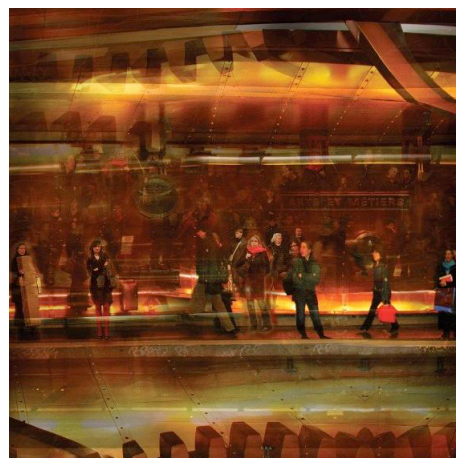


PRESS RELEASE



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Arts et Métiers, (détail) 2008, 54.2 cm x 160 cm

VALERA + NATASHA CHERKASHIN

6 November – 6 December 2008

Galerie Blue Square is pleased to present the Paris premiere exhibition of *Global Underground*, a series of digital photographs and videos by Moscow artists Valera and Natasha Cherkashin. The program is part of a five-year project, begun in 2005, which takes its first images from the New York City subway. A virtual subway is created which makes stops around the world from Moscow, New York, Stockholm, Beijing, London, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo.

The evolving project has been a returning and most important theme in the artists work. In fact, the Cherkashins met in the Moscow Metropolitan in 1992 and have continued to collaborate and include this public space in many of their projects. In the early 1990s, the artists held a number of art happenings in the Moscow station Revolutionary Square, not far from the Kremlin, including the memorable wedding that took place between one of the handsome bronze workers of the 1930s and a young Muscovite woman. These early works recorded and documented the happenings with photography and mixed media works.

Today's unique digitally produced photographs and video projects document the similarities and differences found in underground rail transport systems around the world. The resultant images reflect the complexity and luminosity that draw the viewer into a virtual time and space. As observed by fellow artist and curator Steve Yates, these global underground images become a symbol of a "matrix of change" and "a post-modern metaphor of collective history."

The subway, itself, becomes an active record of the cultural variety and technical achievements of different places. Each subway, in effect, reflects its city's personality through the ambiance of its urban surroundings and the personalities and characteristics of its passengers. The combined evolution of the Cherkashin's work and the technical advances in photography create a new order of transformation. The exhibition celebrates the union of cultures and technical achievements of individual metro systems by digitally reproducing and incorporating them into one "virtual global underground."

Since the 1960s and the first conceptual acts of Valera in his native Ukraine, performance and photography have been the media of expression. Major museums and institutions worldwide collect their works.

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