

TOTART

NATALIA
ABALAKOVA

ANATOLY
ZHIGALOV



THE MAIN ISSUE IN
CONTEMPORARY
ART CAN BE DEFINED
AS AN ATTEMPT AT
OVERCOMING THE
ESTRANGEMENT OF THE
CREATION'S SUBJECT
FROM ITS OBJECT,
OVERCOMING
THE ETERNAL GAP
BETWEEN THE
SPECTATOR AND
THE ARTWORK, THE
SPECTATOR AND
THE ARTIST

TOTART:
RUSSIAN
ROULETTE

MOSCOW MUSEUM
OF MODERN ART

TOTART

NATALIA
ABALAKOVA

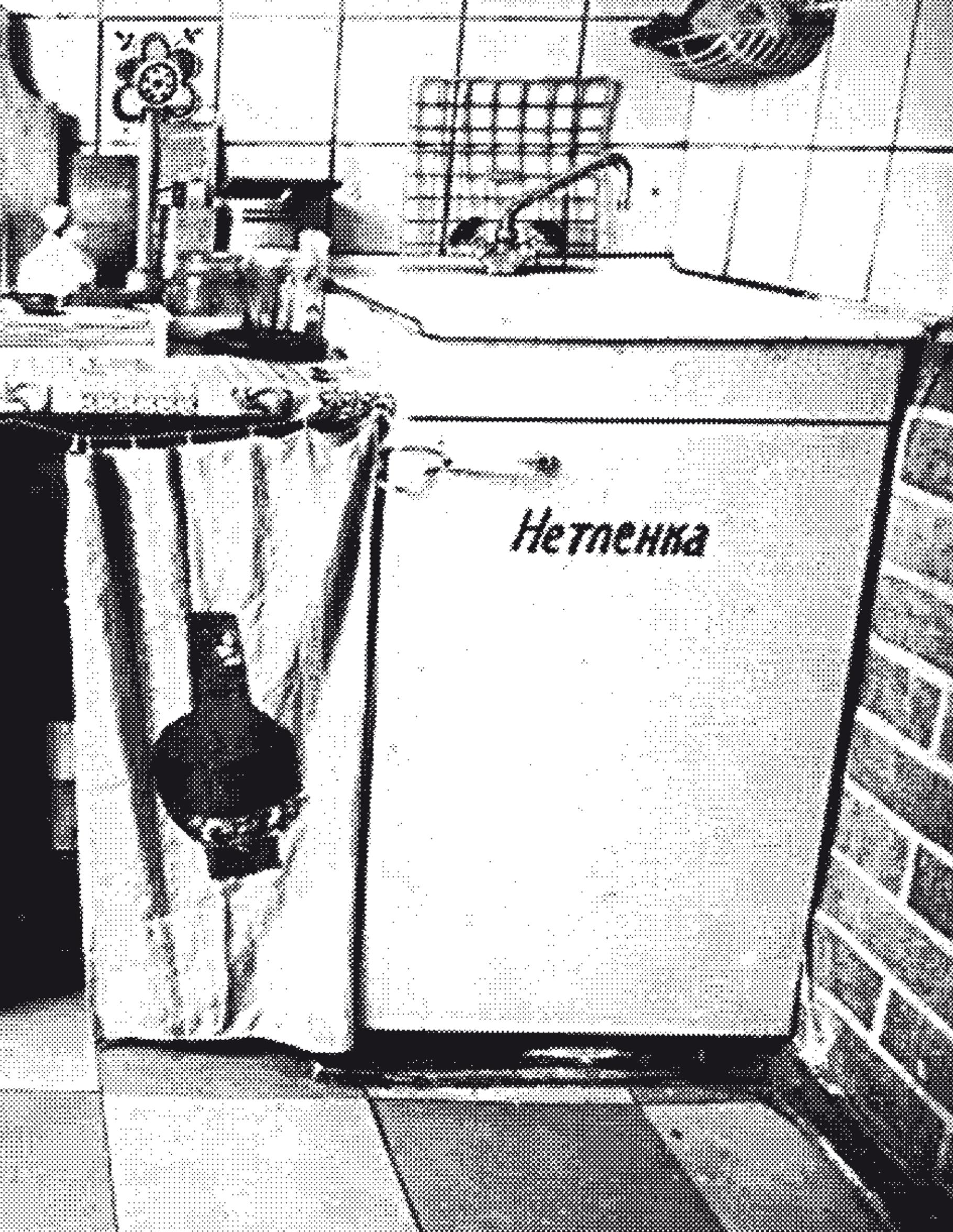
ANATOLY
ZHIGALOV

MAIER

MOSCOW 2012



Kitchen of Russian art
1983. Installation



Нетленка



МОСКОВСКИЙ
МУЗЕЙ
СОВРЕМЕННОГО
ИСКУССТВА
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museum
of modern
art

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Our Chef-D'oeuvre
Eva's Birth
1981

Photo: Vladimir Polishiuk

TOTART: LIFE — INTO ART!

DISCOVER THE SUBSTANCE OF ART ACCORDING TO ABALAKOV AND ZHIGALOV

Andrey Kovalev

TOTART: Russian Roulette
Article published in
Time Out magazine
on January 23, 2012
Moscow

Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov are linguists by education, structuralists by calling, and conceptualists by name. One day, they recognized that for two artists who are legally married, it was better to work together. And together, they spent decades under wonderful intellectual stimulation and sharp aesthetic delights. (They had already started working in the 1960s, when the problem of monetization of art had not yet surfaced — art for art's sake was done exclusively for one's pleasure).

At first, as extremely serious and thorough people, Natalia and Anatoly unified their theoretical basis, and only then began its execution. The name TOTART, invented by them at the same time, at the end of the 1970s, was a contraction of the full name of the new group — “A Project of the Total Artistic Action” [trans. Proekt Total'nogo Hudozhestvennogo Deystviya], declaring no more and no less, the “Investigation into the Essence of Art as Applied to Life and Art” in their slogan.

Under such a universal brand, one could do anything — succumb to boundless historiography, delve deeper into geo-politics; ponder on the national cultural identity; conduct sociological field experiments; occasionally, behave like a hooligan; pose questions about gender wars; fall into ardent metaphysics.

One of TOTART's first projects was a photo-action, “The Solstice,” conducted in 1980. A strange metal box was discovered in a suburban Moscow field, which was photographed once an hour for a period of 24 hours on July 22. Here, anyone can construe any number of interpretations: they can remember Hitler's

invasion of the USSR, the stones at Stonehenge, and Gogol's story “The Eve of Ivan Kupalo,” among other things. Often, such responsible acts were accompanied by a serving of self-irony. For example, during the investigation of the paradigm of the godly Black Square, a square molded out of manure collected at the nearest farm was on display.

And what is perhaps most important, is that such a universal program allowed the transformation of their own lives into a never-ending happening. For example, a newborn daughter, Eva could be proclaimed “The[ir] Best Work of Art.” Once, Anatoly Zhigalov announced that his work as a superintendent was a work of art. All would have been swell, if this did not provoke a conflict of interests. The artist-superintendent once conducted a “Golden Subbotnik [Volunteer Saturday drive]” [trans. from (Rus.) Zolotoy Subbotnik], during which, complaisant apartment dwellers and invited representatives of bohemia painted the courtyard benches and garbage cans into gold. It is understood that such an inadequate labourer of communal management was immediately sent to be treated at a psychiatric institution. Although he was quickly released, he was let go from that place of employment. Because of this oversight from the authorities, it was possible to continue the realization of the project, the “Investigation into the Essence of Art as Applied to Life and Art.” And now, it can be said with certainty — these stoic devotees have achieved everything. In life, and in art.

RUSSIAN ROULE TTE

**TOTART. Natalia Abalakova /
Anatoly Zhigalov**

The exhibition “TOTART: Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov (Voyage to the Edge D.)” encompasses several decades of Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov’s artistic activities. This is really a voyage — a step in the direction of fulfilling the “Project of Investigation of Art as Applied to Life and Art,” which the artists have been developing and cultivating since the late 1970s. Its main goal is to demonstrate the functions of the mechanisms of contemporary art in a changing world through a “critique of art through the means of art itself”. The idea for the coauthored, creative Investigation of Art was formed in the late 1970s; however, previous artistic activities (painting, graphics, visual poetry and literary works of both authors) have organically entered the project and have continued to develop within it.

TOTART’s creative breadth is fairly wide. Temporal and spatial “breakthroughs,” “retreats” and “revisions” of (TOTART’s) Tradition are not limited by any boundaries, evident in its system of inquiries in the form of artistic practices of dialogues-paradoxes, its circle of voluntary or involuntary participants (in life and in art). In sum — the “totality” in TOTART carries a metapolitical, aesthetic and projective trajectory. The goal of this TOTART project is to create models of “total reality” in real conditions of available physical reality, and on materials of that reality.

This is — painting, graphic design, projects, performances, installations, film and video, texts, artistic experiments with sound and with the word.

A kind of hypertext is constructed on the four floors of the exhibition halls in the space of the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, where the compositions themselves create an interactive, semantically aligned installation environment, lined up around the main axes and directions of the artistic activities of the Project.

Here are some of them:

Russian avant-garde and reflexivity based on it,
as a project of current and critical art;
East-West as a dialogue of environments and cultures;
The Gendered Aspect of the Project;
Nature and Culture;
Word and Image;
“Traces, Voices, Places.”

Presumably, a holistic and dynamic model of time is meant to be created in the exhibition space, where the spectator, moving along a spiral, can see all the semantic knots and themes in the process of development.

The placement of exhibition halls itself gives the possibility of creating an image as some utopian “Voyage...” and gives the spectator the opportunity to see models of avant-garde strategies directed towards the impossible mastery of border zones of art (and life) under the sign of postmodernist artistic practices, where the conceptualist method (discussed above) is simply one of the technologies, and the modern (and postmodern) paradigm serves as an object of deconstructive manipulations.



Staircase

1981. A staircase
in A. Zhigalov and
N. Abalakova's home
Village of Pogorelovo
Photo: Igor Makarevich,
Vitaliy Poliakov

GROUND ZERO OF ART

TOTART. Natalia Abalakova /
Anatoly Zhigalov

In order to determine this point of measurement, it would not be excessive to remember the English expression, “Ground Zero,” needless to say, weighed down by the dramatic events of 9/11/2001; the meaning of the term: “the site of an air explosion on the ground, or the site where catastrophic events happen.” For the first stage of the “Voyage...” — this is black and white minimalism, the theme of time-space, structure, text as a stand-alone work of visual culture. The black and white photographs of the performances and projects of the 1970s and 80s from the “Black Series” — this is geometric painting having descended to the last, “pre-object” level of the “last geometer,” gathering a new spatial body in installations, created in the process of performances and actions. Disembodiment and further transformations are still ahead for this “body,” a new (eternal) life on the Net and in multi-media projects of TOTART’s authors — in other words, total virtualization. This, precisely was the challenge to the ideas of Russian constructivism with its dictates of order and compositional harshness, an entrance, or more accurately, an “intrusion” into the sphere of geometry itself, into its “holier-than-thou” — into the sacral sphere of the Black Sphere,



where the “icon” of the Russian avant-garde is subject to “total deconstruction,” materializing in a type of carnivalesque black garbage bag with a gold-lettered sign reading “Black Square.” Quite often, the “final product” of an action or a performance turns into a sign-ideogram. And, finally, within the process of the “critique from the left” — deconstruction of the principle of geometry itself as a repressive beginning in language, and thus in society as well — as a technology of “social control” (see Michel Foucault). Geometry is comprehended in two opposing hypostases and in the unity of the opposites. The Black Square laid an end to the traditional supremacy of the image in art and imposed a dictate of the anti-canon, of an encroaching “new order,” returned the painting from transcendental space back to earth, leaving the energetic and revolutionary substance of suprematism under doubt.

A unique “pilgrimage to the East,” strengthening the “partings,” but in a uniform fabric (the Traditions of the avant-garde — no traditions), reflecting the “external circle” of TOTART’s problematic — the problem of boundaries in defining art, of the absorption of art by life, and the introduction of life into the sphere of art; the problems of interaction between the artist and the spectator, the communicative possibilities of contemporary art, and directly — as an occasion to celebrate — art as an erogenous zone of the collective body of society, resulted in the video-installation “A Garden of Smiles,” [trans. (from Rus.) “Sad Ulibok”] referencing its prototype — the photo-action “Solstice” [tran. (from Rus.) Solntsevorot] in 1980.

TOTART

View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
2012



Flower Wake

1980
Performance/Installation

Photo:
Andrey Abramov, Genrikas
Dobkiavichus, Vladimir Polischuk,
Sergey Shablavin

The inversion of space, violation of common sense, the removal — through destruction — of the stereotypes of cultural awareness, the parody on ritual and myth, which prepares the potential for those who are left in the darkness to unravel time in the opposite direction, and at a new stage to build a new time and a new “purified” myth, creating a new order from chaos, and new structures through internal (emotional and intellectual) and external (volitional) choices.







White Cube

1980

Performance/installation

Photo: Andrey Abramov,
Vladimir Polischuk

The performance is planned as a kind of pragmatic-meditative process, during which participants are lead into a contradictory reality through an absurd-ironic action-game, and subsequently are "elevated" above it, "removing" its contradictions in perspective.



