

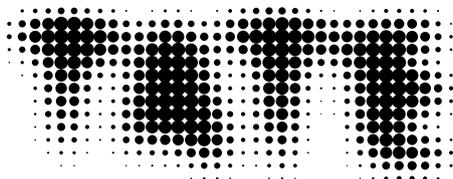
ILYA & EMILIA KABAKOV: NOT EVERYONE WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE FUTURE

18 October 2017 – 28 January 2018

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

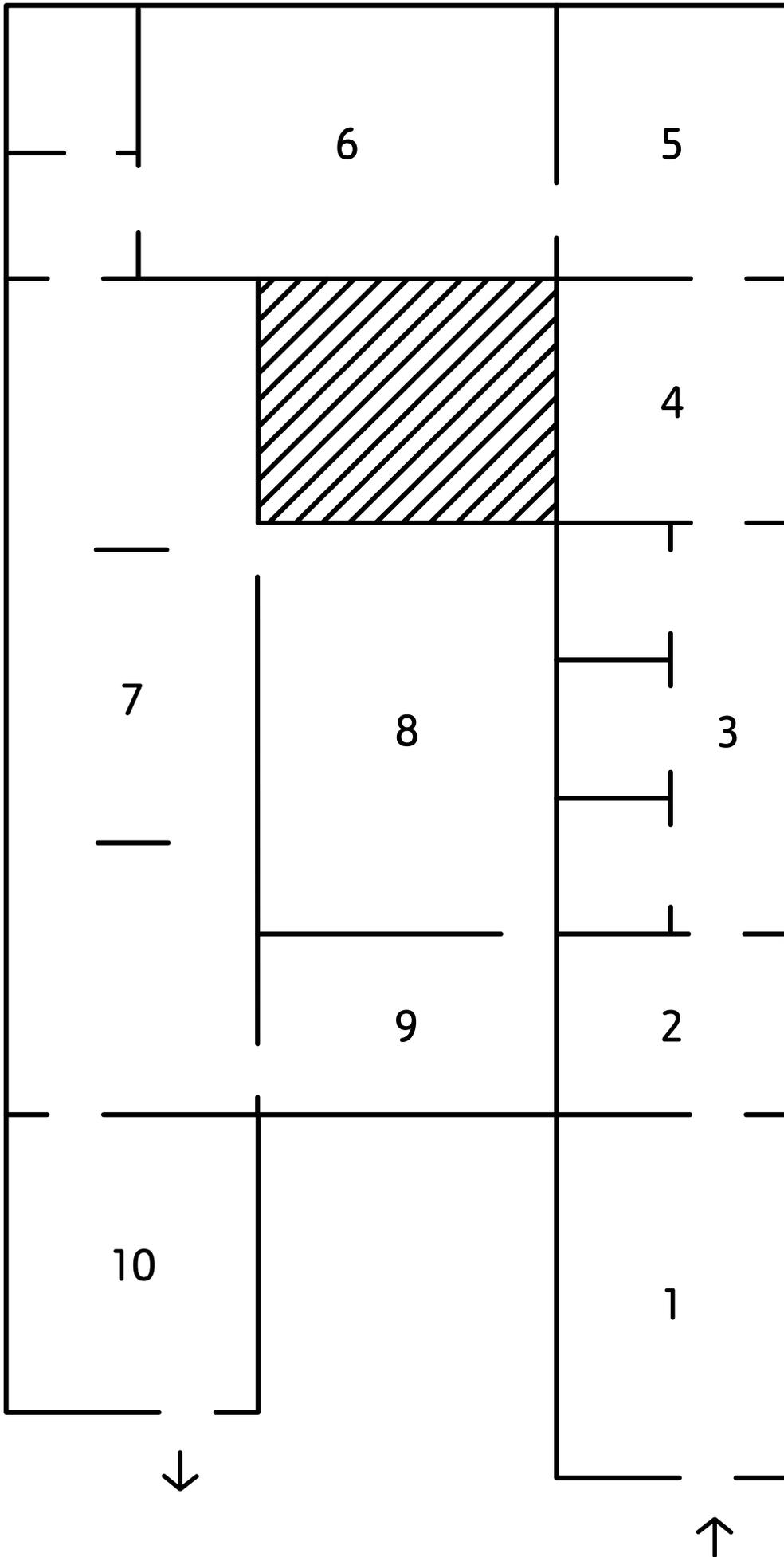
Ilya and Emilia Kabakov are amongst the most celebrated artists of their generation, widely known as pioneers of installation art.

Ilya Kabakov was born in 1933 in Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnipro) in Ukraine, formerly part of the Soviet Union. When he was eight, he moved to Moscow with his mother. He studied at the Art School of Moscow, and at the V.I. Surikov Art Institute.

Artists in the Soviet Union were obliged to follow the officially approved style, Socialist Realism. Wanting to retain his independence, Ilya supported himself as a children's book illustrator from 1955 to 1987, while continuing to make his own paintings and drawings. As an 'unofficial artist', he worked in the privacy of his Moscow attic studio, showing his art only to a close circle of artists and intellectuals.

Ilya was not permitted to travel outside the Soviet Union until 1987, when he was offered a fellowship at the Graz Kunstverein, Austria. The following year he visited New York, and resumed contact with Emilia Lekach. Born in 1945, Emilia trained as a classical pianist at Music College in Irkutsk, and studied Spanish Language and Literature at Moscow University before emigrating to the United States in 1973. Ilya and Emilia began their artistic partnership in the late 1980s, and were married in 1992. Together, they have produced a prolific output of immersive installations and

other conceptual works addressing ideas of utopia, dreams and fear, to reflect on the universal human condition. Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have collaborated together since 1989. Works created before this date, by Ilya only, are indicated as such in the corresponding captions.



ROOM 1

Ilya's early works explore the possibility of drawing and painting as conceptual media. They encompass a range of contrasting styles, from post-impressionism to abstraction, to the incorporation of text and found objects.

Having chosen not to be a state-approved fine artist, Ilya worked clandestinely. Sourcing materials was a challenge. Many of his early paintings are rendered on plywood or Masonite, a type of hardboard that is often used in the construction of walls and floors. The use of these cheap materials emphasises ideas rather than craftsmanship, and sets Ilya's art firmly apart from the official Soviet artists. A number of works introduce fictional characters. In a society where individuals were required to conform to the ideals of Soviet ideology, Ilya took to assuming pseudonyms and personae in his art. The humble, downtrodden figures who often appear in the Kabakovs' work recall the tradition of Russian writers such as Gogol, Dostoevsky and Chekhov.

Clockwise on wall from left to right

Ilya Kabakov

Self-Portrait

1962

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X66318

This self-portrait is an unusually autobiographical statement from an artist who is more accustomed to working with pseudonyms and fictional personae. Its style recalls the post-Impressionist French painter Paul Cézanne, suggesting a gesture of solidarity with the Russian avant-garde artists of the early twentieth century, who revered Cézanne. In 1956 Ilya visited Robert Falk, a member of the pre-revolutionary Jack of Diamonds group who had been ostracised by the Soviet authorities for both his Jewish identity and his refusal to paint in the Socialist Realist style.

Ilya Kabakov

Cubes

1962

Oil paint and enamel on wood

Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, Museum

Purchase, Purchased with funds donated by Norton

Dodge and Nancy Dodge

X65292

Cubes is the first of Ilya's 'picture-objects' – works that resist the simple categories of painting and sculpture. Its crude paintwork and unevenly shaped wooden pieces reflect the meagre resources available to artists working outside the state-approved system. It also mixes abstract and figurative elements: the three dimensional, brightly coloured geometric shapes recall the dynamic abstraction of early Soviet artists such as El Lissitzky, whereas the tiny houses on the bottom right-hand side of the work suggest a contrasting folk or 'naïve' aesthetic.

Ilya Kabakov

Sobakin

1980

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Elchin and Dilyara Safarov

X66329

The left side of the composition resembles a bureaucratic form, in which details of the life and career of a fictional individual, Peter Nikolaevich Sobakin, have been carefully listed. His last name echoes the Russian word for dog (**sobaka**), and on the right-hand side this word appears alongside a simple drawing of a dog. The juxtaposition of the two suggests an underlying irony. Do the career and achievements of an ordinary, hardworking Soviet citizen amount to nothing more than the life of a dog?

Ilya Kabakov

This is the Sky, This is a Lake, This is the Sea

1970

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Private collection, Switzerland

X66328

Like other works of this period, this painting explores different ways of interpreting images. At first glance it appears to be completely abstract, presenting an entirely blue canvas. However, the small pieces of Cyrillic text in each corner present four different voices. We are given the name of each speaker, creating a dramatic scenario with four imaginary characters. Each voice also has a different explanation of what the expanse of blue represents, whether it is a lake, the sea, the sky or the air.

Ilya Kabakov

Head with a Balloon

1965

Textile reliefs, plaster, oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Private collection

X66322

Ilya Kabakov

The Queen Fly

1965

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite and wood

Private collection, Switzerland

X66327

In this work a naturalistic rendering of a fly is perched in the bottom left corner of the canvas, while a more abstracted representation of a fly occupies the middle. The fly has been an enduring symbol across Ilya's career. While it is associated with decaying matter and feelings of disgust, it also embodies the miracle of flight and therefore the possibility of escape.

