



IGOR MAKAREVICH

MANIFESTATIONS CONCEPTUELLES

14 January – 13 March 2010

Galerie Blue Square is honored to present an exhibition of work by Igor Makarevich which opens to the public on Thursday, 14 January, and will be on view through Saturday, 13 March 2010. The artist, who will be present for the opening, last exhibited in Paris as part of a parallel program of the now famous *Moscow-Paris* exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in 1979.

On view will be a representation of works made from the early 1990s to the present, including new objects, paintings, and sculptures from the series *Mushrooms of the Avant-Garde* which was first presented in London last year. The exhibition will also include objects, paintings and photographs from earlier series including *The Source of Life*, *Homo Lignum*, and *Magic of Ideology* which were exhibited as part of the artist's retrospective exhibition at the State Tretyakov Gallery in 2005.

Since the late 1970s, Igor Makarevich has attained the title of one of the founders of the Moscow conceptual movement. Along with his companion, Elena Elagina, the two have contributed to the steady growth and understanding of this important movement of Russian – and non-Russian – twentieth-century art.

Well-known and admired in his native land, this past year has been important in the development of international recognition of the artist and his work. Makarevich and Elagina were selected by David Birnbaum as participating artists for the 53rd Biennale di Venezia exhibition, *Making Worlds*. And, in Vienna at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the artists exhibited *In Situ*, a collection of works that related, both in content and conceptually, to paintings in the museum's collection by Albrecht Durer, Pieter Bruegel, Rembrandt and Frans Snyders.

The paintings and photographs on exhibit reflect concretely the conceptual aspects of the artist's work. References to earlier avant-garde movements and use of text are often important elements of the works as with the *UNOKs*, *Emancipated Objects of the World* series. The artist examines samples of art by artists of the post-Suprematist period who were not included among the official ranks of Socialist Realism and explains through his project entitled "Drawings of Old Soviet Masters," the meaning of UNOK. As stated by the artist:

The Russian word for drawing is "risunok", which consists of two parts: RIS (which also means "rice", the grain that is incorporated in the object) and UNOK (a letter combination that resembles Malevich's favorite abbreviation, UNOVIS (the acronym for the association "Affirmers of the New Art"). In the 1930s, Soviet artists, apparently for lack of other materials, used "lead pencils" to draw... This technique is also "encrypted" in the objects, by using actual pieces of lead.

Another example of the artist's wit and connection between conceptual ideas and reality is evidenced in the paintings and sculptures created for the series *Mushrooms of the Avant-Garde*. Continually referencing the ideas of Malevich and the Russian avant-garde, Makarevich and Elagina first became interested in mushrooms and then upon further investigation, discovered a link between Soviet architecture as manifestations of narcotic hallucination. The theme of Buratino (equivalent to the Russian Pinocchio) also is often found in the artist's work. Working to unravel artistic and popular myths, Makarevich uses the character of Buratino to symbolize the subtle connections between "art" and "life."

Igor Makarevich was born in the Soviet Republic of Georgia in 1943 and moved to Moscow in 1951 where he later studied at the Moscow Art College and State Institute of Cinematography. Since 1979, the artist has worked with the conceptual group "Collective Actions" and is included in numerous public and private art collections including the major museums in Russia, the United States, Germany and the Centre Pompidou in France.



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