Anatoly Zhigalov

White Light — Black Light
1979. Diptych-opposition.
Oil on canvas. Each part 150 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow

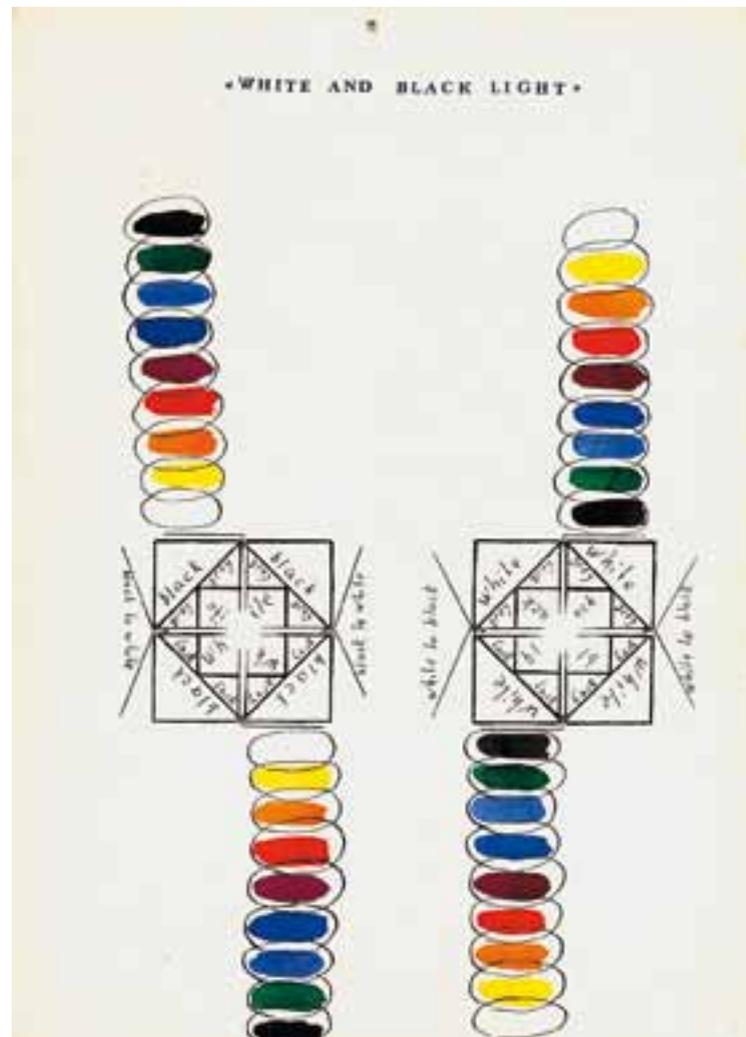
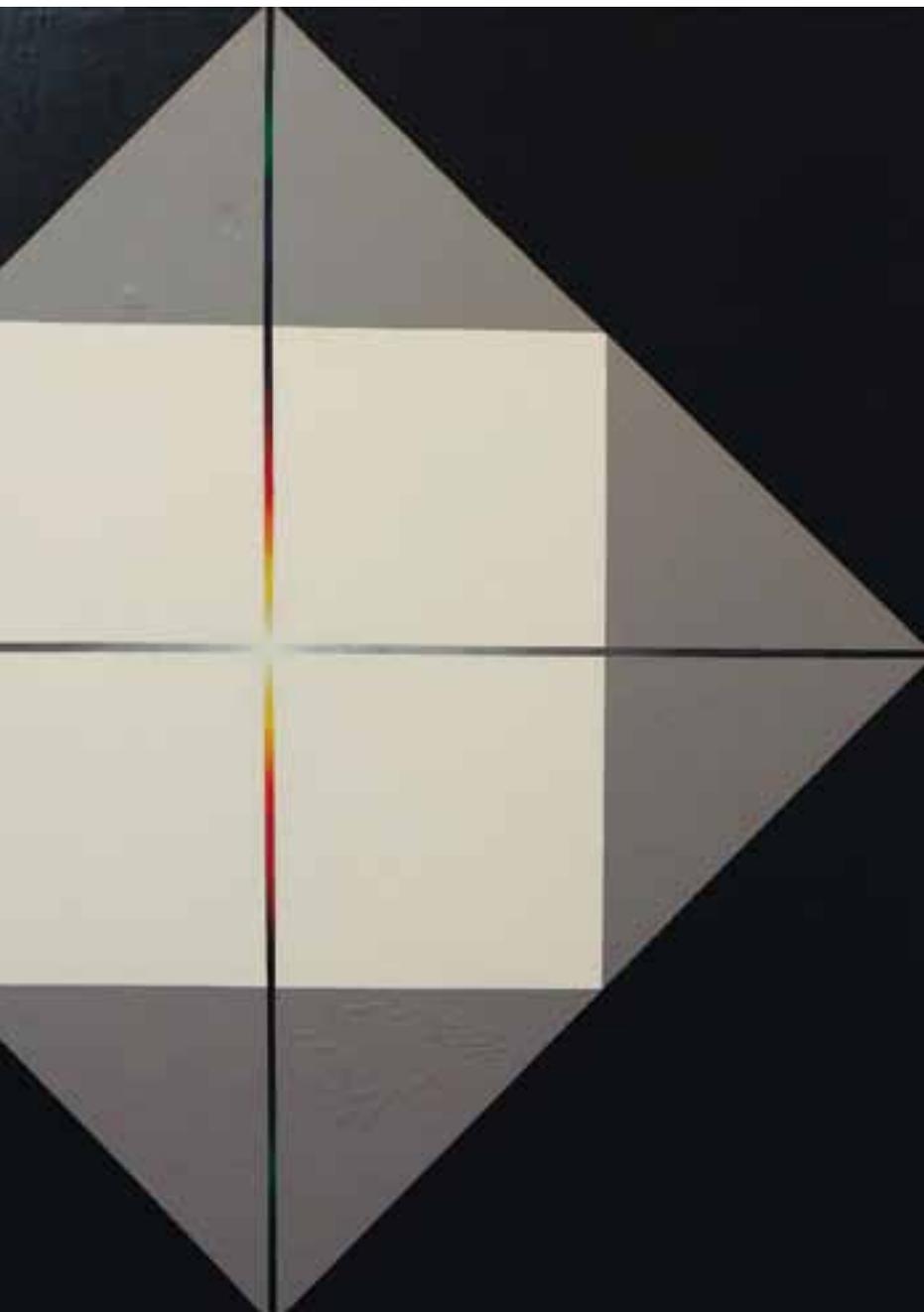


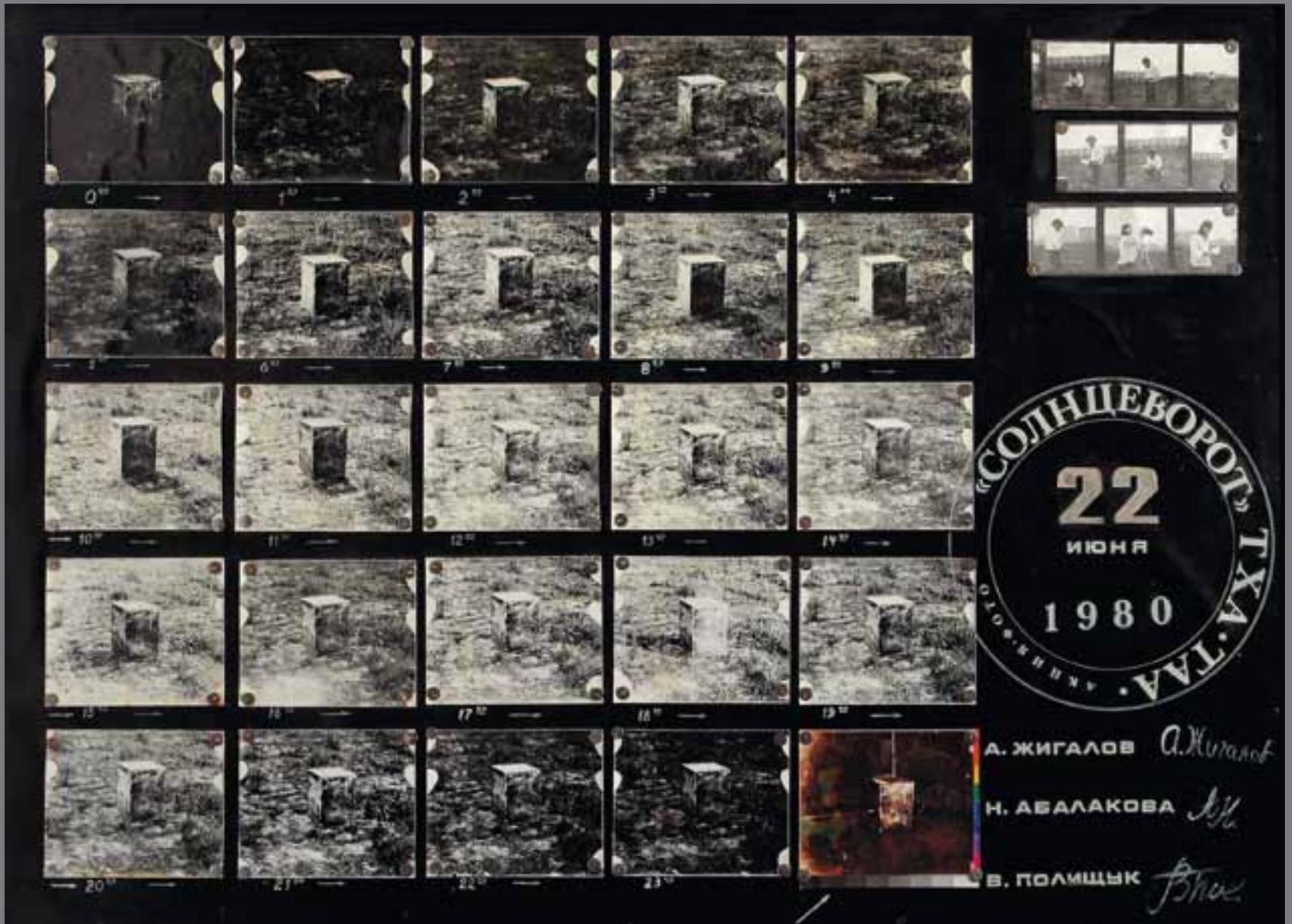
Anatoly Zhigalov

Black Light – White Light

1980. Mixed media. 42 x 29.

Artist's property, Moscow





Solstice

1980 . Photo action

Photo: Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Vladimir Polischuk

The action was accomplished on behest of a proposition from Czech and Slovak artists. July 22, the Summer Solstice is the longest day of the year. On that day, in 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the USSR.

During a twenty-four hour period, strictly on schedule and on every hour starting at midnight, a metal canister with a bullet hole through it that was found accidentally in the field was photographed under different exposures. The action — the fixation of “pure” time as such (the cosmic aspect), a “wounded,” tragic time (the historical aspect), artistic time, taking both former types of time into itself, and in this combination, rendering the holistic “cathartic” action, the subjective time of the artist. The result is photo tableau, built on the structural principle of latticework (Renaissance and Modernism).

The genre of this work is specified as a “photo-action,” the final result is represented as a stand on which 25 photographs are placed. But the process of producing this object was extremely performative: a camera fixed in one spot takes one photograph of the same object once an hour for a period of twenty-four hours. In this case, the direct presence of the artist during the action is not required. A specially invited photographer, whose sole responsibilities include changing photographic plates, and regulating exposure, operates an antique camera. In principle, he could have been replaced with some sort of an automatic device. And this device already existed in 1980; it was called the “Moonwalker” [trans. (from Rus.) Lunohod] and was constructed to discover new spaces. The action took place on June 22, during the day of the summer solstice. By the way, for such types of phenomena, the term “event” is used in astronomy, which is also applied in performance theory and practice in the domain of contemporary art. And in this action, the camera was directed towards an unassuming metal box, the presence of which on a suburban field in Moscow was unclear. Precisely this unrepentant object trouvé found itself a “performer”-actionist, stoically refusing any kind of activity. Besides, in 1980, Tehching Hsieh began the performance, during which he spent an entire year in closed quarters, taking a self-portrait with the aid of a camera fastened on the wall, once every hour. The processuality of such a debilitating and extremely monotone action was focused on the observation of the natural biological processes on the artist’s body, for example, hair growth. But in Abalakova and Zhigalov’s “Solstice,” any kind of eventfulness was completely excluded — interesting and diverse effects of the light were generated in the process of the Sun’s travel across elliptical points, maximally distant from the celestial equator. However, this action in no way corresponds with the scientific theory of creation, but inversely, clearly underlines the true theory of the flat Earth, around which the Sun and other planets revolve. It is befitting to recollect that the colossal Stonehenge dolmens lined up in their eternal circle with one goal — to catch a ray of morning light, falling on the altar on the day of the Solstice. However, on the gathered prints of the results of the action, nothing by those merry pranks that Nikolai Gogol so lovingly described in the story, “The Eve of Ivan Kupalo,” of a similar sort is found.

A. K.*

... and so on ...

1984.
Camera: Igor Aleinikov.
16 mm, 6 min.
Musical theme by A. Zhigalov
performed by N. Abalakova,
Aleinikov brothers and
A. Zhigalov

Garden of Smiles

1996.
Multimedia project.
Spider & Mouse Gallery,
Moscow



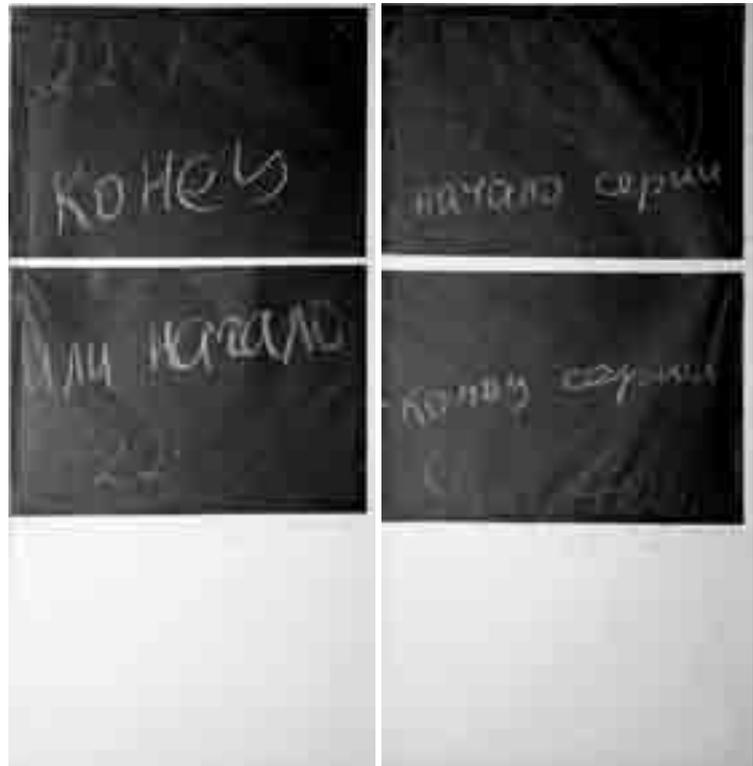
Anatoly Zhigalov

**From the series Text 2
(24 sheets)**

1981. Paper, copy paper, oil
pastels, typewriter. 63 x 30.
Artist's property, Moscow

**From the series Text 2
(24 sheets)**

1981. Paper, copy paper,
oil pastels, typewriter. 63 x 30.
Artist's property, Moscow





**Dedication to Prague
(Homage à Prague)**

1980. Performance/installation
Photo: Jan Sekal

Compositionally, the work is connected with A. Zhigalov's geometric paintings of the end of the 1970s. The oppositions, white — black, light — dark, life — death, creation — destruction (cleansing)-new reality, chaos — order, are typical for Russian mentality. The exchange of symbols (white for black, black for white) introduces the theme of relativity and doubts the stability of such stable oppositions as white-black. However, their relativity, and incapacity to sweep over the entire spectrum of reality, is not an act of volition of a subject, or an intellect devoid of any support, but rather, the result of the depth of experience of the wholeness of life, where contradictions are removed (fire). For all the abstraction in this work, the powerful Prague background should not be forgotten: the Soviet tanks of 1968.