Ilya Kabakov

Pipe, Stick, Ball and Fly

1966

Ceramic, textile reliefs, oil paint and enamel on plywood

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Loan from Ludwig Stiftung

X65358

Ilya Kabakov

Holiday # 1

1987

Oil paint, enamel and paper on canvas

Tsukanov Family Foundation

X65679

Ilya Kabakov

Holiday # 2

1987

Oil paint, enamel and paper on canvas

Private collection

X65692

Ilya Kabakov

Holiday # 6

1987

Oil paint, enamel and paper on canvas

Private collection

X65693

Ilya Kabakov

Holiday # 8

1987

Oil paint, enamel and paper on canvas

Private collection

X65694

The **Holiday** series is presented as the work of a fictional Socialist Realist artist. According to this story, the original commission for the paintings was cancelled and they were put into storage. The fictional artist rediscovered them and decided to reinvigorate them by adding sweet wrappers – a trite upgrade that fails to improve upon the prosaic images beneath. The work comments on how the criteria of what makes for 'good' art is politically charged and subject to change, but also draws attention to the fate of artists who fall out of institutional favour.

Ilya Kabakov

Hand and Ruisdael's Reproduction

1965

Textile relief, print on paper, wood, oil paint and enamel on plywood

Private collection

X66320

A reproduction of **Dutch Landscape with a Raid** 1656 by Salomon van Ruysdael is attached to a white background with a papier-mâché arm placed beneath it. This puzzling combination of visual elements encourages the viewer to consider different ways of looking, whether rooted in Dutch landscape painting, abstraction or surrealist assemblage. It includes a visual pun, as 'to attach one's hand' is a colloquial Russian expression meaning to add one's signature. The composition can also be seen as a window looking onto a real world, represented by the Ruysdael landscape, with the viewer's arm leaning on the windowsill.

Ilya Kabakov

The Bush

1961

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, Switzerland

X66057

Works in centre of room

Ilya Kabakov

Soccer Player

1964

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Private collection

X66323

Ilya Kabakov

The Boy

2000

Oil paint, enamel and textile on plywood

Private Collection, Moscow /

Courtesy Regina Gallery, Moscow

X66824

Translations

This is the Sky, This is a Lake, This is the Sea

1970

Anna Sergeevna Tropina:

This is a lake.

Nikolaj Adamovich Borev:

This is the sea.

Sergej Mikhailovich Levtshuk:

This is the air.

Lidia Borisovna Sekh:

This is the sky.

Sobakin

1980

Inscription (left side):

Name

Sobakin, Peter Nikolaievich

Parents

Sobakin, Nikolai Artemievich

Sobakina, Fekla Ignatievna

Place of Birth

Ryazanskaya Province, Mezevsk middle region, Black Dirt Village later called Pokrovskoe Village, Gorovskaya region

Date of Birth

12 February 1901

25 February 1901 (new style)

Studied

1915 Vyazemsk Parochial School

1935 Vyazemsk Rail Faculty

1949 Kiev Institute for Transportation Engineers

Worked

1921 Stoker, Kashira Station, Pavlovsk RR

1925 Machinist, Senky Station, Petrovskaya RR

1936 Station Dispatcher, Sinelnikovo II Station

1945 Deputy, Kury Station, Kiev RR

1946 Station Chief, Kury Station, Kiev RR

1957 Department Director MPS of USSR (Cargo Department)

Kiev, MPS of USSR

Children

1927, Sobakin, Peter Petrovich, Metallurgist-operator,
Kaninskij Metallurgical Plant

1930, Sobakin, Ivan Petrovich, Constructor engineer,
Moscow-Kursk Metal Assoc.

1941 Sobakina Irina Petrovna, Senior Lab Worker, PhD in
Technology, Kiev Factory of Synthetic Materials,
Volodarskogo

Inscription (right side):

Dog

ROOM 2

Artistic experimentation was permitted for only a brief period after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. In the 1930s Socialist Realism was established as the approved artistic style of the Soviet Union. Painters were expected to produce idealised and determinedly optimistic portrayals of proletarian life. In Ilya's paintings, Socialist Realism is ironically questioned. 'We wanted to analyse the language of Soviet civilisation, the banal everyday language of the system,' he has said. 'We felt like observers in our own country, like ethnologists... but were also part of that life'. **Tested!** 1981 is based on a work by a now forgotten artist from the 1930s, revealing the falsehood of this visual language. A woman whose political allegiances have been questioned has her party membership card returned. What would have been a cruel and traumatic experience is presented here as an occasion for celebration and joy

Clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov

Nikolai Petrovich

1980

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Private collection

X65690

While the text in many of Ilya's early paintings provide new or jarring perspectives on the images, here they complement each other. The landscape is quite conventional – 'the view of some Siberian river', according to the artist. The narrative is written in the third-person style of a novel, proceeding without any major or surprising incident, and breaking off before reaching a conclusion. Yet, Ilya suggests, its fragmentary nature challenges the viewer to understand and elucidate this apparently banal narrative.

Ilya Kabakov

By December 25 in Our District...

Le 25.XII.1979 dans notre district

1983

Wood and metal objects mounted on oil paint
and enamel on Masonite

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art
moderne/Centre de Création industrielle.

Purchase through the Hoffmann Foundation, 1986.

X64367

A tower block overlooks an industrial wasteland that awaits a new construction project. The reality of human labour is suggested by two shovels attached to the surface of the painting. The Cyrillic text lists all of the new buildings, including homes and municipal spaces, which are due to be completed by 25 December 1979. As the artwork is dated four years after this point, and the construction scene is shown in a state of disarray, it is implied that these are the unfulfilled promises of a utopian society.

Ilya Kabakov

The Answers of an Experimental Group

1970-1971

Oil paint, enamel and mixed media on board

Private collection

X65689

An assemblage of found objects is accompanied by comments from different characters who offering their own explanations about the items. The appearance of the text echoes the style of the 'ZhEK' the bureaucratic housing administration, whose regulations controlled everyday life for Soviet citizens. The close attention paid to these abject and apparently insignificant objects reflects the absurdity of Soviet bureaucracy.

Ilya Kabakov

Tested!

1981

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Ludwig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen

X65240

Tested! is based on a Soviet painting from the 1930s, which Ilya discovered in a book of reproductions. It shows a woman being handed back her Communist Party membership card, having successfully convinced the seated officials of her allegiance to the political regime. Ilya's mother had been through a similar experience. He was struck by the earnest style of the painting, which he saw as rooted in traditional religious imagery. The scene is presented as the Soviet equivalent of a sacred ritual, watched over by a bust of Lenin.

Translations

Nikolai Petrovich

1980

It was a quiet, grey, cold autumn day. The horse was harnessed, but Nikolai Petrovich kept stalling and could not bring himself to go out for anything. The trip did not frighten him. In fact, he was totally indifferent to the new journey, and he was not thinking about the cold night, the mud, the bumpiness, or any of the other usual discomforts.

‘So, are we going?’ asked his travelling companion, a local agronomist, also called Nikolai, in a slightly hoarse voice after the cold night. Nikolai Petrovich didn’t feel all that well either. ‘It’s getting cold already, and I left the house in only a shirt and a jacket. Good thing I brought a raincoat, just in case. Damn this weather!’ he thought. ‘You never know what it’s going to be like. Well, I guess it’s time to say goodbye to the summer.’

‘Yeah, let’s go,’ he said and with a sigh stood up from the bench. The door opened with a squeak and, letting the agronomist out first, he saw the already pinkening sky, courtyard, village outskirts, the road winding down the mountain and the view so familiar and already tedious to him after all these years. In the wagon, looking silly among

the other things, lay an old refrigerator, which the landlord of their lodgings, taking advantage of the opportunity, asked Nikolai Petrovich to deliver to his brother-in-law's house in the next village.

Nikolai Petrovich had worked here for a long time, changing his profession often, and now, as a senior forestry inspector, had been called to Usolya-Verkhnee where 'his presence was needed immediately' and where they had been waiting for him three days already. Because of the bad road and the wagon breaking down, though, he had been unable to get there.

'If there were only a decent road in these regions! At least like the one between Vyshgorod and Khalupin,' he thought with his usual annoyance. 'Then they would be perfect. Ah, why talk about it?' He even squirmed a little as he remembered the Zheludovsky Ravine between Beryozov and Lugovinov which they still had to cross today and in which all wagons, horses, and even vehicles, without exception, bogged down. Last month a tri-axled dumptruck became so stuck that even two tractors had difficulty dragging it out after it had sat there for a whole week.

'After the rains these past few days, what will it be like now?' thought Nikolai Petrovich melancholically, but right there he resolved not to think about such a thing, and instead, in his

usual manner, think about something pleasant. And that something pleasant had happened not all that long ago. Pleasant, and even joyful, was the following: Nikolai Petrovich's daughter, Marusya, who went to Krasnoyarsk, passed her examination and entered the agricultural institute. How many problems there had been with this Marusya! 'She has my character,' mused Nikolai Petrovich with pleasure, recalling the many unpleasantries Marusya's 'stubborn' nature had always brought them. He had only to remember the many arguments, tears and persuasions the whole family had been through with her decision to move to Krasnoyarsk and take the examination for the 'aggie' institute. 'What's the matter, there's not enough work for you here in our area?' her sister and mother had yelled at her. 'Where will you live? You won't be among your own kind there!' echoed her grandmother. Nikolai Petrovich only ...

