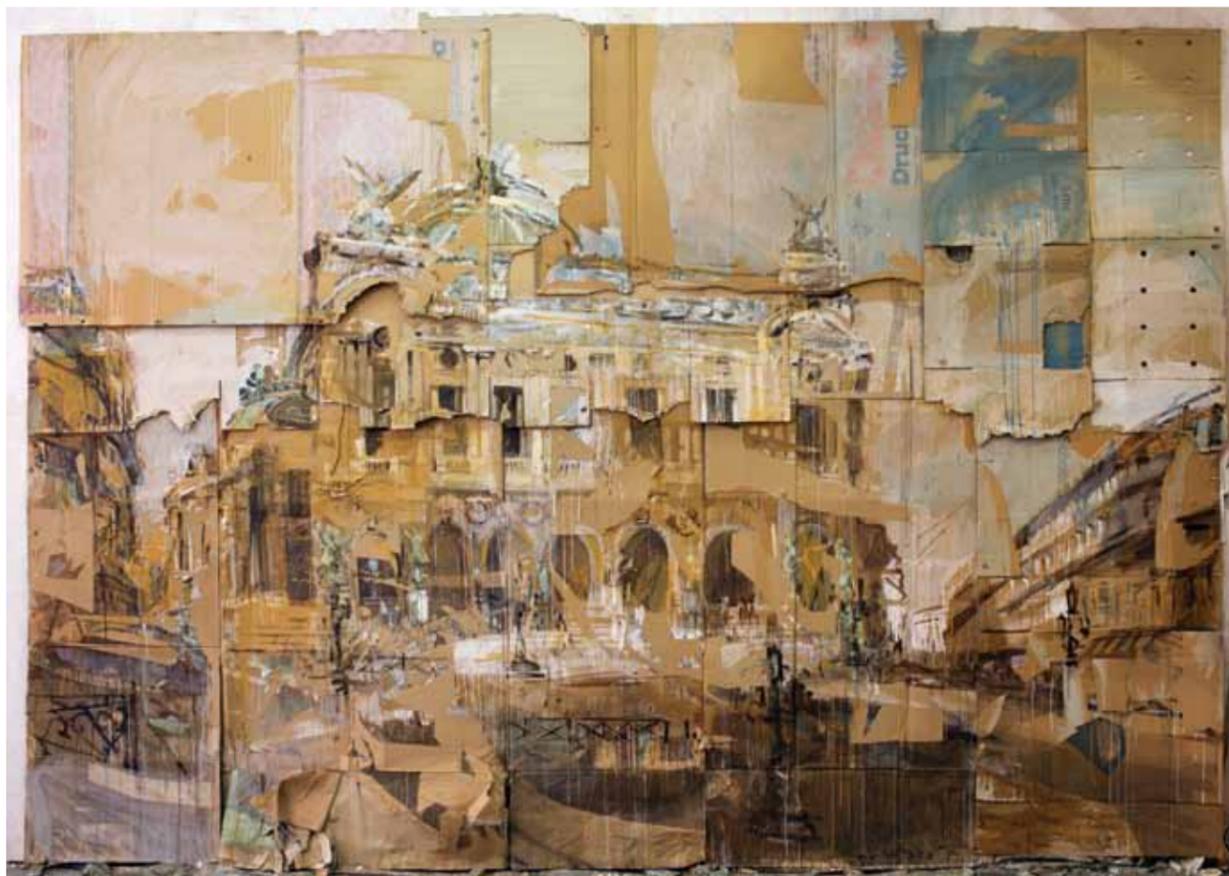


Gaiety is the Most Outstanding Feature of the Soviet Union: Art from Russia



Gaiety is the Most Outstanding Feature of the Soviet Union: Art from Russia is the first exhibition of contemporary Russian art at the Saatchi Gallery in London. This large survey show features eighteen artists working in diverse ways across the mediums of painting, photography, sculpture and installation.

Most of the artists in the exhibition, which takes its title from a speech delivered by Joseph Stalin in 1935, are young and emerging, and have rarely shown their work internationally; the exhibition also presents Boris Mikhailov's highly acclaimed photographic project, *Case History*, which documents his

hometown of Kharkov following the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