**Black Sculpture
Installation**

1981. Installation.
Operation "HOUSE."
Village of Pogorelovo

Black Cube

1980. Performance/installation
Photo: Andrey Abramov,
Vladimir Polischuk

Here, functions the same principle of the acquisition of "common sense" through its own inversion by the creation-destruction-creation of a new "nonmaterial" state... The destruction as a "revolutionary impulse," giving a new vision. The permanent revolution of the spirit. A carnivalesque turn on its head does not move here in a circle (of perpetual return), but along a spiral (negative eschatological dialectic). The positive is peered at through the negative — a negation — "no-no" of Eastern and Christian apophysis. The artist is a mediator between what is denied and what is asserted.



Snow
(Three elemental poems)

1980. Performance
 Photo: Vladimir Polischuk

- 1) The word "SNOW" is written on a black paper. The paper is placed between two panes of glass, and is buried under snow.
- 2) The paper with the word "SNOW" is extracted from under the snow, a paper ball is made out of it, and in turn, is placed under the glass of the side-table. A snowball is rolled and placed on top of the table. The paper ball is set on fire. The snowball begins to melt from the heat of the burning word "SNOW."
- 3) The word "SNOW" is written by hand on the snow, the snow inscription is gathered and eaten.



Natalia Abalakova

And at Night, They Fly

1988. Oil on canvas. 110 x 150.
Property of the author, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Building Yard

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Property of the author, Moscow

Landscape with Pipes

1976. Paper, tempera,
collage. 35 x 55

Landscape

1978. Paper, tempera. 62 x 86.
Property of the author, Moscow





Lalay's Izba

1981. Interior of Lalay's burnt izba [traditional Russian village hut] where he previously lived, until his relocation to the one in which he died. Operation "HOUSE." Village of Pogorelovo. Photo: Igor Makarevich, Vitaliy Poliakov

Dedication to Lalay

1981. Live sculpture. An underground pit at the site of the fire. Human body, bandages Operation "HOUSE." Village of Pogorelovo Photo: Vitaliy Poliakov



Staircase

1981. A staircase in A. Zhigalov and N. Abalakova's home. Operation "HOUSE." Village of Pogorelovo Photo: Igor Makarevich, Vitaliy Poliakov



Birth

Collective photo-action.
The idea of photographic light
trails suggested by Vitaliy Poliakov
Operation "HOUSE."
Village of Pogorelovo
Photo: Igor Makarevich





Anatoly Zhigalov

Left Foot. Operation "HOUSE-2"
1981/1981/2001. Black opaque paper. Kaliningrad National Art Gallery, Kaliningrad, Russia

Operation "HOUSE-2"

2002. Multimedia project. Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg, Russia

Operation "HOUSE-2"

2001. Multimedia project. Fragment from a video interview. Museum "Zverev Centre of Contemporary Art," Moscow

Operation "HOUSE-2"

2002. Multimedia project. Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg



Operation "HOUSE-2"

2009. Installation. "Traces, voices, places," L-Gallery, Fourth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art





Our Anthills

1982. Performance/Investigation
 Photo: Anatoly Lupachev

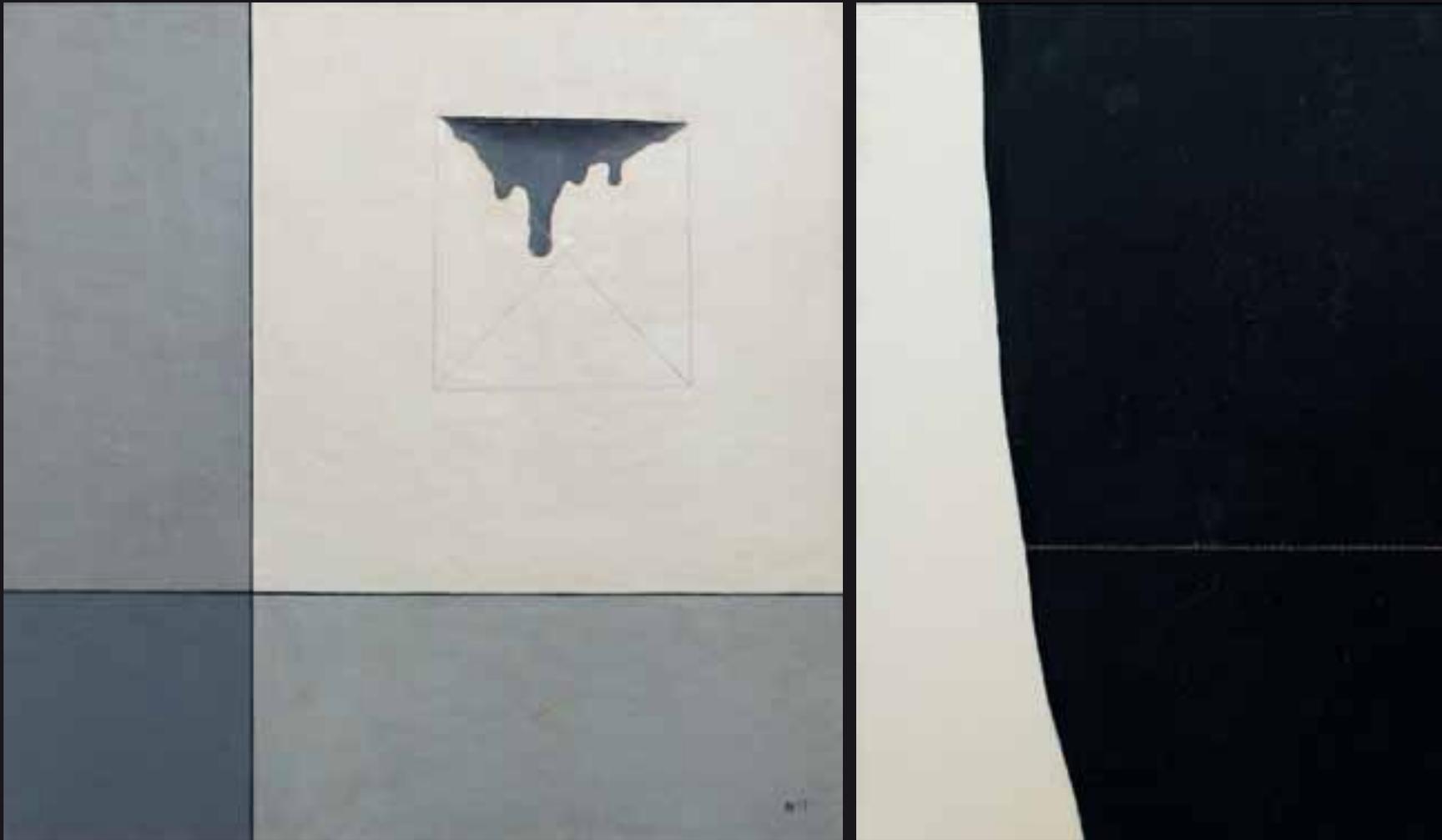
The work was being conducted over the entire summer. In the forest, three anthills located nearby were chosen. Slogans were placed above them:

1. "OUR ANTHILL IS THE BEST!"
 2. "OUR ANTHILL IS THE LARGEST!"
 3. "OUR ANTHILL IS THE HAPPIEST!"
- A series of experiments were conducted with the anthills, causing absolutely no physical or moral harm to the forest or its inhabitants.

Anatoly Zhigalov
Explorations of the Square
Triptych

Anti-square
1977. Oil & sand on canvas.
100 x 100

The Golden Middle,
or the Contemplation
of the Square Five Years Later
1981. Oil on canvas, printer's ink,
bronze paint. 100 x 120



Black Square

1981. Canvas, water-based
whitewash, tempera, stencil.
100 x 120. Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Composition
with a Grey Square**

1978. Oil & sand on canvas.
60 x 50. Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Composition with a cut-out Square
(Anti-square 1, Zero Square)**

1978. Oil on canvas. 60 x 50.

Museum of Nonconformist Art,
St. Petersburg, Russia



**School of Art from the series
"Explorations of the Square."**

1981. Live sculpture
Human body, wall, rope,
adhesive tape, book
Performance festival.
Village of Pogorelovo
Photo: Vitaliy Poliakov

Dung Square

1981. Found Object.
Hay, manure



Anatoly Zhigalov

Black Advancement. Project

1981–1985. Mixed media. 42 x 29.

Artist's property, Moscow

Red Advancement. Project

1981–1985. Mixed media. 42 x 29.

Artist's property, Moscow



An overgrown and bearded man wearing glasses precariously balances on four large nails, hammered into a wooden wall. Around him — two squares, outlined by white adhesive tape. It follows from the explanation that the author aimed to “eliminate the sign ideograms set by predecessors, subsequently demythologizing them.” The “Black Square” itself is carelessly fastened to the performer's (Anatoly Zhigalov) naked torso. This is a sign of peace; where, already, no opposition must exist between the material and the spiritual, the iconoclastic icon of the twentieth century is relegated to the space of mundane corporeality. The artist is dressed in dirt-stained jeans and in worn-out house slippers. However, the extreme skepticism of the group TOTART towards the “living, royal infant” and its author carries over, it seems, to any Big project, however far removed it would have been to the actual event on the chronological timeline of an imaginary Museum. Hung up on a wall in a constrained, but relaxed pose, the artist's body is reminiscent of Leonardo's famous “Vitruvian Man,” which today is used as a visual illustration to the thesis “A person is a measure of all things.” Usually, with a sophisticated academic mastery, Abalakova and Zhigalov draw out their references, and prescribe, in contemporary language, “tags.” But in this case, the citation is not closed, but open: the figure on Leonardo's drawing is a figure with arms spread out above the shoulders, inscribed into a circle, not a square. The second reference, the description of the genre (Live sculpture), is a direct reference to Gilbert & George, certified jokers, and bent towards a museum-like, academic rigor in the design of their works as strongly as TOTART. However, the British wits did not have the same kind of life, and existential experiences, as did Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov. For the British cynics and jokers, it was easy to distance themselves from any ideas of the Absolute, in contrast to the Soviet intellectuals who were born under Stalin, and who inherited increased sensitivity to all possible manifestations of totalitarianism. With some degree of hopelessness, they called their project “TOTART” at the end of the 1970s, referencing the Wagnerian total work of art, *Gesamtkunstwerk* — a term, which appeared at the end of the 1980s in Boris Groys' book, significantly rousing the Western artistic community with his ideas that the utopias of the wonderful Russian avant-garde were materialized by Joseph Stalin. But even in Groys' scandalous philosophical essay, as well as in TOTART's artistic investigations, there was a meticulously concealed true object of polemics; the real predecessors of the group — the Soviet modernists of the 1960s, which stoically attempted to build precarious bridges to the early avant-garde. But the code of ethics of Soviet non-conformism made it absolutely taboo to engage in any kind of internal polemics. But what is interesting is that the main component of the project under discussion was a peasant house in which the artists once lived. The home was declared an artistic project, and TOTART's version of the “Black Square” is found within its walls. In the same village, Eduard Shteinberg had witnessed something diametrically different, capturing it in the painting, “Malevich's Square and the window of Fisa Zaytsev's house” (1985), tragically attempting to soften and humanize the superhuman ideas of his great mentor and part-time companion.

A. K.



**Black Square from the series
"Explorations of the Square"**

1981. Live sculpture
Anatoliy Zhigalov is on the wall
of a house of the village
of Pogorelovo.
Village of Pogorelovo
Photo: Vitaliy Poliakov



Natalia Abalakova

Laundry on a Line

1977. Paper, watercolours.
25 x 37. Property of the author,
Moscow

Natalia Abalakova

Black Square

1990. Collage. 63 x 49.
Property of the author,
Moscow





Also



**A Chair is Not for You —
a Chair is for Everyone**
1982. Object. Cardboard sized
A4, stencil



**An exposition by N. Abalakova
and A. Zhigalov at an APTART exhibition**
1982

Book-object
1982. 15 double-sided collages,
125 x 86. APTART exhibit. Property of the artists



My God. What Does it all Mean?

Installation. 1990.
TOTART Exhibition "Glasgow-Moscow," "Sadovniki"
gallery, Moscow

My God. What Does it all Mean?