Tested!

1981

Plate no. 8, department 19

Exhibition of Socialistic Industry 1936

I. Alechin

Tested!

(The Purging of the Communist Party)

First prize and diploma of the Soviet Agricultural Exhibition.

By December 25 in Our District...

1983

By 25 December 1979 in our district will be constructed:

1. Twelve apartment houses, streets and places on 142,000 square metres for 18,300 inhabitants
2. 168 houses for one or two families on 8,500 square metres for 1,280 inhabitants
3. Six communal and educational houses on 7,500 square metres with 2,200 places
4. Two boarding schools on 2,600 square metres with 880 places
5. One cinema and 5 clubs for 2,600 persons
7. Five kindergartens and other places for children
8. Library with reading room and 160 reading places
9. Two stadiums and 3 sports fields
10. A public bath house with a laundry
11. Six dining rooms with 2,000 seats
12. Two restaurants with 1,000 seats
13. A hospital with outpatients' clinic
14. A health centre
15. Two parks and two squares with open swimming pools
16. Four canteens with a supermarket
17. Two repair services
18. 44 km asphalt roads
19. The house of books

The Answers of an Experimental Group

1970–71

Answers of the Experimental Group at Pavlov. RSKS

Nikolai Pavlovich Malyshev:

I will hang my new raincoat here.

Nikolai Arkadievich Krivov:

I bought this steam engine for Volodya, my son.

Alexander Alekseevich Koss:

My wife, Briukhanova Anna Alekseevna, pounded in this nail.

Anna Borisovna Gorodovina:

I don't understand anything.

Volodya Malyshev:

This nail can easily be pulled out.

Elina Markovna Yampolskaya:

We have to go for firewood, there is no more firewood at all.

Lenochka Sinitzyna:

The stick doesn't look like a stick.

Sofia Tikhonovna Solodova:

We definitely have to visit Lia this year and take Zhenya along.

Karp Venjaminovich Sorin:

There was an automobile here earlier.

Gleb Alexandrovich Shukhaev:

I would remove the stick, it is poorly drawn and isn't needed here at all.

Aleksei Dmitrievich Lisitzyn:

I would hang some sort of suit here on this hanger.

Boris Pavlovich Nikolaev:

I, too, think that there is some sort of object missing.

Alexandra Mironovna Lvova:

Apparently, these are the remains of some sort of psychological event.

Ivan Anatolievich Sisakyan:

These are symbols: a threat, the absence of something pseudo-motion and fictitious effort.

Sonya Podobed:

Summarised here is a programme of deviation, concealment.

Anna Vladislavovna Leshko:

It doesn't seem to me that a sign system without plasticism renders a painting.

ROOM 3

In 1985 Ilya created **The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment** in his Moscow studio. It was his first whole room, or 'total' installation, a carefully choreographed staging of objects, lighting and text that immerses the viewer within the artwork.

Like the other two installations in this room, it presents a fictional narrative that takes place in the confines of a communal apartment – a form of domestic residence that emerged during the Soviet Union to deal with the shortage of housing in urban areas. Multiple households were forced to share the same cooking and washing facilities in often cramped conditions. For Ilya, the Soviet communal apartment is emblematic of the way in which the individual is exhibited and exposed to the gaze of others. The character of **The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment** finds a way to escape from this oppressive, everyday reality.

Clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov

The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment

1985

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de Création industrielle. Purchase, 1990.
X62215

The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment is set in a room in a communal housing block, its walls covered with propaganda posters. The doorway has been blocked up, but we can peer in, and read the bewildered accounts of the other tenants to piece together what has happened.

The unnamed inhabitant seems to have built a catapult to hurl himself through the ceiling and into space. The utopian fantasy of space travel was a powerful part of Soviet life, yet here it is used to escape from the dreary reality of communal living.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Incident in the Corridor Near the Kitchen

1989

Mixed media installation

Melissa Schiff Soros and Private Collection

X66825

'The perpetual state of war, either concealed or open, which reigns in the communal apartment creates in it an atmosphere of waves and tornadoes that never subside', Ilya has said. In this installation, the corridor has become a literal scene of turbulence and chaos, with pots, pans and other kitchen utensils seeming to fly through mid-air. This discord is in jarring contrast to the paintings, which could be seen as windows looking out onto a more idyllic landscape. A written account of the event is displayed on a music stand.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Objects of His Life

2005

Furnished room with furniture, display cases, storyboards, found objects, documents, drawings, texts, furniture, and collage

Private collection

X66462

Including hundreds of personal items arranged in display cases or suspended on wires, this installation imagines a fictional character whose existence is reduced to the things he owns. These are presented and labelled like artefacts in an archaeological museum, even tiny pieces of rubbish. As with the earlier painting **Sobakin**, in Room 1, the Kabakovs ask whether the complexity of any individual's existence and personal experiences can be adequately reflected in material objects or institutional records

Ilya Kabakov

16 Ropes

1984 / 1994

Rope and mixed media

Private collection

X69535

Ilya Kabakov

Box with Garbage

1986 / 1994

Wood and mixed media

Private collection

X69585

Translations

The Man Who Flew Into Space from His Apartment

1985

The lonely inhabitant of this room, as becomes clear from the story his neighbour tells, was obsessed by a dream of a lonely flight into space. In all probability, he realised this dream of his, his 'grand project'.

The entire cosmos, according to the thoughts of the inhabitant of this room, was permeated by streams of energy leading upward somewhere. His project was conceived in an effort to hook up with the streams and fly away with them. A catapult, hung from the corners of the room, would give this new 'astronaut', who was sealed in a plastic sack, his initial velocity. Further up, at a height of 40-50 metres, he would land in a stream of energy through which the Earth was passing at that moment as it moved along its orbit. The astronaut had to pass through the ceiling and attic of the building. With this goal in mind, he installed powder charges and at the moment of take-off from the catapult, the ceiling and roof would be wiped out by an explosion, and he would be carried away into a wide-open space. Everything took place late at night, when all the other inhabitants of the communal apartment were sound asleep. One can imagine

their horror, fright, bewilderment. The local police were summoned, an investigation began, and the tenants searched everywhere – in the yard, on the street – but he was nowhere to be found.

In all probability, the project, the general nature of which was known by the neighbour who told the investigator about it, was successfully realised.

~

Always, and also for as long as I can remember myself and even when I don't remember (my mother told of this about me as a three-year old) there has been a desire to run, to get away from that place where you are now. To run without looking back, so as never to return, to run so far away that they can't bring you back from there, to run so fast that you can't be caught, to run so suddenly and unexpectedly that no one could anticipate it and interfere, to jump out at the most unexpected moment when no one was expecting it, to jump through the window which was always closed, through the door which is most likely locked...

~

Knowing the age-old history of the Russian dream about flight and about life in space, it is not difficult to include this installation, 'The Room' in a long series of similar projects

among which one could cite the ideas of Fyodorov and Tsiolkovsky. It is particularly important to consider that aspect of these theories whereby the cosmos is represented as entirely suitable for human existence, for migration from Earth, which by that time – the time of space migration – will turn out to be excessively overpopulated. In connection with this, I would like to mention that the project was predetermined by this condition. But in correlating his situation with the idea of the resettling of the human race at first to nearby planets and then all over space, won't we arrive at an ideally pronounced and all-penetrating principle of communality, realised on one end of the spectrum in an overcrowded apartment in a four-storey building, and on the other in infinite space?

In this regard, we should turn our attention to three types of objects located in the room of the inhabitant. These exist there permanently and, without a doubt, they pushed him to the realisation of his concept.

Here we are talking about, in the first place, posters with which he wallpapered his room, not having the opportunity to acquire simple wallpaper. These posters are hung in three tiers, and in their arrangement it is not difficult to see three mythological levels of existence: the highest level is of the gods, the middle level (so to speak), is of real life, its everydayness, and the lower or third level is of the nether

regions, hell, which coincidentally or not has turned out to be composed of red posters.

The second object is the painting, which someone gave to the inhabitant of the room. It depicts the solemn moment of take-off into space by the Spassky Tower of the Moscow Kremlin. All of this takes place on Red Square, which is represented in incomprehensible dimensions which do not correspond to reality: virtually the entire population of the country is there. In this way, the flight into the sky of the main tower of the country acquires universal proportions.

Finally, the third object which can be seen in the dishevelled room is a model, standing to the left of the door and illuminated by an electric light bulb, of the city block where the 'traveller's' building is located. A metal ribbon is attached to the roof depicting the trajectory of his future flight. Here, in this crudely constructed landscape with a bright blue distance and sky with large white clouds, isn't there some sort of strange, piercing note resounding in the consciousness of the 'one who flew away', when he in his loneliness thought out his plan at night and simultaneously bid farewell to the earth and to the place where he was at the moment? Wasn't this model, illuminated by a light bulb, an image of the entire earth to which he had already bid farewell in his imagination and which he looked at from above and as though from the side?

