

Art Paris Art Fair 2014: report on Russian creation

Paris, 27 March 2014, Art Media Agency (AMA).

While Russia may have given up its place as guest of honour to China this year, its art scene continues to enrich the programme at Art Paris Art Fair. There are around ten Russian galleries in total, both new and returning, exhibiting during this edition under the glass roof of the Grand Palais, representing the significant growth of this movement.

Both driven and unique, Russian artists seek to ask questions – and even to provoke. Widely known for being a non-conformist artist, Marlen Spindler is being exhibited at Nadja Brykina Gallery (D20), where visitors can rediscover one of the most influential figures of Russian painting. The artist explores the interplay between colour and light, as well as nature and freedom. Meanwhile, at Roza Azora Gallery (E18), Ivan Loungine's series *La trace de l'homme* places man at the centre of investigation, shining a spotlight on a post-Soviet space where man no longer knows his place. The gallery's stand is rife with imagery from the last thirty years in Russia – of economic tragedy and lost dreams. Such politically-charged artwork also features at Galerie Blue Square (D7), where Eric Bouloatov, Yevgeniy Fiks and Igor Marakevitch are presenting work which celebrates the power of language and the imagination. The watercolour painter Nicolas Tolmachev, who recently won the UART competition, is equally on show at the gallery.

Experimentation is also a key feature at Galerie Russkiy Mir (E19), which is showcasing two painters, Yuri Bakrushev and Sergei Gherassimov, working under the name Yuri Gherman. Their series of paintings revisits classical concepts of the still life tradition, with a contemporary twist. Meanwhile, Pechersky Gallery (C2) is exhibiting Valery Koshlyakov and Arsen Savadov, known for their neo-baroque paintings and psychedelic subjects. New media such as photography take pride of place at Gallery Lilja Zakirova (A22), which is displaying prints by Katerina Belkina, amongst others.

This diverse variety of art work is increasingly attracting international attention, as observed by Oksanna Salamatina, founder of her eponymous gallery, which supports both emerging and well-established artists. She spoke to AMA about the buzz surrounding Andrei Sharov's pieces in her stand (C23). With a punk aesthetic, Sharov produces difficult and uncompromising portraits, whose vibrant colours recall works by Ingres, Matisse or Warhol. The interest marks a positive introduction to the fair for the gallery, which is committed to raising the international profile of its artists. "We're not just a shop," says Oksanna Salamatina. A sentiment shared by Ekaterina Iragui and Eléonore Senlis-Lafeuille, who run Moscow's Galerie Iragui (A5). The gallerists are proud to be presenting, amongst others, promising Russian artists, and to be introducing them to an international audience. Pavel Pepperstein, Nikita Alekseev, Ivan Razumov, and Valeria Nibiru are being showcased thanks to a donation by Daniel and Florence Guerlain, who recognised their audacious and poetic graphic talents. The donation is a bold start for Russian artists, rarely exported outside their own country, and an important level of recognition for Senlis-Lafeuille, who emphasised the gallery's wish to present a synergic vision.

Casting an eye around the stands at Art Paris Art Fair definitely proves that the Russian art scene has many tricks still up its sleeve.

Tags: art paris, art paris art fair, fair, france, gallery, paris, report, russia.