Fragment of an installation Russian Rose. 1990.
TOTART Exhibition "Glasgow-Moscow," "Sadovniki"
gallery, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

Ideal Space Project I-II

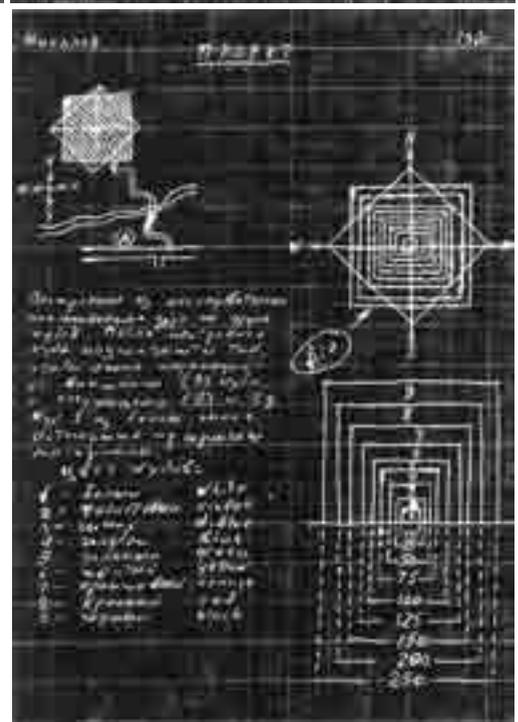
1980. Photopaper, mixed media.
18 x 12. Artist's property, Moscow

Ideal Space Project III-IV

1980. Photopaper, mixed media.
18 x 12. Artist's property, Moscow

A Plan of the Action

1980. Photopaper, mixed media.
18 x 12. Artist's property, Moscow



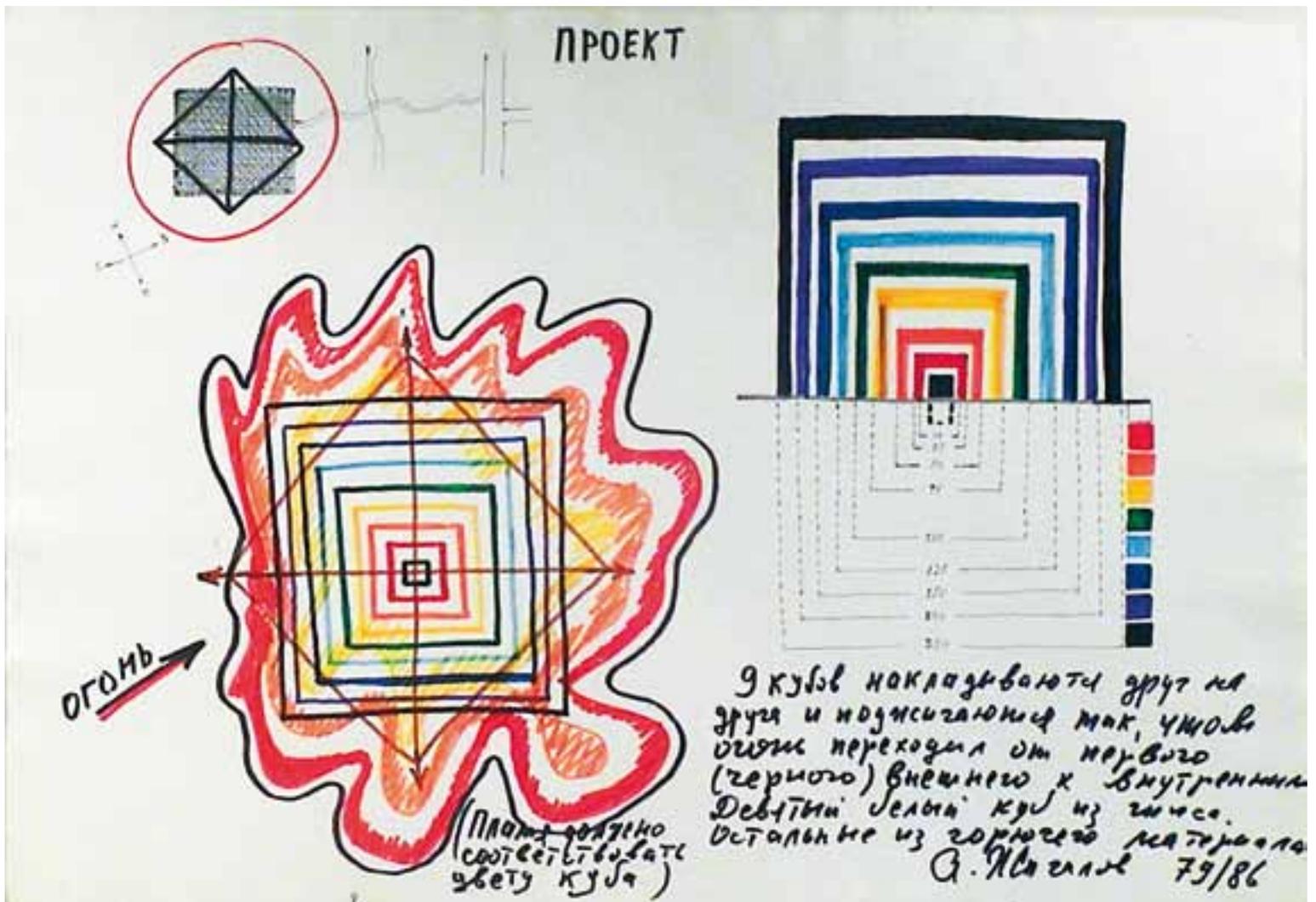
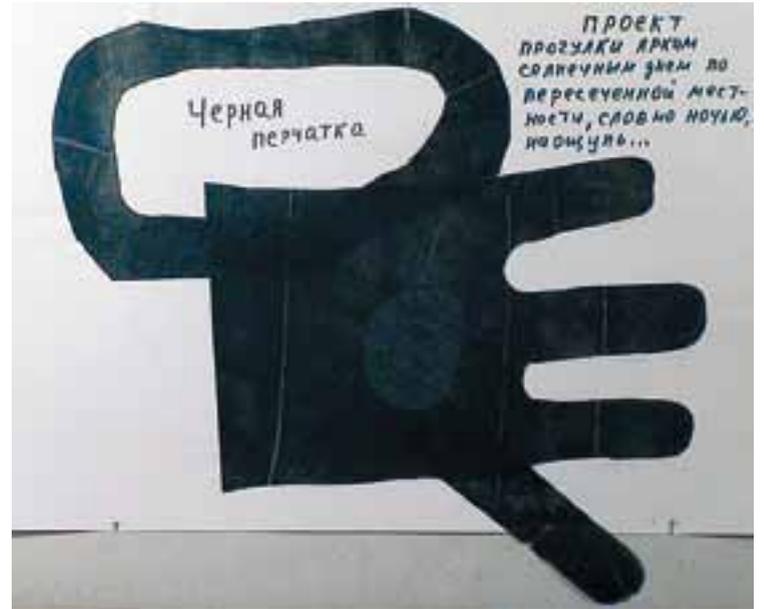
Anatoly Zhigalov

Black Glove

1981. Mixed media. 21 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow

Fire. Project.

1979-1986. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow



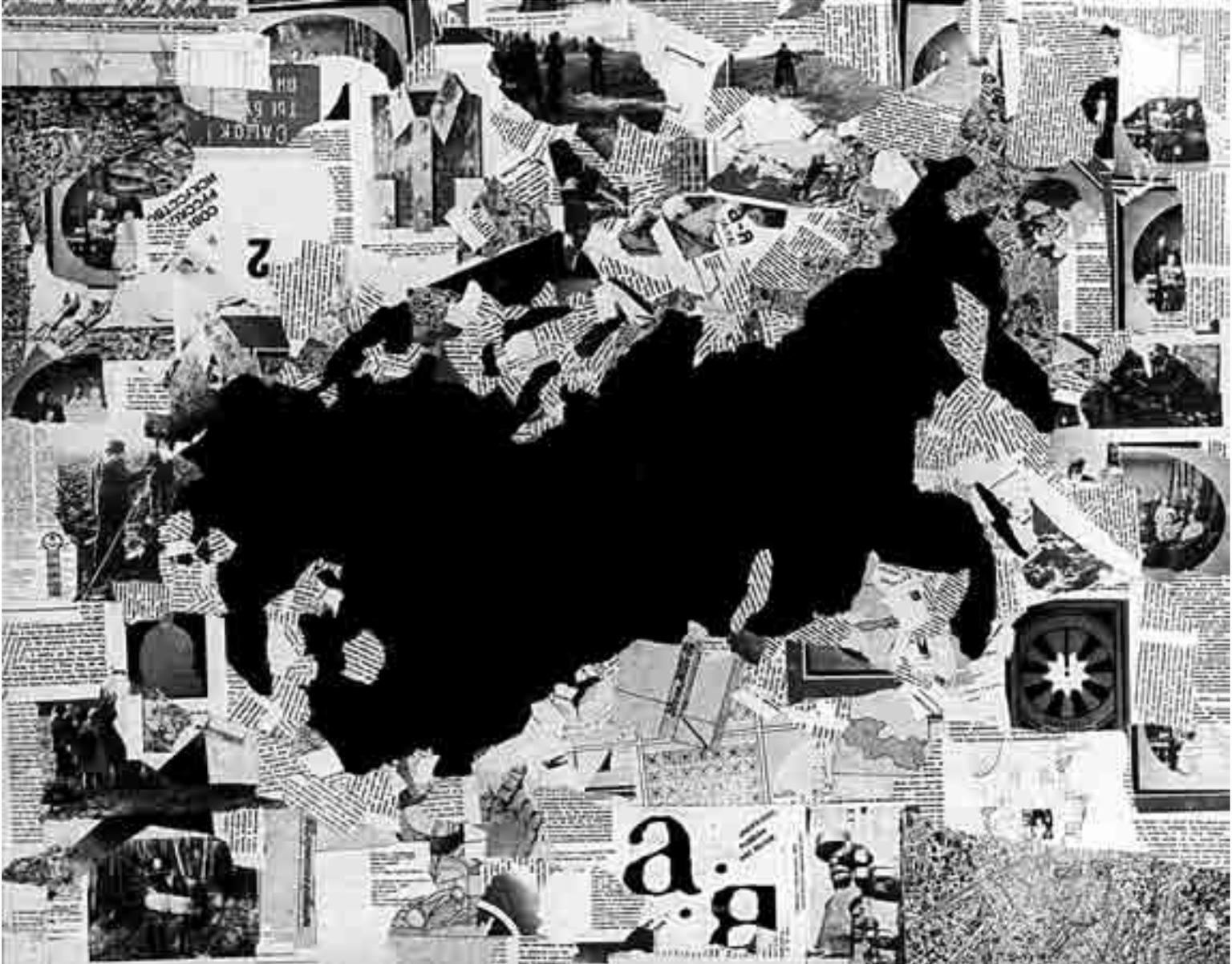
Natalia Abalakova

Black Hole

From the series

Summa archaeologiae

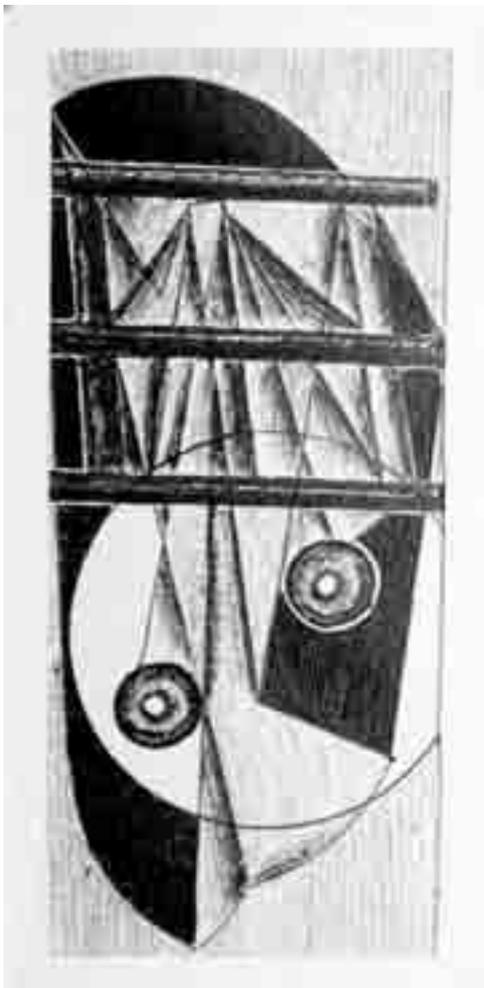
1981. Collage. 62 x 86. Norton
and Nancy Dodge Collection,
Zimmerli Art Museum,
New Jersey, USA



Natalia Abalakova

Suprematist Composition 1

1975. Paper, ink. 12 x 5.
Property of the author,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Suprematist Composition 2

1975. Paper, ink. 12 x 5.
Property of the author,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Large Milk Churn

1976. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Property of the author, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Scene with a White Milk Churn

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.

Property of the author,
Moscow

Barrel

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.

National Centre for Contemporary
Arts, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Standing Barrel

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.

Property of the author,
Moscow

Lying Milk Churn

1980. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.

Property of the author,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Ravine with Piles

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Property of the author, Moscow

Dump

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Property of the author, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Double Landscape

1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.