Nikolaev's Story

I didn't know him well... He arrived two years ago, having been recruited for a construction job. He was given a room in our communal apartment. Where he worked, I don't know. I was his neighbour. His room was to the right of mine. He never visited me, and he let others into his room reluctantly. I don't know if he has anyone, he always lived alone. Two fellows sometimes came to see him. One of them brought the painting which is hanging in his room. When he moved in, he remodelled his room. He couldn't get his hands on any wallpaper so he covered everything with posters which he bought. He said it would be cheaper that way.

Our communal apartment is large, twelve families. We live in a four-storey building, on the last floor. Almost every day for a few months he went to the attic. The neighbours asked what he was doing there, but he almost never talked to anyone, and almost never used the kitchen, even though his door was just opposite it. He would only put the teapot on to boil.

I dropped in on him about six months ago – his room was full of scattered blueprints, some of them were glued right to the wall. I thought that they were for the building site where he worked. On a table in the corner stood a model of our block, our street, and you could see our building. I asked him why there were metal bands attached to the model and leading

upward from the roof of our house. He suddenly said that it was the trajectory of his future flight...

He lived very poorly, without any furniture, and he slept on a folding cot without a sheet...

He felt, as he told me, that he wasn't quite an inhabitant of Earth, as though he had been born not here at all, and that not waiting for death, he had to leave for there, where, according to him, he should be...

I'll tell you a little about his 'grand theory'.

He imagined the entire Universe to be permeated by huge sheets of energy which 'lead upward somewhere'. These gigantic upward streams he called 'petals'. The plane of movement of the galaxies, stars and planets does not correspond to the direction of the energy of these petals, but intersects them, periodically passing through them. Thus, the Earth together with the sun periodically crosses through one of these enormous 'petals'. If you knew this precise moment, then you could jump from the orbit of the Earth onto this 'petal' – i.e. you could enter, join, this powerful stream of energy and be whirled upward with it.

He told me that he knew, that he had calculated this moment. It only lasts a short time, about twelve minutes. He kept that

day a secret. But to enter that stream you had to give your body an initial movement, momentum, so that a departing force would pick you up. For that initial thrust he counted on the energy of the field of the moon and two heavenly bodies – Sirius and Pluto – which at that very moment would add the necessary pull as a result of special cosmic cones.

For this transfer to the 'petal', he thought up his project. He realised it on April 14, 1982 in the middle of the night...

To realise his plan for departure, he decided to build a catapult in his room, which would give him the initial velocity at the moment of take-off. By his calculations, it would propel him to a height of 40 metres above the Earth, where he would enter the sphere of action of the energy of a 'petal'. He fastened 4 extension wires made of thick rubber in the two corners and at both sides of the room. Stretching them, he attached the catapult to a hook screwed into the floor. The lock mechanisms on the hook were supposed to release the saddle of the catapult suddenly. But at the moment of take-off, he also had to pass through the ceiling of the room, the attic and the roof of the building. For this he installed powder charges along the entire perimeter of the ceiling and roof, so that at the moment of take-off the ceiling and part of the roof above the room would be ripped away by an explosion and thus release him into open space.

He kept from me the hour and date when he would carry out his plan, and therefore at the moment of explosion I wasn't in his room. But it seems to me that someone must have been there to help him get into the space sack and to release the locks on the catapult. The space sack was made of clear plastic and was intended to protect the body in the open cosmos and for travelling in the 'petals'. In the sack there were provisions, an oxygen tank, navigation instruments and other equipment...

Startseva's Story

I was sleeping when suddenly there was a terrible explosion nearby, as if the building were crumbling. I ran out into the hallway dressed like I was. All the neighbours ran out too, in their night clothes. There was smoke pouring from his room, some sort of steam and the smell of something burning. His door was completely destroyed, hanging by the hinges. Inside the room everything was surrounded by smoke, some sort of machine was hanging from belts. The entire ceiling was blown away, you could see a hole, and there was also an enormous hole in the roof. There was wind and rain and everything was rattling, water was pouring in on the floor through the hole. Nikolaev climbed up to seal everything with plywood at least...

Golosov's Story

A car arrived immediately from the nearby police station. They started to search for him all over the block – maybe he was lying somewhere or had fallen – but they didn't find him anywhere... Maybe he really did fly away, that sort of thing happens.

Some of the papers and drawings were taken by the investigators. The junk in the room was thrown out – here it is, a part of the plywood from the attic where he was busy doing something, with some kind of blueprint glued to it...

The repairmen from the ZhEK (housing maintenance committee) nailed boards over the door so that no one could enter or touch anything. But curious outsiders continually come by, moving the boards and peeking between the cracks... And the model on the table still stands, as it was, under the lamp, just like it did when he was still here...

Incident in the Corridor Near the Kitchen

1989

When Olga Yakovlevna went out to get water in the morning, she saw a lot of pots, frying pans and mugs freely fluttering about like birds in the still dark space of the communal corridor, and a few little white people were standing quietly on the brand new flying pot which belonged to Igor Subordin from the corner room.

INCIDENT IN THE CORRIDOR, NEAR THE KITCHEN ALBUM TRANSLATION

Cover

Incident in the corridor, near the kitchen

p.2

Incident in the corridor, near the kitchen

p.3

In the communal kitchen

p.4

The communal kitchen (installation)

p.5

V. Fedorova's casserole

Grandma Katya's pan

Zoe Lisina's casserole

N. Morozov's teapot

Ivan Ivanovich's coffeepot

Zoe Lisina's pan

Olga Victorovna's washing bowl

Volodya's mug

Olga Victorovna's washing bowl

p.6

Grandma Katya's pan

Rosa Ivanovna's milk jug

Victor's casserole

Rosa Ivanovna's teapot

Anna Markovna's milk jug

Vera's milk jug

Anna Markovna's colander

Vera's bowl

Volodya's bowl

Objects of His Life

2005

Text from the installation on which it is based, **The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away (The Garbage Man) 1988:**

Living in this room is a man who spent his life having never thrown anything away; not one item, paper, jar, box, etc.

He could not part with any of these things because each was tied to a memory, an impression, someone's likeness. To part with any of these things, he imagined, would mean to part with their memories, to loosen his ties to the past, and together with that, all one's life.

His memory tells him, that in past life, each remembrance is full of meaning, it is impossible to count one event as meaningful and another not, rather each is an equivalent part of life itself.

Therefore the only thing left to do with these items and memories, is to catalogue them, to make rows and columns, given them numbers and enter them into a ledger in a strict, exacting order.

I sat through almost 30 years in my attic studio. I would leave the house early, at 8 o'clock (it was an hour away by car or metro), I would go up to my attic, to my studio. I would walk past the trash and garbage boxes near the gate, through the

inner courtyard that was dirty, covered with junk and dust in the summer, or with white, melting also dirty snow in the winter. And I would go up the back stairs (through the back entrance), and as I made my way up to the fifth floor, I ran into two buckets of garbage with table scraps on each landing, one on each side, near the doors to two communal kitchens which opened onto the landings. Shouts, both male and female, could be heard coming from each side, sometimes the doors would open and a woman would step out in a bathrobe to scrape the leftovers from the plate into the garbage bucket. I would slowly ascend higher and higher past this morning life up the old stone steps, the edges of which were already ground down as if with a file. I would run into the janitor of our building crashing down from above with an enormous metal trough full of kitchen trash. The trough would be coming down the steps ahead of him, and he would hang on to it with a long rope so that it wouldn't fly down the stairs. I was able to put it all together with an unexpected, sudden illumination: the trough, the janitor and the chopped off steps. For this trough, sliding down over the course of 70 years (the building was built in 1902) had ground down the edges of the stairs. "A trough grinds stone."

Finally, I would reach the last, attic landing. It was also filled with old junk, but the objects which the residents brought here (only so they didn't have to drag them to the dump near the building entrance) were large: an old oak kitchen cabinet

with chiselled columns, enormous beds, a wall unit, a gigantic broken mirror in a carved frame. Every morning or almost every week something new would appear there. Stunned by the beauty of a few things, I would drag them into my studio and use them – tables, chairs, an old couch. (True, with the latter I also acquired an enormous number of bedbugs which gnawed on me mercilessly all night when I would spend the night in the studio).

...I open the metal door with my key and pass across the wooden plank under the very roof, among garbage and other junk preserved here since the day the house was built and brought here by the residents over all these years... It is a long passageway about two hundred steps. At the end of this whole journey, I open the door to the studio at the end of the attic and enter "home". I sit down on the chair. I look around. I must continue drawing, I must paint what I began yesterday, finish the work for the publishing house which they have been waiting for a long time now. But I don't do any of this. Like yesterday and all the days before that for some reason I open a package with old paper and notes, and I slowly begin to rearrange these pages in senseless dissipation – this is the same kind of foolish garbage that surrounds me, but it is my personal garbage, accumulated during my stay in the attic. All kinds of junk, all kinds of scraps radiate a bundle of memories: what happened, how that memory is connected with the scrap, the remnant...

Texts from objects hanging from the first wire

1. Coloured cellophane

- a) I had some boiling water here, if he had said something about Valentina, I would have given it to him...
- b) ...I hear a noise, everybody runs – and I haven't got the nerves – I didn't even dare come out...