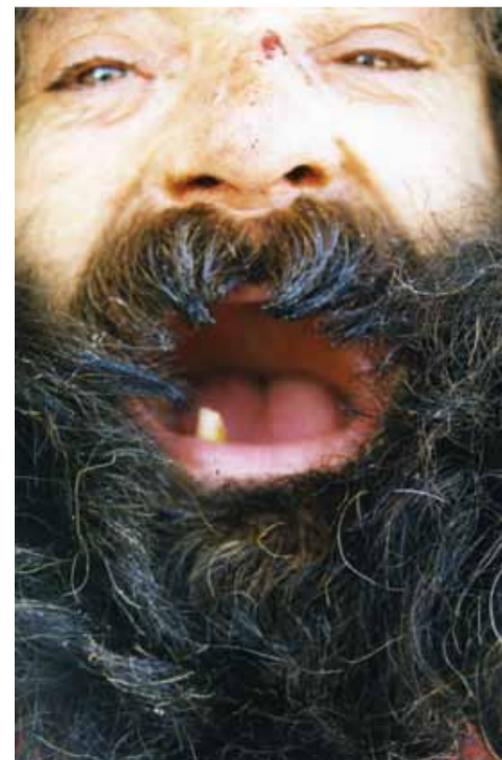
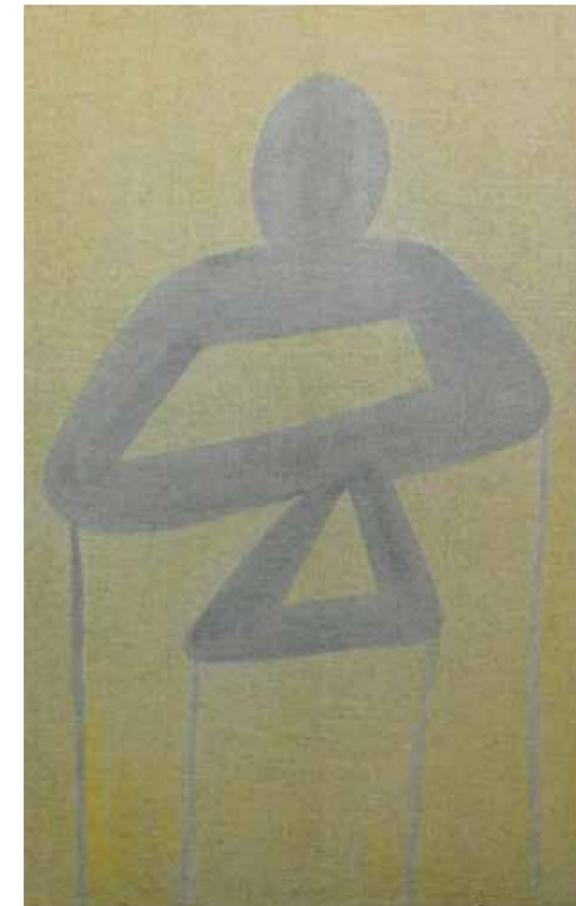
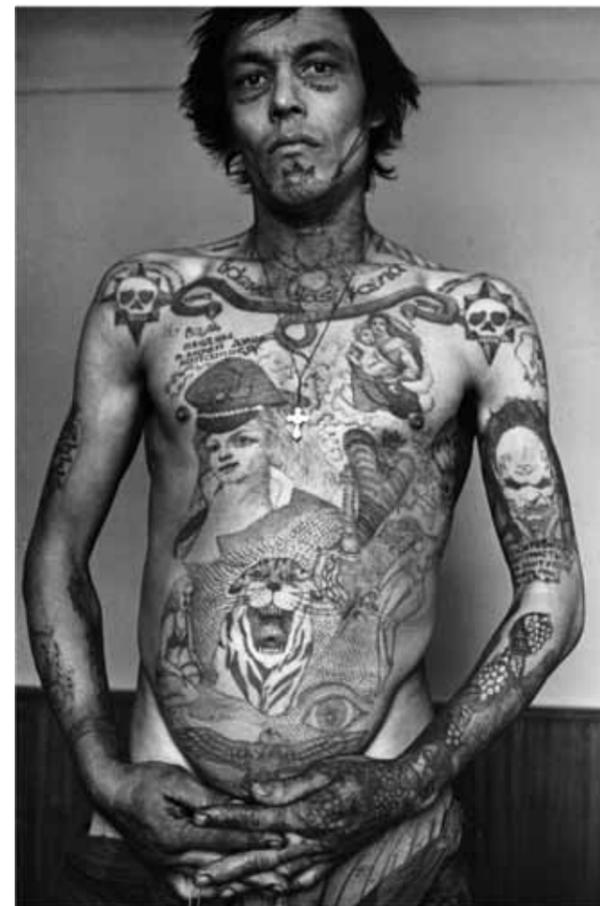
Witnesses to the break-up of the Soviet Union and the perestroika years, the artists in this exhibition have absorbed the complexities of life in Russia and created a wide variety of works in response. Some of them play on Russia's long and rich tradition of jokes and a distinctive sense of humour which also find its way into political satire. Others draw on the influential wave of modernist art in Russia, particularly Malevich and Rodchenko, as well as important contemporary Russian artists such as Ilya Kabakov.

As Dimitri Ozerkov, director of the Contemporary Art Department of The

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, says about the artists in his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, "Their art is multifocal and transcendent, poetic and hypocritical, politicised and romantic. It is probably the most global art in the world but still very much related to its origins."

The works in this exhibition play a key role in shaping understanding of recent Russian history as well as contemporary Russian art.

Until 5 May 2013
www.saatchigallery.com



■ □ Valery Koshlyakov, *Grand Opera, Paris, 1995, tempera on cardboard, 345 × 487 cm*

© Valery Koshlyakov, 1995, image courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London

□ ■ Sergei Vasiliev, *Russian Criminal Tattoo Encyclopaedia Print No. 12, 2010, giclée print, 165 × 112 cm*

© Sergei Vasiliev, 2010, image courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London

□ ■ Yelena Popova, *Overblown Hero, 2011, mixed media on linen, 170 × 110 cm*

© Yelena Popova, 2011, image courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London

□ □ Boris Mikhailov, *Case History, 1997–1998, a set of 413 photographs, dimensions variable, a selection illustrated*

© Boris Mikhailov, 1998, image courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London