Property of the author, Moscow

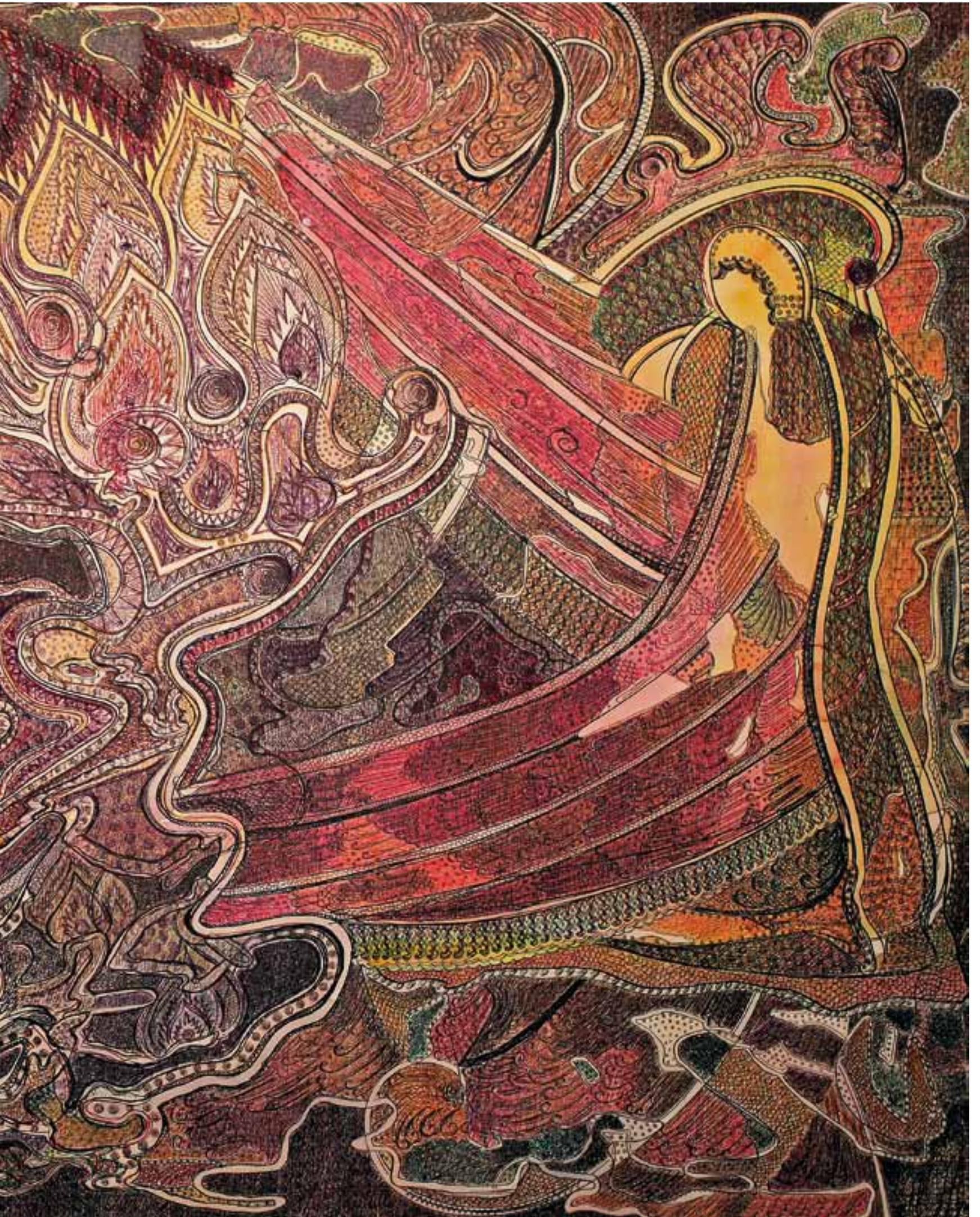


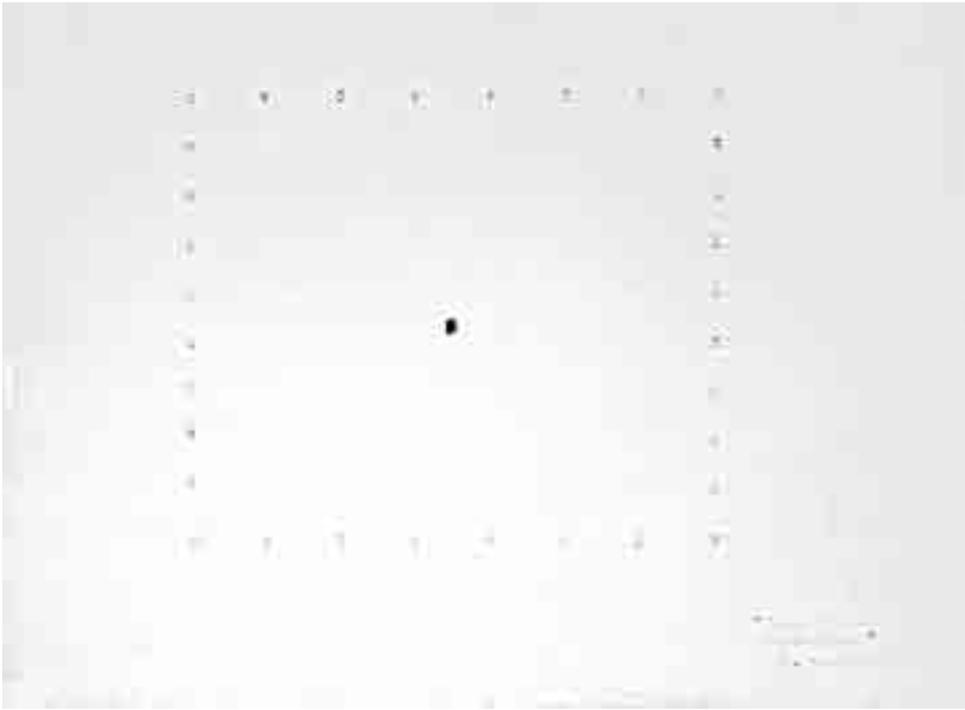
Natalia Abalakova

Menorah

1975. Mixed media. 44 x 61.
Property of the author, Moscow





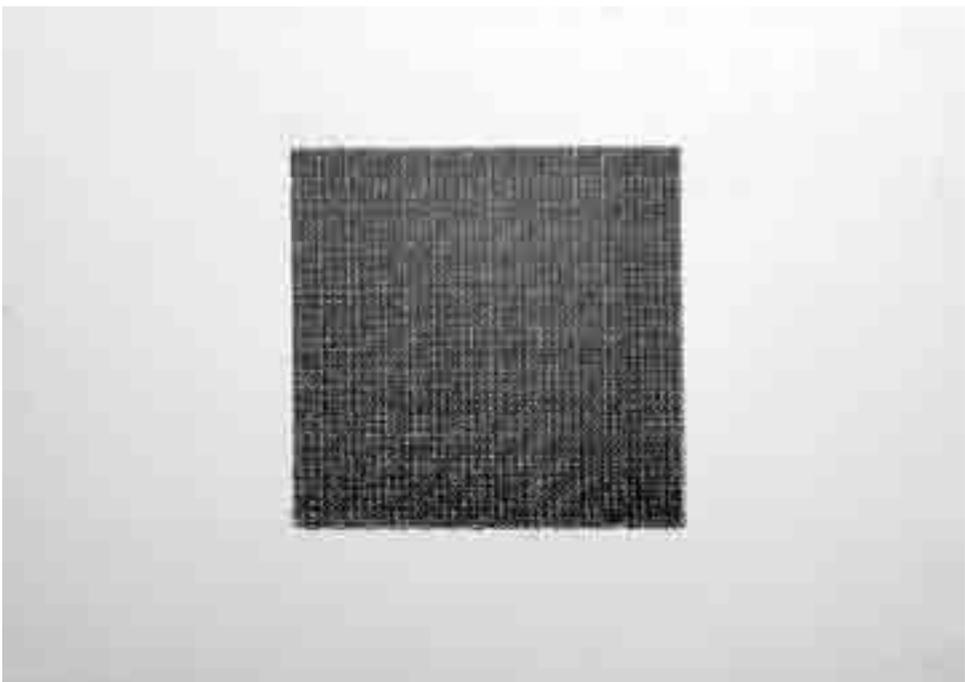
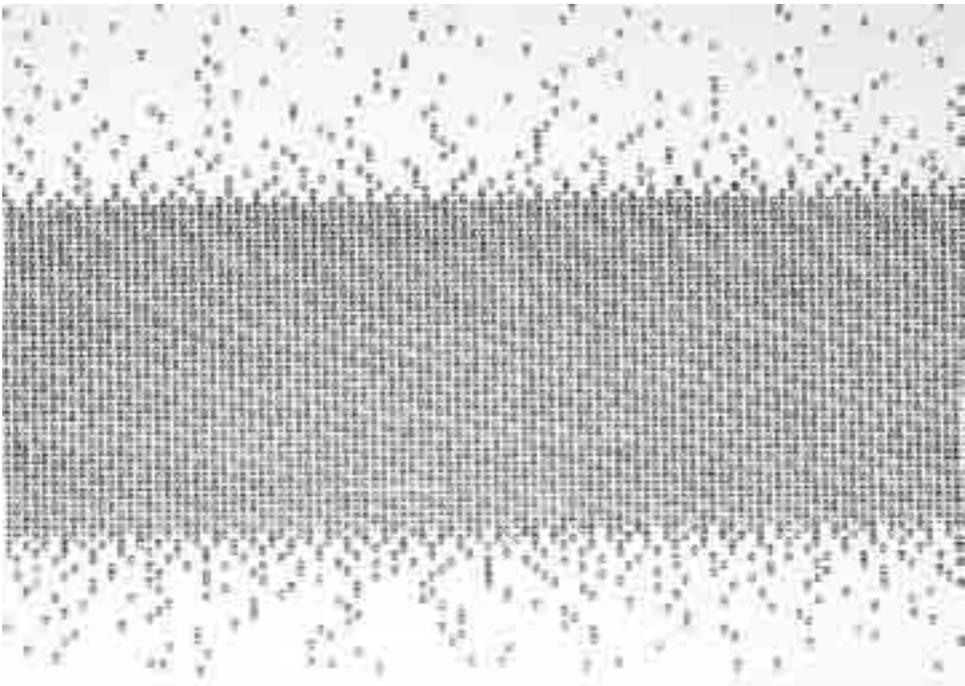


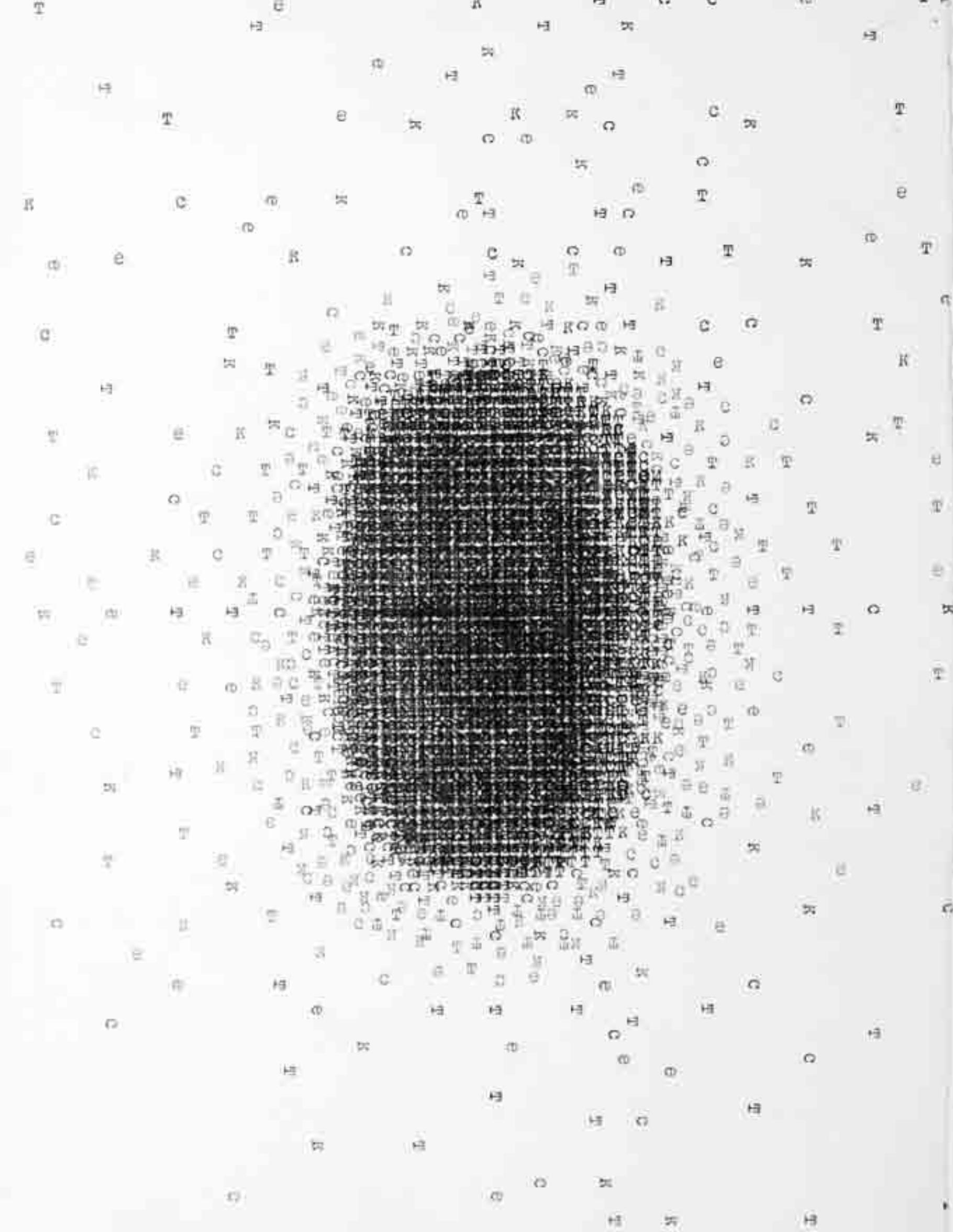
Anatoly Zhigalov

Text 1 (11 sheets)

1980. Paper, typewriter. 22 x 29.

Artist's property, Moscow



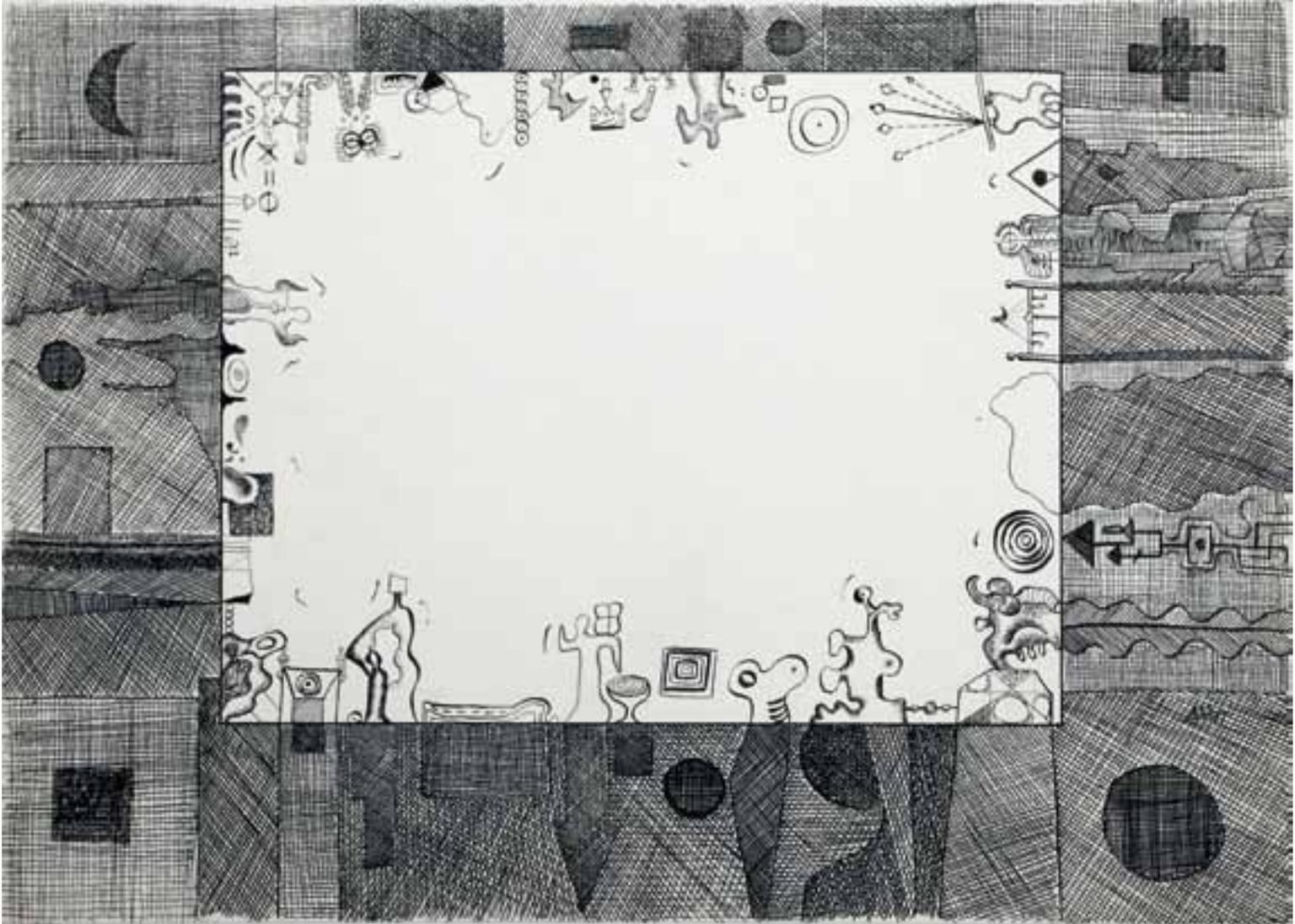


Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

1977. Paper, ink. 30 x 21.

Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

1975. Mixed media. 62 x 43.

Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

AU!