2. Loofa fragment

- a) Oh, oh, everything is topsy-turvy, they turned everything over!...
- b) They're going to KILL him!

3. Plastic bottle fragment

- a) Well, just look! They even moved the stove from its place!...
- b) Oh, go fuck yourself and leave me alone!

4. Red ballpoint pen

a) Just like that, you let loose around here – save that for your own home...

b) My hand hurts even now, how I tugged and pulled him along. And everyone pushed me aside, go away, don't interfere...

5. White plastic toy gate

a) Oh, what's a screech it was, what a screech!...

b) You're asking for it again!

6. Plastic razor

a) What did they spill here? God, they broke everything, what sort of people...

b) ...Now everyone got scred and hid, instead of doing something, calling someone to help...

7. Painted flannel
 - a) Go fuck yourself! Sit in your room and butt out!...
 - b) What do you think, somebody has to answer for everybody...

8. Toilet roll fragment
 - a) So what money did I take from you, bitch, go ahead and tell me!
 - b) Nobody gave you permission to unleash your hands...

9. Leather tag
 - a) Who's that coming here, so tiny, so cute?...
 - b) Hey, why are you butting in – it's none of your business, go home and sit there- humph! Another one who wants to get her two cents in!

10. Scrunched paper

a) Mother, give me thirty kopecks!...

b) Vera didn't give it to her!

11. Metal yoyo

a) They're going to KILL him!

b) I didn't start, you started...

12. Piece of foam

a) Marya Akimovna, you see – I didn't start this – but then they'll start talking!...

b) Simya Yakolevna, what's "playpen?"

13. Cardboard packaging

- a) Oh, what the fuck do I need her for, the fucked up whore!
- b) Mother, are we going to chow soon?

14. Metal drill bit

- a) Let's go, he'll remember, fuck him, let him lie there...
- b) I met you, and all the past inside my soul died down not quite. I reminisced of a golden time, and my heartgrew light...

15. Twig

- a) Don't pretend, whore, don't play a turkey here!...
- b) What the fuck, he is treating --- every day...

16. Bag of metal fragments

- a) I don't know what I'm going to do with him, whore, let him come...
- b) Oh God, I'm going to lose my mind from this racket!...

17. Brown crayon

- a) Strain it and put it on a low flame, I'll be right back, I just have to take the garbage out.
- b) What, he has to listen to her... should I just hang it like this or on a clothespin?

18. Red plastic lid

- a) You should have thought about it earlier, now we just yell and yell!
- b) The belt's all leather. And the edges have a light, slightly yellowish stripe...

19. Green plastic

a) Go tell your mother everything's ready and we can start pouring.

b) You are a fucking bitch! You flap your lip around here, meantime look what the child did over there!...

20. Blue scrunched tape

a) And you too, Maria Nikolayevna, but in, without knowing what's where, but meddle anyway...

b) Spraying, Marya Ignatyevna, does nothing.

21. Tyre fragment

a) Shake it up, shake it up good! So there's no sediment left in there.

b) Olga Nikolayevna, when I saw his eyes, I thought he was going to kill, I shrank back and just stood there...

22. Yellow plastic pot

a) Can I get drink here?

b) Oh enough, enough blabbing, you go on, you don't even know what about and look what comes of it!...

23. Purple ID clip

a) ...If you don't come back this instant, just watch out I don't know what I'll do to you...

b) Where does she work, in the beauty parlour?...

24. Scrunched receipts and metal

a) ...Where could he have run to – to Valya, his sister...

b) But just tell me, why did they fix him so, what could he have said to them that was so terrible that they had to disfigure a man so?

25. White cable

a) I'm fine, just fine, soon they'll be here, now they'll see...

b) Last night they were giving it our, now I'll just go and take.

26. Sponge

a) I'm frightened to come out here, even...

b) And why, may, I ask, do you find it necessary to shut me up to not let me say one word?

27. Metal screw dipped in red paint

a) ...What did I ask you to do last time you don't recall? But I repeated it twice to you!

b) He took the matches with him too, the scum.

THE GARBAGE MAN, ALBUM

Cover

The Garbage Man

p.2

The Garbage Man's room

p.3

His hallway

His hallway

p.4

Found under the sofa

Found in the corner

Found on the street

Found in the corridor

Found in the corner

Found on the street

Found in the corner

Found in the yard

Found in the corner

Found in the corridor

Found in the yard

Found under the sofa
Found under the sofa
Found on the street
Found in the yard
Found in the corridor

p.5

Found under the sofa
Found on the street
Found in the yard
Found on the street
Found in the corner

Found in the corridor
Found in the corridor
Found in the yard
Found under the sofa
Found in the corner
Found in the yard

Found under the sofa
Found on the street
Found in the corridor
Found in the corridor
Found in the corner

Found on 3 May 1987

p.6

Found on 3 May 1987

Found on the street

Found in the yard

Found under the sofa

Found in the corridor

Found in the yard

Found on the street

Found under the sofa

Found in the corridor

Found in the corridor

ROOM 4

The sculptural installations **Trousers in the Corner** 1989 and **I Catch the Little White Men** 1990 both feature minuscule paper cut-out figures. According to Ilya, these 'little white men' are the inhabitants of a parallel world who can occasionally be glimpsed by human eyes. The tiny figures are just one example of the subversions of perspective and scale that appear throughout the Kabakovs' work, perhaps reflecting the ways in which individuals are elevated and forgotten in historical records.

Concerns with scale and perception are also present in Ilya and Emilia's models for the realised and unrealised installations **Where is Our Place?** 2002/2017 and **The Vertical Opera (Guggenheim)** 1998/2008. Both works draw upon the idea of the museum as a site of cultural authority, shaping our understanding of history, art, and society as a whole.

Clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov

Trousers in the Corner

1989

Textile and paper

Private collection

X66306

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

I Catch the Little White Men

1990

Wood, glass, paper, wire and light bulbs

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66305

Works in centre of room

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Model for The Vertical Opera (Guggenheim)

1998 / 2008

Wood, paper and light bulb

Private collection

X66308

The distinctive rotunda of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York is the proposed setting for an ambitious opera on the history of Soviet Russia. The Kabakovs' concept utilises the vertical space of the structure, which the audience observes from the balconies. Enclosed within architect Frank Lloyd Wright's modernist vision, each level of the rotunda stands for a different chapter in this musical epic: 'Ante-Revolution', 'Revolution', 'Soviet Times', 'Perestroika' and 'Post-Perestroika'.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for Where is Our Place?

2002 / 2017

Wood, paper and light bulbs

Private collection

X66307

Where is Our Place? imagines two exhibitions occurring simultaneously within a single art gallery. Old master oil paintings in thick gilt frames can only be partially seen as they ascend into the ceiling. Meanwhile, a display of contemporary photographs and poetry is shown at eye level. There are also two types of viewers – giants and subterranean beings, whose world is just about visible through windows in the floorboards at the edges of the gallery. This reflection on old and new art is also a play on perspective, emphasising that everything appears relative to one's own position in the world.

Translations

I Catch the Little White Men

From The Mental Institution or Institute of Creative Research
1990

AUTHOR OF THE 'PROJECT': SEDYHK, NIKOLAI GAVRILOVICH,
1931.

ENTERED THE INSTITUTE 18 DECEMBER 1978.

EXCITED, CONSTANTLY IN A STATE OF TENSION, TALKS
EXCESSIVELY.

UNCOMMUNICATIVE.

~

'PROJECT': 'THEY'RE IN THE CABINET'

(WORK BEGUN ON THE "PROJECT" OCTOBER 1989)

SEDYKH'S STORY

"A long time ago I worked at the 'Institute for the Study of Creativity' with various 'authors' on the problem of the observations of creativity in the early stages of its discovery. In no way had I ever noticed any signs whatsoever, even the smallest, of creativity in myself. So the case of the discovery of creativity completely accidentally in my case is all the more interesting, as is the rapid and clear appearance of it as

occurred in my case. I was working on the realisation of Sizov's 'Project'. We wouldn't move an inch, sometimes standing still for hours, waiting for the appearance of the 'little white men'. Often our many hours of waiting produced no results. Therefore, in contrast to Sizov, I set for myself the task not only to see but 'to catch', not to 'let go' the 'little white people'. This happened a year ago, and that moment must be considered the time of the beginning of the realisation of my own "project", my transition from collaborator to 'Author', and in terms of research of creativity – the observation of its transition from the latent, hidden phase to its active phase.

My 'Project' includes the building of a cabinet of a specific construction with special glass, as well as the creation in it of a special polarised light. According to my supposition, the 'little white men' should, while crossing through that glass reservoir with a special air filling, linger a while and move around in its field. The first experiments conducted with the first cabinets built according to my design brilliantly confirmed my supposition. The 'little white men' started to linger in it, some of them changed the direction of their motion, others changed the position in their group.

However, a great deal of work was still required in terms of the shape, height, and length of the cabinet in order for it to fulfil its role in steadily 'delaying' the 'little white men'. Total darkness also turned out to be necessary, as well as silence around the apparatus."

Collaborator's Notes

Here we see a clear example of 'infection' by creativity, whereby one creative 'Project' begets another, one idea continues and develops the previous one from which it gets its impulse. Sedykh originally was a collaborator in the realisation of Sizov's 'Project'. But soon after his work on that project, he himself felt a powerful surge of creative energy in himself and after 2 months became an 'Author' himself.

Trousers in the Corner

From The Mental Institution or Institute of Creative Research
1989

AUTHOR OF THE 'PROJECT': SIZOV, VLADIMIR TIMOFEEVICH,
1926.

ENTERED THE INSTITUTE 12 MARCH 1986.

VERY RESERVED, NOT TALKATIVE. INTERESTED IN VIRTUALLY
NOTHING, INCLUDING FOOD AND WALKS IN THE FRESH AIR.
COMPLETELY ENGROSSED IN THE REALISATION OF HIS
'PROJECT'.

~

'PROJECT': 'SOMEONE KEEPS SHOWING UP IN THE CORNER'
(WORK BEGUN ON THE 'PROJECT' 18 MARCH 1986)
SIZOV'S STORY

"Ever since childhood I have held the conviction that in addition to us, ie. people, animals, birds and fish, inhabitants of our earth which are all normal and well-known to everyone, that on our planet there may also turn out to be other beings, but totally accidentally and only temporarily, temporarily since they belong to a completely different civilization, they are inhabitants of completely different worlds. And a number of times, in my very earliest childhood – and this is one of my strongest childhood memories – I saw 'them', these aliens, but from afar, in the corner of my room.

Twice again in my life this happened: when I was moving into a new house, and there again during a storm – I saw them again but much closer, like little white men walking one behind the other in formation... For a minute it seemed to me that they were souls of those who had died, souls without their bodily shells. Two years ago I saw them again on my old trousers which I didn't need any more and therefore I had tossed into the corner so I could throw them away later. My little men appeared a number of times during the night and even in the morning, from behind these trousers, but they never went down to the floor... I took the trousers with me to work in order to clarify whether this appearance was connected with the trousers, and at work I tossed them into a corner. The little men appeared here too, and didn't leave for a whole 6 minutes! I didn't tell anyone about my discovery, except for my neighbour at the office whose desk was next to mine and with whom I was very friendly... Unfortunately, the trousers in the corner started to attract the attention of the whole office, and with the help of my friend I had to find another place in the scientific research institute, where similar research was being conducted, and where my observations provoked lively interest. Here I conduct constant observations of my 'beings' and to help me with that I have been given an entire group of qualified collaborators and a large laboratory. Maybe we will soon be able to answer the questions: Who are these aliens? What are they doing here? Can we communicate with them?"

Model for installation The Vertical Opera (Project for Guggenheim)

1998 / 2008

This project proposes to transform the Museum into an Operatic Stage, which is encircled by balconies, with the theatrical performance taking place in the centre, occupying the entire vertical space of the building, from ceiling to floor.

The theme of the 'Opera' is the history of Soviet Russia from her beginning to her end.

The vertical space is divided into five tiers. The viewer, ascending the spiral, passes through the 'heavens', from one period of history to the next. Each has its own heroes and its own muses.

The following are the Tiers:

ANTE-REVOLUTION

REVOLUTION

SOVIET TIMES

PERESTROIKA

POST-PERESTROIKA

Where is Our Place?

2002/2017

Installation at the Querini Stampalia Foundation, Venice, during the 50th Venice Biennale, 2003:

Concept

Everything is rather relative – including our place in the world, and in particular, that very art which we are now displaying, that which is called contemporary. Art also existed in this very place but at another time, and in its time it had pretensions of external existence, as being an immutable image – but now our 'contemporary' art has arrived on the scene and has unexpectedly replaced it... But the old has not disappeared and is constantly present, discrediting what the new generation is doing today...

The goal of this installation is to juxtapose these two things in a paradoxical way.

ROOM 5

The limits of visual perception are explored in **Three Nights** 1989. The three large paintings all relate to the theme of night, whether it be a starry sky or a nocturnal insect. However, they are placed behind a large screen, allowing only a partial view of each work. Viewers must look through monoculars, which are directed at small apertures through which magnified images of little white men can be seen.

With its emphasis on preventing and enabling different ways of looking, Ilya has linked this work to two irreconcilable types of knowledge. He contrasts the information that you can learn from conversations or books, which can be broken down and analysed, and the mystical revelations that 'descend upon you', which can be almost impossible to comprehend or communicate to others.

Ilya Kabakov

Three Nights

1989

Mixed media installation

Private collection

X66309

In 1978 in the Voronezh Picture Gallery during an examination of one of the three paintings by the common name **Three Nights** (the paintings arrived in the Museum in 1938, and it has been impossible to establish either the name of the artist or the genuine title of the works; the title **Three Nights** was given conditionally), details were accidentally discovered in its upper part that until that time had not attracted attention to themselves. These were figures of small white people, no larger than one centimetre in size. It was suggested that such creatures might also turn out to be on the other two paintings. In fact, a thorough examination of the paintings **Night No. 2** and **Night No. 3** affirmed this, which was recorded by a photograph at that time, in the autumn of 1978.

During an examination of the painting in 1982, the location of the white figures had shifted from their original place

by 40cm. Continual observation of the little figures has been conducted from that time, and their new location is specifically recorded.

21.1.1985

Deputy Director

Voronezh Picture Gallery (Voronov)

Scientific Secretary of the Museum (Ignatiev)

Details from **Three Nights**



Details from **Three Nights**



Details from **Three Nights**



Translations

Three Nights

1989

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~

OBSERVATIONS OVER THE PAINTINGS, STARTING FROM
JANUARY 1997

PAINTING "NIGHT # 1" / vertical painting /

JANUARY 2, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN" APPEARED AT LEFT
UPPER CORNER

FEBRUARY 14, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN APPEARED AT THE
UPPER PART OF THE PAINTING IN THE MIDDLE"

PAINTING "NIGHT # 2" /the big painting/

JANUARY 10, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN" APPEARED OVER
THE CLOCK ON THE RIGHT.

JANUARY 27, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN' MOVED OVER THE
CLOCK FROM THE LEFT SIDE AND FROM THE TOP

PAINTING "NIGHT # 3" /painting with a fly/

JANUARY 3, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN" ARE NEAR THE REAR END OF THE FLY.

JANUARY 14, 1997 "THE LITTLE WHITE MEN" ARE ON THE HEAD AND SHOULDER OF THE FLY

Night #2

Translation of Cyrillic text

'Why are you crying?

Oh, silly bear!'

'Why wouldn't I yell,

Why wouldn't I cry?

Poor me, sad,

Unhappy orphan.

I came into this world

Without a tail.

Even homeless

And abandoned cats

Hold their mangled tails

In the air.

Only I, poor

Orphan,

Walk in the forest

Without a tail.

Doctor, good Doctor,

Have pity on me,

Quick, sew a tail

To miserable me.

Good Doctor Aibolit [Aibolot = "Ouch, it hurts"]

Started to laugh.
The doctor says to
The silly bear:

Look, in that case,
I have photographs.
All the tails are in front of you,
Choose one.

Here is the multi-coloured
peacock's fan
Which blazes grandly.
Here is the mouse's tail,
Thin like string.
That we don't notice.

Here is the fox's bushy tail.
And one, glittering black
Of a horse.
The little reddish tail
Of the squirrel
Sparkling of a golden fire.

It takes a little time
To sew a tail
But be careful, bear!
Don't regret it
After your wedding!

ROOM 6

Not Everyone Will Be Taken Into the Future was the title of a 1983 essay about the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich, which Ilya contributed to **A-YA**, a journal of unofficial Russian art that was published in Paris. He imagines Malevich as a charismatic visionary, leading his people upwards into the future. He then remembers his art school, where the most deserving pupils were selected to go to the Young Pioneer camp, while the rest were left behind. Ilya reflects that some artists will go forward and become part of the history of art, but many others will be forgotten.

In the installation of the same name, made by Ilya and Emilia in 2001, a train is already leaving the platform, carrying all of those selected to be part of the future. Discarded canvases bring to mind all of the artists abandoned to obscurity, whether they have fallen out of favour with a political regime or simply become unfashionable. As the art world is so focused on keeping up with the present moment, the Kabakovs ask, 'What will happen to these works tomorrow?'

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Not Everyone Will Be Taken Into the Future

2001

Wooden construction, railway car fragment, running-text display and paintings

MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Art / Contemporary Art.
LHG 1948 / 2001 – permanent loan Geyer & Geyer Collection,
Vienna

X62900

This installation is dedicated to the problem that is very topical for the situation in the contemporary art world today: What will happen to artists and their works in the very near, and not so near future? How will they be accepted and understood by the new viewer of the future, the new art critic, the new collector, the new curator?

In our mind, this problem today is masked by the dominant reality, the demand to be 'contemporary' no matter what! The demand 'to exist today' overwhelms the question: What will happen to these works tomorrow?

This is a personal problem for every artist: What is more important, to have his works understood and accepted today, or to wish for them to live into 'tomorrow', and what is the difference?

Translations

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Excerpt from Ilya Kabakov, 'Russian artists on Malevich', **A-YA**
1983

NOT EVERYONE WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE FUTURE

You don't even know what to say about Malevich. A great artist. An inspirer of terror. A great boss.