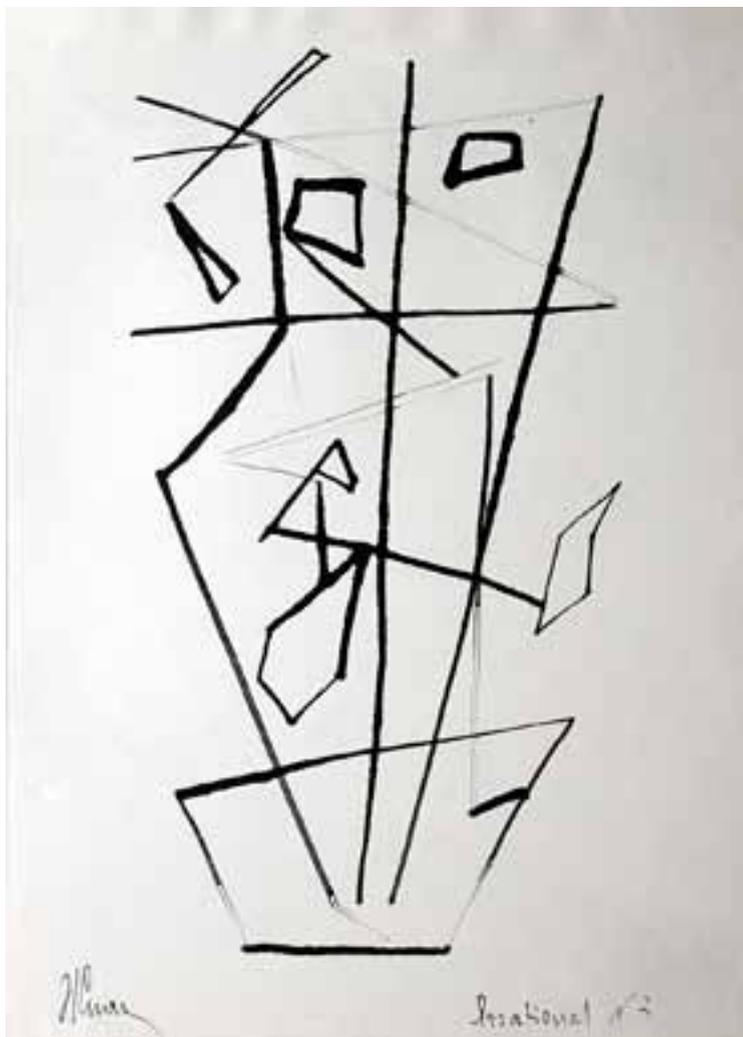
1961. Collage. 32 x 24.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

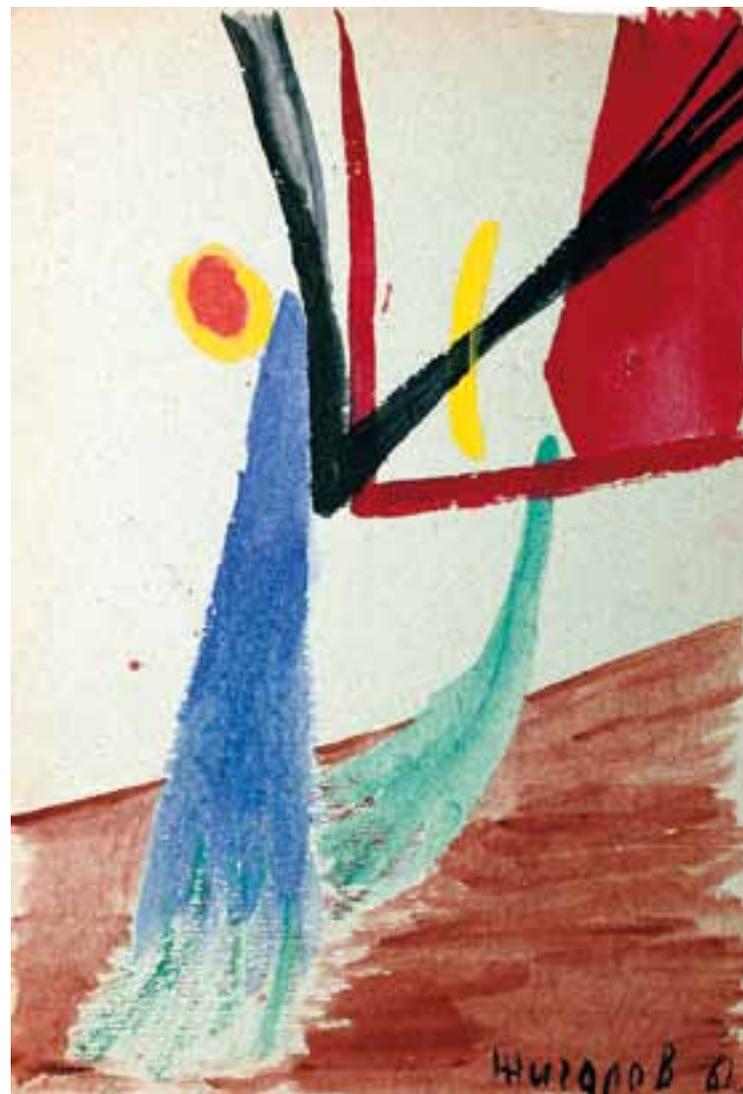
1959. Paper, ink. 27 x 19.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

1962. Paper, ink. 29 x 20.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

1961. Hardboard, nitroenamels. 123 x 41.5
(On the inverse side a caption written in nitroenamel: 1975 — the year of A. Zhigalov's move to a new apartment, when the painting was gifted to Alexander Babulevich).
Collection of Alexander Babulevich



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition

1963. Oil on hardboard. 128 x 41.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition with a Spring

1969. Oil on canvas.
Collection of Alexander Glezer,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Composition
with a White Square**

1977. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80.
Artist's property, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

**Composition
with a Grey Square**

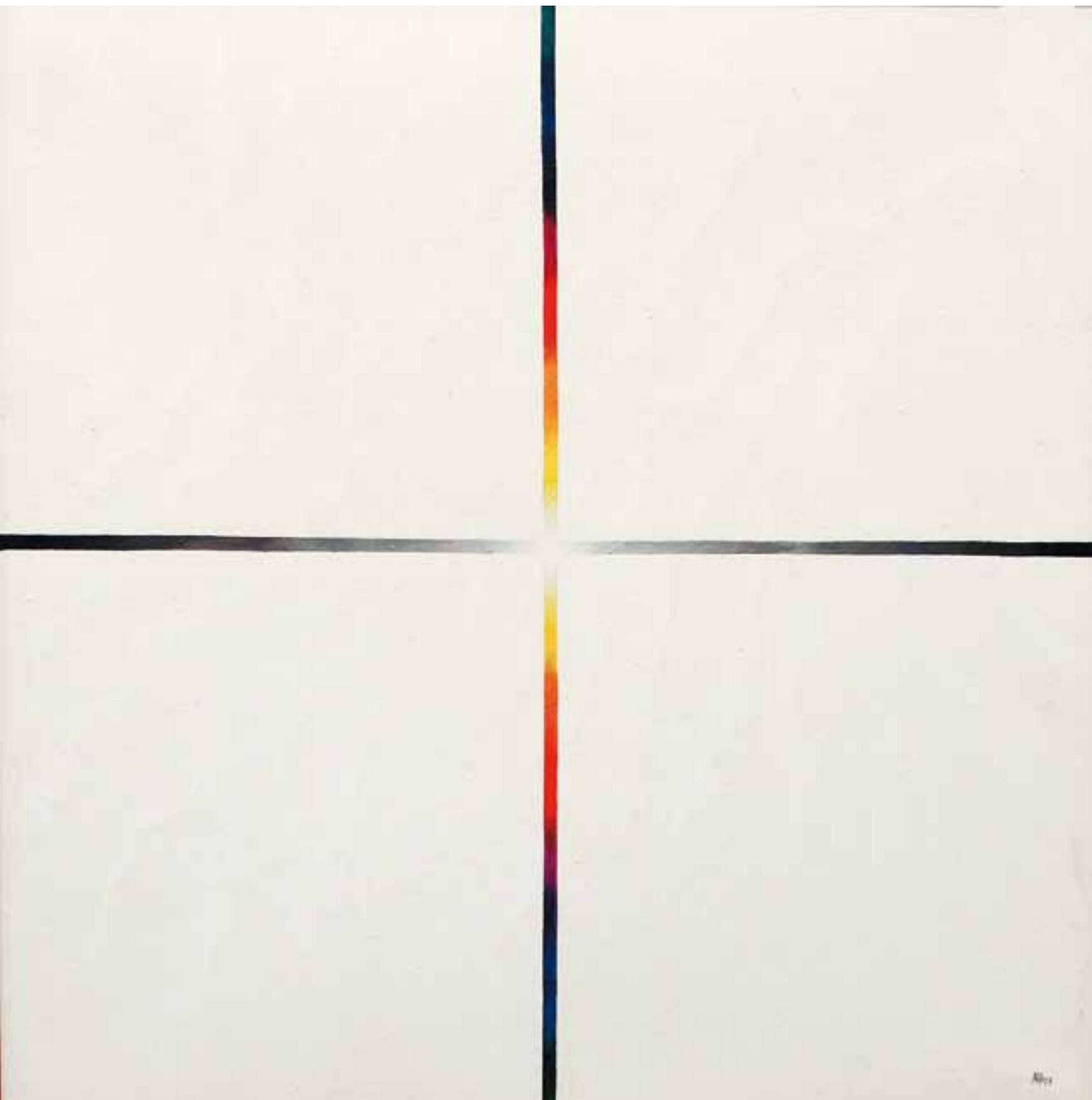
1977. Oil on canvas. 50 x 66.
National Centre of Contemporary
Arts, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Spectral Cross

1979. Canvas, sand, water-based
whitewash, oil. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



THE GOLDEN LAW

TOTART. Natalia Abalakova /
Anatoly Zhigalov

In culture, including in Russian culture, the colour gold, carries a certain semantic weight. It is a sacral colour of the background of icons, church implements and religious regalia — “non-material,” according to theologians’ interpretations. It is also the “fabric” of governmental regalia, a symbolic colour of power, might and wealth. But it is also a carnival image of money, and an euphemism for the abject (the repulsive) (in psychoanalytical terms, a stable, mutually reversible pair of gold/excrement). And finally, in its reduced, bronze version — a “cemetery colour.” In artistic actions, objects and performances, “Gold” breaks down stable constructions of what is socially acceptable and marks an event, first and foremost as an artifact; moreover, as an avant-garde one in its strategy, since such an artifact becomes an active intrusion of art into life and life into art in its dadaesque intentionality, revealing a plethora of questions concerning the very nature of art, its connection to life, its place and functionality in society, and most importantly, of the boundaries between art and its aesthetic categories.

A “Classic Totart-Object,” among other things, is organically connected with the theme of the trace, as well as with the handcrafted, “artificial” interference, creating a new polylogue within a single piece of work. Thus, appears a broadened semantic structure inclusive of certain “totalitarian” notes, with a desired multidimensionality of an extremely concrete and simultaneously eternally abstract image. The cluster of mutually exclusive elements — a bamboo fascine (East/West, soft/hard), an erectile vertical of the fascine / the horizontal position of the log awaiting to be sawn-off/castrated etc. — create a complex image of devastated, but still menacing totalitarianism. The axe is another symbol of a “mysterious Russian soul” because of its far from unilinear manifestations, the emanation of will-power and an anarchically-powerless beginning; this is also a call to arms, to riot, and an instrument of regulation and construction of a life landscape.

Another semantically complimentary colour to gold becomes the colour red. Red, a “hot” sign in painting, echoes with state topography and with “Malevich’s unfaltering flame” (this is how Germano Celant denoted the code for contemporary Russian culture, a code with the help of which Russia should, for some reason, occupy a distinguished place in an international context). Owing to a play on words and meanings (“Red Square” — Red Square [trans.: distinction between a geometric shape and the geographic landmark in Moscow], a multi-plane game of the “red theme” unfolds (whatever is understood by this).