The headmaster of our school, a very stern, fierce man, said as spring and the end of the year approached: 'Only those who have deserved it will go to the school's Young Pioneer camp for the summer. The others will remain here'.

Everything broke apart inside me.

Everything depends on the boss. He can – I cannot. He knows – I do not know. He knows how – I do not.

We had many bosses at school: headmaster Karrenberg, head of studies Sukiasyan, the poet Pushkin, head of military studies Petrov, the artists Repin and Surikov, the composers Bach, Mozart, Tchaikovsky... And if you didn't obey them, if you didn't do what they said or recommended, 'you will remain here'.

NOT EVERYONE WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE FUTURE

This chilling sentence contains the primordial division of all people into three categories, like children:

1. He who will take.
2. He who will be taken.
3. He who will not be taken.

... I shall not be taken.

A great, epoch-making picture appears in my imagination:

1913. Europe. A high mountain. Not even a mountain, but a kind of plateau. A small knot of grim people is standing at the very edge of the plateau, where it falls away like a sliced-off piece of cheese. Before them, right at their feet, where the land, going downhill, breaks off, a sea of mist is spread out. How are they to go forward and to where? Behind the group of leaders stands frightened, huddled humanity, at a respectful distance in order not to interfere with the conference. What will be the leadership's decision? Silence. A great historical moment.

If one draws close, trembling all over, to the small, elevated meeting, there, among the other great helmsmen, one sees Malevich. Calm. Self-controlled. Fully prepared for the immense responsibility that has fallen to his lot.

He recommends that they go on, straight at the sky. He regards the edge of the precipice at his feet as the end of the past life. The entire past history of mankind, all its affairs, its art, has ended right here and now. The 'old' land has ended. Ahead is the 'new' land, the breath of the cosmos, a new class of being. He is totally gripped by this new spirit, of which he himself is the embodiment. At this great moment the horizon is opened up for him in both directions. The future is clear and so, therefore, is the past. He has completely mastered the old existence and knows it, has squeezed it in his fist. There it lies, fallen quiet, wrinkled, a small square on his broad palm. There will be no repeat. Ahead is only the 'Other'.

A few will go with him into this new, precipitous world. These 'new men' will live in the future, closely united around their teacher, given wings by his spirit, his ideas. How is this select company to be penetrated? How is a ticket to be bought for the departing train? There is a system of tests for this, which will determine your preparedness for spiritual flight. If, for those left, a square is simply a square and five coloured rectangles are five rectangles, then, for those who have grasped the new spirit, have entered into it, these are signs of the new spiritual space, the gates beyond which lie the 'new land', the koan whose solution is on a new, unprecedented plane.

The 'new men', in touch with the new life, will have their work there: to mark the 'new' (formerly old) land, the 'earthlings' (former people) and their 'planettes' (former homes), their clothes, furniture and utensils with supreme signs, imbuing everything with energy, as it were, so that nothing on this planet and on all the others, whatever there may be in the cosmos, shall remain without the vivifying force of supreme consciousness.

'It's finished here – go ahead'.

Well, and what will happen to the 'unpromising' citizens left? One more recollection from my schooldays. I lived in a dormitory at school. When the headmaster said, at the assembly I have already mentioned, that not everybody would go to the Young Pioneer camp, but only the best, one of the pupils asked quietly whether he could stay in the dormitory for the summer.

'No,' the headmaster replied. 'The dormitory will be closed all summer for repairs and it will be forbidden to stay there.'

...To sum up:

The way ahead is with Malevich alone.

But only a few will be taken – the best. Those whom the headmaster chooses – HE KNOWS WHOM.

ROOM 7

Since the early 2000s, the Kabakovs have returned to exhibiting paintings in their own right, not always as part of an installation. Many of these works explore themes of memory and forgetting, often relating to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In **Under the Snow #2** 2004, fragmentary images of parades and heroic soldiers are visible among swathes of white, suggesting a historical past buried beneath the blank surface of the present day. In other works, scenes resembling Soviet paintings seem to be layered on top of each other, their edges like the ripped pieces of a hurriedly assembled collage. The relation between the different elements is ambiguous, and it can be hard to tell which represent the background and which the foreground. The series **Two Times** conflates imagery reminiscent of seventeenth-century painting with glimpses of everyday Soviet life, as if art history were intertwined with the Kabakovs' early memories.

Section 1, works on wall clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Two Observers # 2 Diptych

(Right part of diptych)

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Olga Filatov's collection

X66822

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Kanon # 4

2007

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66792

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Under the Snow # 2

2004

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X65232

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

The Window Into My Past

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X66058

The Window Into My Past represents a triple-layered memory. At the centre of the composition is Ilya's 1981 painting **Tested!** A depiction of a work by a minor artist from a forgotten book, **Tested!** is itself once removed from the original source and given new meaning by Kabakov's appropriation of it. Here, it becomes the centrepiece for a depiction of one of the artists' exhibitions, with visitors sitting at desks to study books relating to the works on display.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Vertical Painting # 12

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X66799

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
The Colorful Noise # 8

2014

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66802

Section 1, works in centre

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for Healing with Paintings

1996 / 2010

Wood and print on paper

Private collection

X66312

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for The Toilet

1992 / 2017

Wood and textiles

Private collection

X66314

In 1992, the Kabakovs were invited to participate in the exhibition Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany. They constructed a compact, concrete building whose separate male and female entrances indicated that it was intended to be a public toilet. When they entered, audiences discovered

that the interior was decorated with domestic furniture and keepsakes, as if it had been long inhabited by an anonymous resident. While the installation offered a metaphor about life in the Kabakovs' homeland, many visitors assumed that it reflected a social reality, and that people in Russia really did live in toilets.

Section 2, works on wall clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

The Six Paintings about the Temporary Loss of Eyesight (They are Painting the Boat)

2015

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X66804

The series **The Six Paintings about the Temporary Loss of Eyesight** are presented as works by an ageing artist, who may or may not be afflicted with deteriorating vision. This is represented by small dots which are evenly spread across the surface of the painting. There are echoes of the sweet wrappers attached to the earlier **Holiday** paintings, which a different fictional artist used to revitalise previously made works. Together the series suggest that, as Emilia has said, 'reality can never be seen straight on but is always obscured either on purpose or by necessity'.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Two Times # 10

2015

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X66803

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Vertical Painting # 4

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X66796

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
The Collage of Spaces # 6

2010

Oil paint on canvas

Bukhtoyarov Family Collection, London
X66826

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Two Times # 17

2015

Medium Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X66807

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Two Times # 22

2016

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X66812

Section 2, works in centre

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Model for The Arch of Life

2000 / 2014

Textile, wood and light bulbs

Private collection

X66311

Section 3, works on wall clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

The Four Paintings about the Sun # 4

2013

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66801

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Two Times # 20

2016

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66811

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Dark and Light # 9

2013

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X66800

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
The Appearance of the Collage # 10

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection
X66795

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
The Appearance of the Collage # 8

2012

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X66794

Section 3, works in centre

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

**The Man Climbing Over the Wall. Model for a Sculpture
(The Eternal Emigrant)**

1995 / 2004

Plaster and wood

Private collection

X66313

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov

Model for Inscriptions on the Wall (Reichstag)

1998/2000

Paint on wood

Private collection

X66310

In 1945 Soviet soldiers seized the Reichstag, the former German parliament building. They covered the walls with Cyrillic markings, writing their names, their hometowns, expressions of their hopes and feelings, and their hatred for Fascism. More than fifty years later, several artists were invited to propose an artistic intervention in the Reichstag. The Kabakovs' unrealised plan was to frame and light some of the surviving inscriptions to memorialise those minor players in the historical narrative and bring into view markings that would otherwise remain invisible.

Translations

Model for Inscriptions on the Wall (Project for Reichstag)

1998/2000

The main idea is to preserve in their entirety the existing inscriptions by Soviet soldiers on the walls, while at the same time inserting these inscriptions into the ensemble of the new interior of the Reichstag. It is equally extremely important to balance two different times in a single space: the time of history (1945) and the time of the new interior's construction.

The concept of the installation presumes that preparation of shallow glass display cases in metal frames which will cover over the existing inscriptions on the wall in accordance with the existing plan of the proposed locations in various places around the building. Yellowish lighting from below on the left and right is to be installed inside each case. Lighting is installed there not as much as to provide actual illumination of the inscriptions inside the 'displays', but rather to create the atmosphere of 'history', the rarity and significance of what is located behind the frames. This is more like the 'semi-light' that is common in many archaeological museums to illuminate ancient sculptures and frescoes.

Two Times #20

Translation of Cyrillic text

...dancers known to the whole city. Lieutenant Yermilov, li...
...nant Starosvetov, cornet Korolev, cornet Tobolsky, cornet
Kohanovsky,
- the rest refused, as is usual in such
cases, complaining about having limps and other ailments.
Unfortunately, the manuscript
...the end of the story with the rubies,
...of the storyteller himself, whether he died -
...ot known to us.

Publisher.