The red colour is present in painting of both authors, localizing in the “Chinese theme” and reminiscent of the events of the recent past — in Mao’s Little Red Book and cultural revisions and revolutions, so alluring for contemporary artists, for the interpretation an reinterpretation of our own, and not at all Chinese, history. During the time of dramatic events in Tiananmen Square in 1989, Natalia Abalakova created a painted work with the Chinese hieroglyph meaning “Democracy.” The dynamic expressionistic letter does not contradict the harsh, structural cold-bloodedness of an analytical conception; and in this, the gendered aspect of the interaction of the

artists; the “internal” empire of co-authorship; a dialogue on the themes such as identity, subjectivity, gender and desire can be seen. In performances, the bodies of the artists themselves simultaneously became an instrument, an artistic image and the phenomenology.

**A Classic Totart Object
(Golden Axe)**

1987. Object.
Bamboo gallows, bamboo fascine, golden axe, text.
Property of the artists

TOTART

View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum
of Modern Art, 2012





**Contemplation
of a Red Axe**
1990.

Performance/installation

**Classic totart-object
(Golden Axe)**

1987.

Wood, metal, bronze paint, text.

Photo: Sergei Nikolaev, Leticia Sestari.



An object — a handmade work, bearing the stamp of artisanship and gestures of ornamentation-gilding. The theme of hands (manual intervention) had been invisibly laid on the texture of the image, criss-crossing with the aggressive-constructive complex under the sign of an axe (fascia). A broadened semantic structure encompassing "totalitarian" notes appears, a desired multidimensionality of an extremely specific and simultaneously indefinitely abstract image.

An axe, as it is known, is one of the symbols of a "mysterious Russian soul," in its far-from singular manifestations. An axe is the personification of a rebellious-predatory prowess and a strong power of voluntarism ("you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs"), an accessory to an Oprichnik [a guardsmen/secret police during a period of mass repressions of the aristocracy between 1565–1572, during Ivan the Terrible's rule], a robber, an executioner and the instrument of an architect-carpenter. An axe is an emanation of will-power and anarchic-powerless beginnings (the signs of rebellion) and a means of dismembering and arranging a living landscape. Similarly — it is a reminder of the craft of a lumberjack, connected not only to the theme of a "wooden Russia," but also with Heideggerian metaphor of the "trails of a woodcutter," the forest trails, leading to "underground streams": to the forgotten Being and a hidden Nature. Hands with an axe are qualitatively neutral, functionally reversible — this is the first evidence of intrusion into nature, the anticipation of techno-aggression, and a sign of nostalgia for a pre-technological contact with the natural environment. Under the sign of the axe both anarchy and tyranny are combined, art and harsh physical labour; it is a symbol of breaking through the epistemological niches, including the "window to Europe," which, unfortunately often becomes overgrown, and requires renewed efforts.

Sergei Kuskov. "Tvorchestvo"
[Creativity]. No. 11, 1990

In 1924, in an essay for the journal “LEF,” Osip Brik called on the artist to go on a voyage “from the painting to the calico,” and to make only the kind of art that would bring direct benefit to society. In the 1970s, the idea of utilizing that artistic potential was travestied by Arkadiy Raikin, who proposed to mount dynamo machines onto ballerinas. At that moment, on the other side of the world, many Western artists were firmly convinced that a true work of art must become a direct social action. In 1982, during documenta 7, Joseph Beuys began an action to plant 7,000 oaks. The ecologically oriented project of the German artist carried a strong element of social obligation for citizens — a giant mound of basalt boulders could not be removed from Kassel’s central plaza until the full completion of the project. In October of that same year, the TOTART group conducted a Subbotnik, a Saturday volunteer drive, during which an “Avant-Garde Alley” was inaugurated. But there was no social pressure imposed — quite the contrary; this was about the total dissolution of an artistic gesture in the stream of real life. Let us begin by saying that previously, Anatoly Zhigalov found employment as a building superintendent at an apartment cooperative. And landscape work on the territories adjacent to the building, obviously entered into his direct list of duties; moreover, in the announcement inviting others to the Voskresnik, a Sunday volunteer drive, there was a direct mention that the alley will become a “collective work of art.” But evidently, seeing how apartment dwellers were uninterested in such a summons from the superintendent, the project was mostly conducted with the efforts of an invited artistic community. But the latter were not so much motivated by the improvement of the urban environment, as by their involvement in an artistic action.

Meanwhile, this was practically the first attempt to enter into real-life social space — before this moment, any type of activity took place in a closed circle, amongst “their own.” During his time, Pierre Bourdieu directly contrasted the “ghetto effect” and the “club effect.” But the community of non-official artists was simultaneously the ghetto, where all the outcasts of official aesthetics were relegated; and a closed elite club with very complex rules of inclusion of new members.

And everyone understood that a certain risk is involved in an attempt to leave the ghetto.

In 1985, the apartment inhabitants were invited to a Voskresnik, during which fences, benches and garbage cans around the house were painted in gold. A short announcement bore “TOTART’s” signature. And it was not only the children playing in the courtyard, but their diligent fathers and serious grandmothers, also took part in the entertaining action. And thus, they fulfilled Beus’ pledge — “Every person is an artist.” Amongst themselves, they did not think of any such thing; evidently, the neighbours evaluated what was happening as a clever jest by a nice and eccentric couple. As a result, the situation corresponded amazingly with Estétique relationnelle, “relational aesthetics,” postulated by Nicolas Bourriaud in 1995.

Moreover, even the slightest political undertones were eliminated during this action, while simultaneously anyone could have easily unfolded a boundless spectrum of culturological associations. However, this notwithstanding, the system unexpectedly reacted to the crossing of boundaries — Anatoly Zhigalov was sent to a psychiatric hospital. But was soon released — as a reminder, in 1985, “change was in the air.”



Cubed Art
“My Latest Work: I Am Supervisor at “Quant’ Residential Block,” or “Cubed Art.” From Supervisor Work series.
 1982–1985.

1. Art belongs to people.
2. Artist belongs to people.
3. Custodian belongs to the members of the cooperative that hires him.
4. Members of the cooperative are part of the nation.
5. This, my latest work “I Am Supervisor” belongs to the people THREE TIMES.
6. Again, art belongs to people.
7. Thus, my latest work “I Am Supervisor” is “CUBED ART.”
8. Artworks are sold and bought.
9. One month of my latest work “I Am Supervisor” is for sale at nominal price of 561 515 (five hundred sixty-one thousand five hundred fifteen) rubles and 62,5 kopecks (cubed 82,50) minus the salaried 82 (eighty-two) rubles and 50 kopecks. Total: 561 433 (five hundred sixty-one thousand four hundred thirty-three) rubles and 12,5 kopecks, or at retail price for one day as 18 714 (eighteen thousand seven hundred fourteen) rubles and 12 kopecks.

Zhigalov Anatoly Ivanovich,
 Apt. 4, 132 Kashirskoye shosse,
 115561 Moscow
 Tel. 399 30 38.

A. K.

**Avant-Garde Alley Inauguration Subbotnik.
From Supervisor Work series.**

1982. Action

Avant-Garde Alley inauguration subbotnik took place on October 9, 1982, near number 130, Kashirskoye shosse. Artists from Moscow and Leningrad, as well as art enthusiasts, took part in the subbotnik. Left to right: Nikolai Panitkov, Alexey Kamensky, Vladimir Mironenko, Yuri Albert, Eino Lappolainen
Photo: Vladimir Polischuk



The Golden Voluntary Sunday

1985. Action

The Golden Voluntary Sunday

1985. Action.

Final work from two cycles — Supervisor Work and Golden Series (includes Golden Ladder, 16 Positions for Self-Identification, Pochart, etc.). The “Golden Voluntary Sunday” was declared at number 130. The sign concludes with TOTART. During this Voluntary Sunday, friends of the artists and local dwellers painted gold all the fences, benches and litterbins around the house.

The work was done in real space and its social conditions. Gold colour has very special semantic meanings in Russian culture. It is the sacred background colour in icons and churches; it is immaterial, from the theological point of view; it is the colour of state regalia; it is the symbol of money (and shit), and the cemetery colour, at last. Used in this action, it roughly shifts all the stable construction of what is socially adopted, and marks the event as an artifact. This artifact has avant-garde strategy, as it actively merges the borders between life and art, and poses a row of questions about the nature of art, its relations with life, its place and functions in society, its limits and aesthetic categories. At the same time, the postmodernist tactic is evident here — in the irony of methods and use of materials.

As for the question about the limits of art (the question that is essential for the project “Investigation of the Essence of Art in the Context of Life and Art”), it was posed and solved here. Soon after the Voluntary Sunday, Anatoly Zhigalov was arrested by the militia (by the way, it happened in the Library of Foreign Literature, where he studied postmodernist aesthetics for the Bulletin of the Lenin Library) and, for one month, put into a psychiatric clinic. As it usually happens, life won fast, and the “limits” were defined very soon. The artist received the highest praise that was possible for a State (a totalitarian one). “A police station is the place where I meet the State,” Velimir Khlebnikov wrote during the more or less liberal post-revolutionary years, when he wandered in the more or less liberal Nature. Half a century after, the State that became Nature doesn’t leave a single spot, not a single break where one could miss it.

It became Art with a capital A.

The 8 mm film is now lost.

The Golden Voluntary Sunday — 2. 2009

Volunteer artists Marina Fedotova and Alexander Menus repeated the 1985 Voluntary Sunday action at the opening of the Dialogues 9th International Biennale of Contemporary Art in St Petersburg.

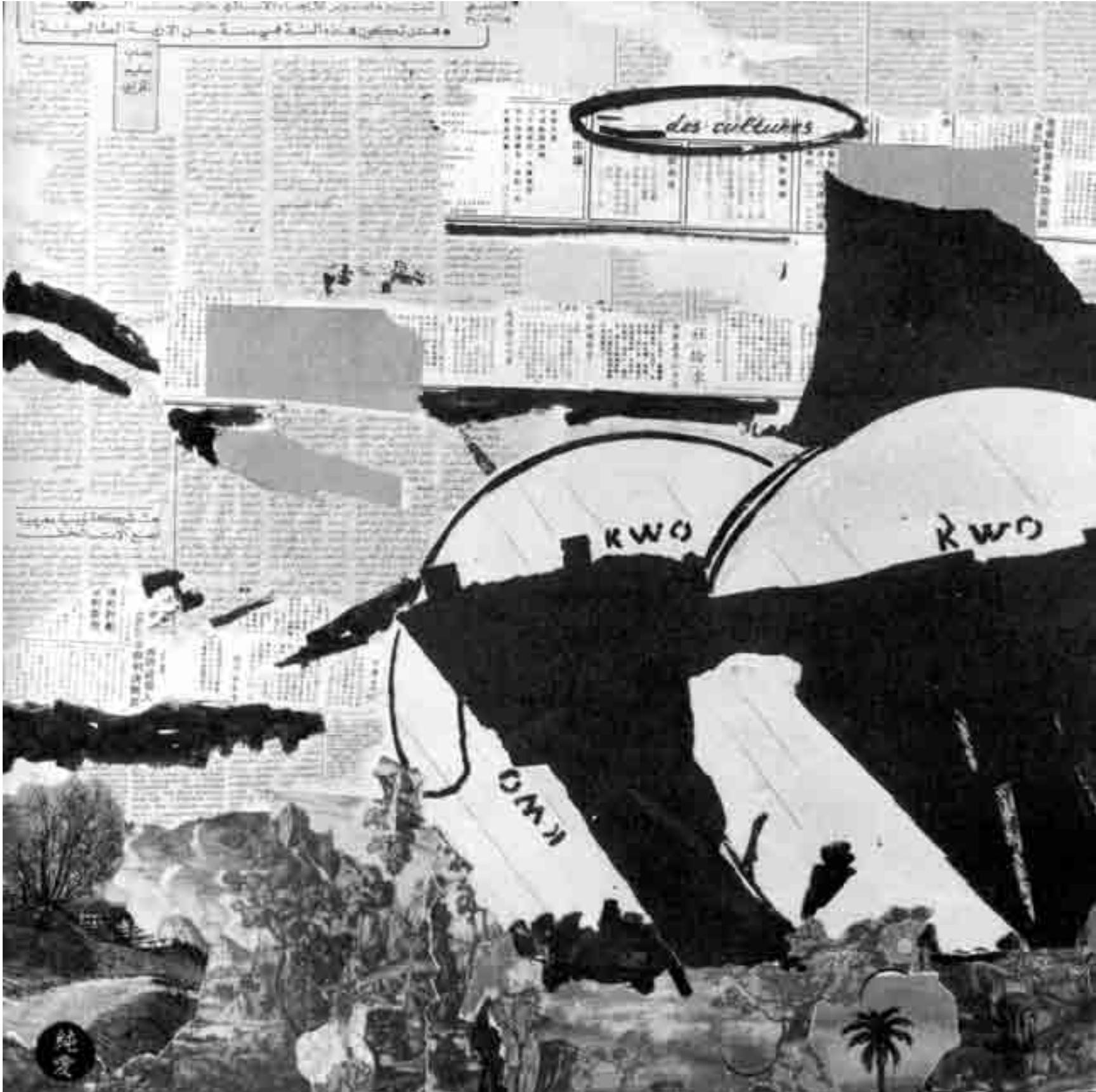
The Golden Voluntary Sunday — 3. 2011

ZIP group of artists repeated the 1985 Voluntary Sunday action at Maybe Festival of Public Art in Krasnodar



Natalia Abalakova

KWO
From Summa
archaeologiae series
1983.Collage
61 x 85.
Artist's property,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Maxi Perform Color.

From Summa archaeologiae series

1982. Collage. 62 x 86. Collection of Norton and Nancy Dodge, Zimmerli Art Museum, New Jersey, USA



Retro 1. Those Glorious 60s and 70s

1982. Performance/installation

The walls of the room are decorated at eye level with a series of pages from the catalogue "Colour, Form, Space" (1979, Moscow, 28 Malaya Gruzinskaya). Above and below this "horizon line" there are documentations of the Moscow artistic life of the 1960s and 70s. These documentations, grouped chronologically and semantically, were like memoirs of the authors of the project "Investigation of the Essence of Art in the Context of Life and Art." Apart from documentations of the Moscow situation, there were also materials from Czech, Slovak and French artists who were friends with the authors of this project.