ROOM 8

‘When I think about that world in which my mother’s life passed’, Ilya has said, ‘what arises in my imagination is a long and semi-dark corridor which is twisted like a labyrinth, where behind each new turn, behind each bend, there is not a bright exit glimmering in the distance, but just the same grubby floor, the same grey, dusty, poorly painted walls illuminated by weak, 40-watt light bulbs.’

Labyrinth (My Mother’s Album) 1990 is one of Ilya’s few directly autobiographical installations. Resembling the décor of a communal apartment building, the walls are lined with photographs taken by Ilya’s uncle, and a memoir by his mother, Bertha Urievna Solodukhina. The text recounts her struggle to survive and bring up a son during the Soviet era. The corridors curve in a double spiral, first leading into the centre, then winding out again. As the visitor approaches the centre, an audio recording of Ilya himself can be heard, singing Russian romances half-remembered from his childhood.

Please do not use mobile phone torches in this installation

Large print translations of the text available outside Room 8

Ilya Kabakov

Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)

1990

Wooden construction, 9 doors, wooden ceiling props,
24 light bulbs, detritus, audio and 76 works on paper,
photographs, ink and printed papers

Tate: Purchased 2002

T07923

ROOM 9

Ilya's **Ten Characters** albums were a series of narrative drawings made from 1970–4. Each album revolves around the life of an imaginary figure, including commentaries by their friends and casual observers. The characters tend to be isolated and lonely artists, and their fantastical stories embody different strategies for survival within a totalitarian regime.

These works straddle art and literature, a quality that is emphasised by their physical presence as albums whose pages are turned like those of a book. The small scale reflects the circumstances of their production. They were made surreptitiously within the confines of the Moscow studio, where they could be shown to small groups of trusted friends.

Works on wall clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov

Human: Mind, Soul, Body

1961

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65363

Ilya Kabakov

Monument

1961

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65359

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1962

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65339

Ilya Kabakov

Abstract Drawing

1962

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65360

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1962

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65341

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1962

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65340

Ilya Kabakov

Abstract Composition

1964

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65361

Ilya Kabakov

Title Composition Nr. 1

1966

Coloured pencil on paper

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65346

Ilya Kabakov

Pipe, Stick, Ball, Fly

1966

Graphite and coloured pencil on paper

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65347

Ilya Kabakov

Horse

1967

Graphite and coloured pencil on card

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65348

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1968

Coloured pencil and ink on card

Private collection

X68020

Ilya Kabakov

From the Past to the Future

1968

Graphite and coloured pencil on card

Museum Ludwig, Cologne / Donation Ludwig

X65350

Ilya Kabakov

Space

1969

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65362

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1970

Coloured pencil and ink on card

Private collection

X68066

Ilya Kabakov

A Piece of Meat

1971

Coloured pencil and ink on paper

Private collection

X68021

Ilya Kabakov

Toothbrush

1972

Graphite and ink on paper

Private collection

X68022

Ilya Kabakov

Numbers

1973

Coloured pencil and ink on paper

Private collection

X68023

Ilya Kabakov

Untitled

1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

X65364

Works in centre of room

ROOM 7



The Released Gavrilov

X67004

**The Looking Out Of The
Window Arkhipov**

X67005

**Agonizing
Surikov**

X67001

**The Decorator
Malign**

X67003

The Flying Komarov

X67002

The Jocker Gorokhov

X67005

**Sitting In The Closet
Primakov**

X66992

**Anna Petrovna
Has A Dream**

X67000

ROOM 10

The theme of flight appears throughout the Kabakovs' work. From the solitary flies in Ilya's early paintings, it has been associated with the possibility of escape – whether from the oppression of the Soviet Union, or more generally from the harsh reality of life.

Spanning twenty years, the works in this room focus on the figure of the angel, an enduring symbol that has appeared throughout the history of art. For the Kabakovs, the angel is a stateless being that is free from earthly and bureaucratic constraints.

Following Ilya's departure from the Soviet Union, the Kabakovs now live in New York State, and remain continuously active, developing new projects to be exhibited around the world. 'Our life consists of our work, dreams and discussions', Emilia Kabakov has said. 'We are lucky: we manage to transform reality into fantasy and permanently stay there.'

Works on wall clockwise from left to right

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Incident at the Museum

Print on paper

Private collection
X70211

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Six – winged (Seraphim)

c 1972/74, 2014
Print on paper

Private collection
X70205

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for The Five Steps of Life

2000 / 2012

Textile, plaster and wood

Private collection

X66317

This sculpture is intended to be erected in a 'sculpture park' like those usually located near a museum, where similar objects are located a short distance from one another among the trees. This is a rather voluminous object (the height is nearly 10 metres, the length is 17 metres, and the width is 12 metres). It represents a fragment of what is called an artistic ruin of a giant palace that at one point existed in this spot and from which only this fragment of a staircase and five sculptures adorning this staircase have remained. The staircase is made of white brick, the sculptures are made of white cement covered with white paint (like sculptures in the former Soviet Union). The sculptures represent the following (beginning from the bottom): a human head being born from an egg; a frightened person on all fours wearing a threatening mask of a lion; a person carrying on his back a crate with a light inside (a lamp burns constantly inside the crate which has semi-transparent sides); a person crawling over a fence and stuck forever in this state (the image of an

immigrant who finds himself 'neither here nor there'); and finally, a tired person, lying in such a pose that he is carrying a horrible weight on his back and he is unable to stand up or even change his position. The sculptures have been very well preserved, but the right edge of the staircase is broken off and it is dangerous to approach it.

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Fallen Angel #1

c.1989

Print on paper

Private collection

X70207

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Fallen Angel #3

c.2014

Print on paper

Private collection

X70208

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
How to Meet an Angel

c.1997

Print on paper

Private collection

X70204

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
The Angel Over The City

1998

Wood, plaster, textile and light bulb

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg

X66316

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
How to Meet an Angel #2

c. 1997, 2014

Print on paper

Private collection

X70206

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for The Three Angels

2012

Wood

Private collection

X66315

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Wings #5

Print on paper
914 x 1194 mm

Private collection
X70210

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Wings #4

2014
Print on paper

Private collection
X70209

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
How Can One Change Oneself?

1998

Feathers, leather, and ink on paper

Private collection. Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac,
London – Paris – Salzburg
X62889

Work in centre of room

Ilya Kabakov and Emilia Kabakov
Model for How to Meet an Angel

1998 / 2002

Wood, metal, plaster and thread

Private collection

X62895

Translations

Model for How to Meet an Angel

1998/2002

An encounter with your angel in real life appears to be virtually impossible. But that is far from the truth. All that is necessary is to recall that this encounter can take place in extreme circumstances, and especially at critical moments in a person's life. And, it is within our powers to create the situation for such an encounter.

On a large empty space, best of all in a distant rural place, the erection of a very tall ladder vertically upward is begun. The ladder should reach a height of 1100 metres. Today's material (light alloys) permit the creation of a structure with the necessary durability and stability. A person who has resolved to ascend to the top of the ladder should be prepared to spend more than 2 days to do so. However, once he is near the top he finds himself high above the clouds, alone within conditions of wind and inclement weather; he thus creates – it will absolutely arise - that crisis moment when, upon request for urgent help, the appearance of an angel will turn out to be inevitable.

Model for The Five Steps of Life

2000/2012

This sculpture is intended to be erected in a 'sculpture park' like those usually located near a museum, where similar objects are located a short distance from one another among the trees. This is a rather voluminous object (the height is nearly 10 metres, the length is 17 metres, and the width is 12 metres). It represents a fragment of what is called an artistic ruin of a giant palace that at one point existed in this spot and from which only this fragment of a staircase and five sculptures adorning this staircase have remained. The staircase is made of white brick, the sculptures are made of white cement covered with white paint (like sculptures in the former Soviet Union). The sculptures represent the following (beginning from the bottom): a human head being born from an egg; a frightened person on all fours wearing a threatening mask of a lion; a person carrying on his back a crate with a light inside (a lamp burns constantly inside the crate which has semi-transparent sides); a person crawling over a fence and stuck forever in this state (the image of an immigrant who finds himself 'neither here nor there'); and finally, a tired person, lying in such a pose that he is carrying a horrible weight on his back and he is unable to stand up or even change his position. The sculptures have been very well preserved, but the right edge of the staircase is broken off and it is dangerous to approach it.

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Red Star Over Russia

The Kabakovs are from a generation of artists forged in the post-war Soviet Union. Find out more about the visual culture which preceded their artistic practice in the exhibition *Red Star Over Russia: A Revolution in Visual Culture 1905–55* on Level 2 of the Blavatnik Building. The exhibition is open from 8 November 2017 until 18 February 2018. Joint ticket offers available.

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov

18 Oct – 28 Jan 2018

The Eyal Ofer Galleries

Supported by



With additional support from Mr Roman Abramovich

The exhibition is organised by Tate Modern in collaboration with the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg and the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

Curated by Juliet Bingham, Curator, International Art, Tate Modern, with Katy Wan, Assistant Curator, Tate Modern

Leaflet text by Katy Wan

Photography is not permitted in the exhibition

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Let us know what you think #Kabakovs

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov have collaborated together since 1989. Works created before this date, by Ilya only, are indicated as such in the corresponding captions

All works © Ilya and Emilia Kabakov 2017