Retro 1. Those Glorious 60s and 70s

1982. Performance/installation

Left to right: Sven Gundlah, Alik Ryabsky, Natalia Abalakova, Nikita Alexeev

Photo: Georgy Kizevalter and Alik Ryabsky



Work

1983. Performance
 Left to right: Natalia Abalakova,
 Simona Sokhranskaya, Vitauskas
 Stasyunas, Anatoly Zhigalov
 Photo: Alik Ryabsky



This work follows the perpetuum mobile principle and is infinite, theoretically. This principle of “total” action and “total” presence that requires choice from the spectator, lies at the base of the following TOTART performances. The artists (a Man and a Woman) form a completely autonomous system that doesn’t depend on the spectator (here the issue of Artist and Society is posed). At the same time, this system is open, so it cannot be broken by any intervention from the outside, to which it reacts adequately (except for physical destruction of the subjects of action). As the time of Work flows almost in eternity, its tempo is slowed and perceived as a fragment of a ritual, where order and chaos interchange constantly.

Take Care of the Art, Which Is Our Wealth!

1983. Performance/environment
 Photo: Igor Makarevich and Alik Ryabsky



The installation includes three zones of art:
 1. Zone of “pure art” — the “barrel” and the “panel.”
 2. Zone where art becomes a common property.
 3. Zone where art starts to contaminate the environment and requires intervention to eliminate it. The barrel was used by the spectators as a changing cabin and a basketball basket, while the panel was used as a volleyball net.

Take Care of the Art, Which Is Our Wealth!

1983. Performance/environment





(ИСКУССТВО ТРЕБУЕТ ЖЕРТВ)

Это произведение искусства может создать любой человек в любой точке земного шара где бы то ни было водятся москиты, комары, мушкетеры бабыки и проч. Над землей или водой (или болотом) повешиваемся куб, отлучившись противомоскитной сеткой, покрытой сверху клееким веществом. Изнутри куб - полон сильно освещен.

Человек, решившийся на такую акцию находится внутри куба с заката до рассвета - этого времени достаточно. Зиды насквозь плотно облеплены поверхностью куба и прекратили поступление воздуха. Куб с зерном навсегда обретет на своем месте как памятник ТОТАРТ'А.

В. М. Сурган

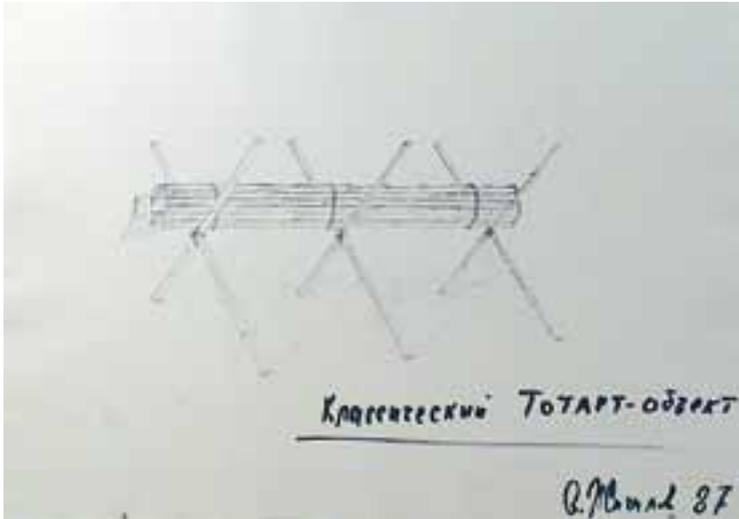
25.VII.86
Позорелово

Anatoly Zhigalov

Art Requires Sacrifice
1986. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow

A Classical TotArt Object (Golden Axe)
1987. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow

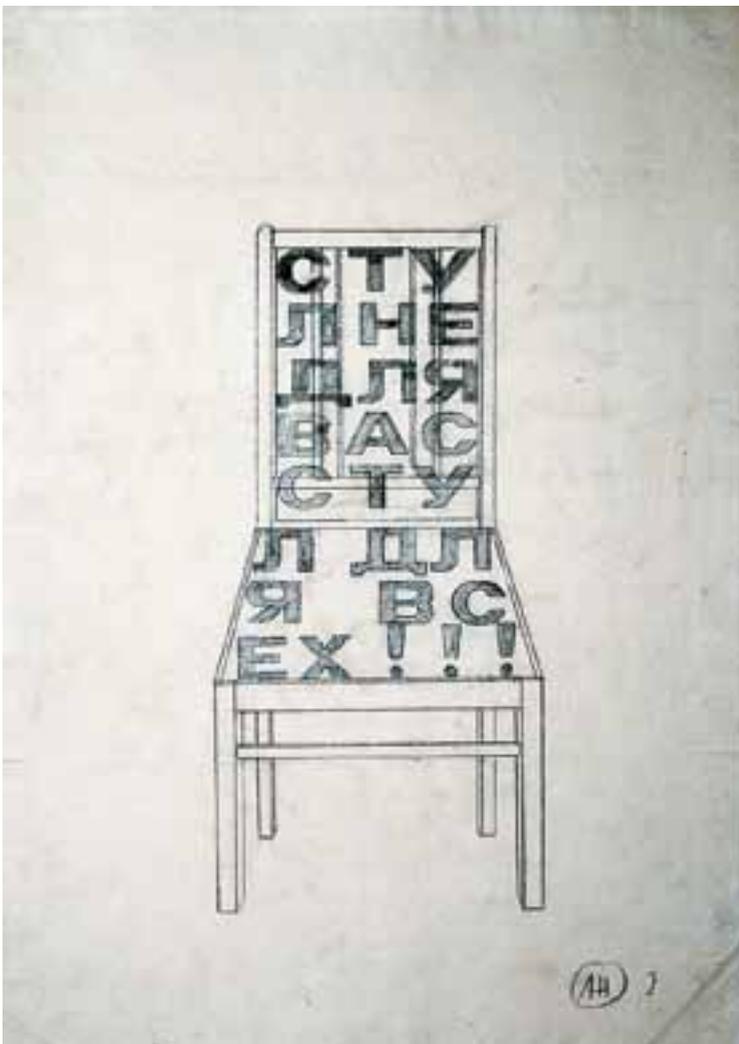
**A Chair Is Not for You —
a Chair Is for Everyone**
Project
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Life and Death
1986. Project of an action.
Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow

Icarus
1986. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow

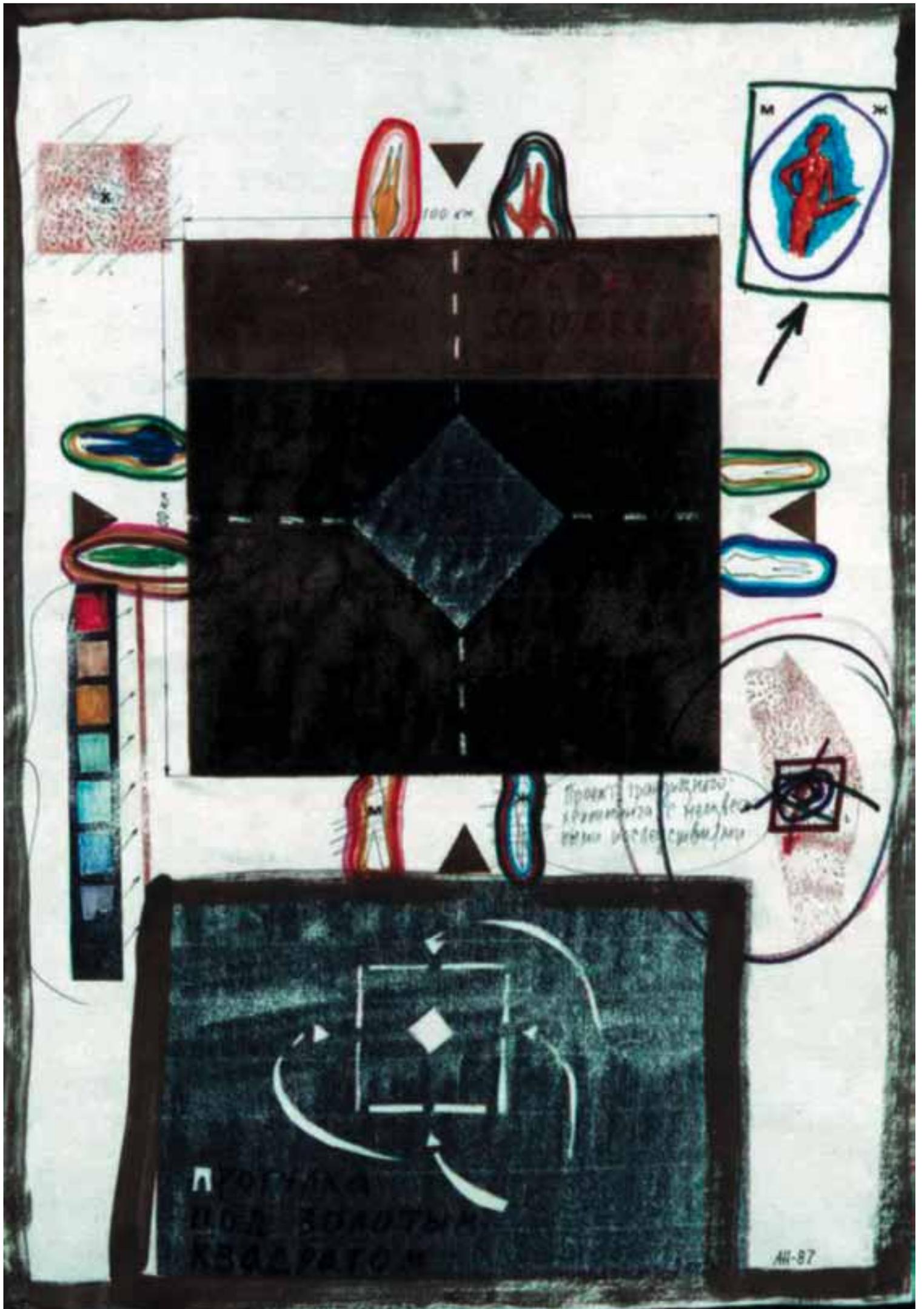




**Endure a Little Bit More,
and Things Will Go Well**
1997. Multimedia project.
Free Culture Humanitarian Foun-
dation, 21 Gallery, St. Petersburg;
1997–1998. Spider & Mouse»,
Moscow
(Later elaborated into a single-
channel exhibition version and
a four-channel version)

Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden Square
1987. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow



Window-1

1983. Performance

In this work the artists expose themselves to the contemplation of the spectators and their possible reaction; they provoke the spectator's decision by the very fact of their presence (a stimulus — a reaction). This work introduces the TOTART term for the first time.

Window-2

1983. Performance

Photo: Georgy Kizevalter

This is an iconic portrayal of artists as nameless human beings (a Man and a Woman). Utopia and anti-utopia. The rising and the humbling. The atmosphere was particularly tense, for the performance took place in the center of Moscow and there were many spectators attracted by the crowds and the bright screen.

Window-2

1983. Performance

Absence-Presence (Window-3)

1984. Installation. Cardboard silhouettes of the artists in full length. "Le Vivant et l'Artificiel," Avignon, France. Collection of Pierre-Alain Hubert, Marseille





Sunflower Seeds

1983. Performance
 Photo: Georgy Kizevalter
 All evening long, Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov chump sunflower seeds, gradually involving everybody in this process, so that by the end of the event all the floor was spitted. From time to time the automatic guide giving a tour of the "exhibition" broadcasts: "This Total Artistic Action realizes the project of "Investigation of the Essence of Art in the Context of Life and Art"



Purification

1983. Action
 Photo: Jiri Needla
 This work was proposed by Italian artist Paolo Barile. He sent the "pure" ground from Pompeii excavations to purify the contaminated space of a pond in Orekhovo-Borisovo filled with dirt. Another portion of the ground was eaten by the artists to purify themselves of filth.



Sign of the Avant-Garde

1984. Music performance
 Left to right: Natalia Abalakova, Vadim Zakharov, Zoya Polyakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Evgeny Barabanov. Valentina Goncharova is at the foreground.
 Photo: Vladimir Polischuk
 The artists are sitting on chairs facing the fridge. Anatoly Zhigalov has a scarf on his lap, from which a thread leads through the fridge handles to Natalia Abalakova. Anatoly Zhigalov unknits the scarf, and Natalia Abalakova winds the thread into a ball. The musicians can improvise in this situation of "endless" performance — an open system reacting to outer and inner impulses. The work was over when one of those present cut the thread abruptly.

Rope

1984. Action
 In the foreground: Matti Millius, Anatoly Zhigalov, Eva Zhigalova and Tartu citizens
 The attendees are supposed to hold to the rope, form a single chain and walk into the streets where they can face different unexpected situations in real city space. The duration of the action depends on circumstances or finishes when the last participant leaves the chain.



Russian Roulette

1985. Performance
 Photo: Alik Ryabsky
 The artists are sitting in front of the mirror, contemplating their own reflections and the reflection of the movie projected on the white wall behind them. The spectators stand on both sides of the space and watch the sitters, their reflections and the screen.
 The theme of mirror is brought about by rigid symmetry and geometrical character of the whole composition comprising performance and text.
 8 mm film by Igor Aleinikov



DisputeArt — 1

1984. Performance
 Left to right: Natalia Abalakova, Konstantin Zvezdochetov, Sergey Mironenko, Anatoly Zhigalov, Yuri Tabak, Sergey Ruzer, Viktor Nikolaev, Nikita Alexeev
 Photo: Georgy Kizevalter
 One can hear speeches about Moscow artistic situation (the analysis of AptArt exhibitions and events) and avant-garde art in soviet conditions, coming from the basement. This is an attempt of a dialogue between the artist and the artistic milieu (as part of society).



Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition.
From "Garbage" series
1985. Collage, mixed media.
60 x 84. Artist's property,
Moscow







Natalia Abalakova

Sketch of a Red Room

1983. Gouache on paper. 62 x 86.
Artist's property, Moscow

Sketch of a Red Room

1985. Gouache on paper. 62 x 86.
Artist's property, Moscow

16 Positions for Self-Identification (Golden Room)

1985. Painted performance/installation
Photo: Igor Aleinikov
Anatoly Zhigalov paints the outline of Natalia Abalakova in red and gold, and then they change places. The artists move clockwise until white figures with red contours and golden backgrounds cover all the walls. After that, Natalia Abalakova paints the face and body of Anatoly Zhigalov in red, and Anatoly paints her in gold. The spectators watch the action through the door hole.
Video documentation by Sabina Hensgen
16 mm film (20 min.)
by Igor Aleinikov

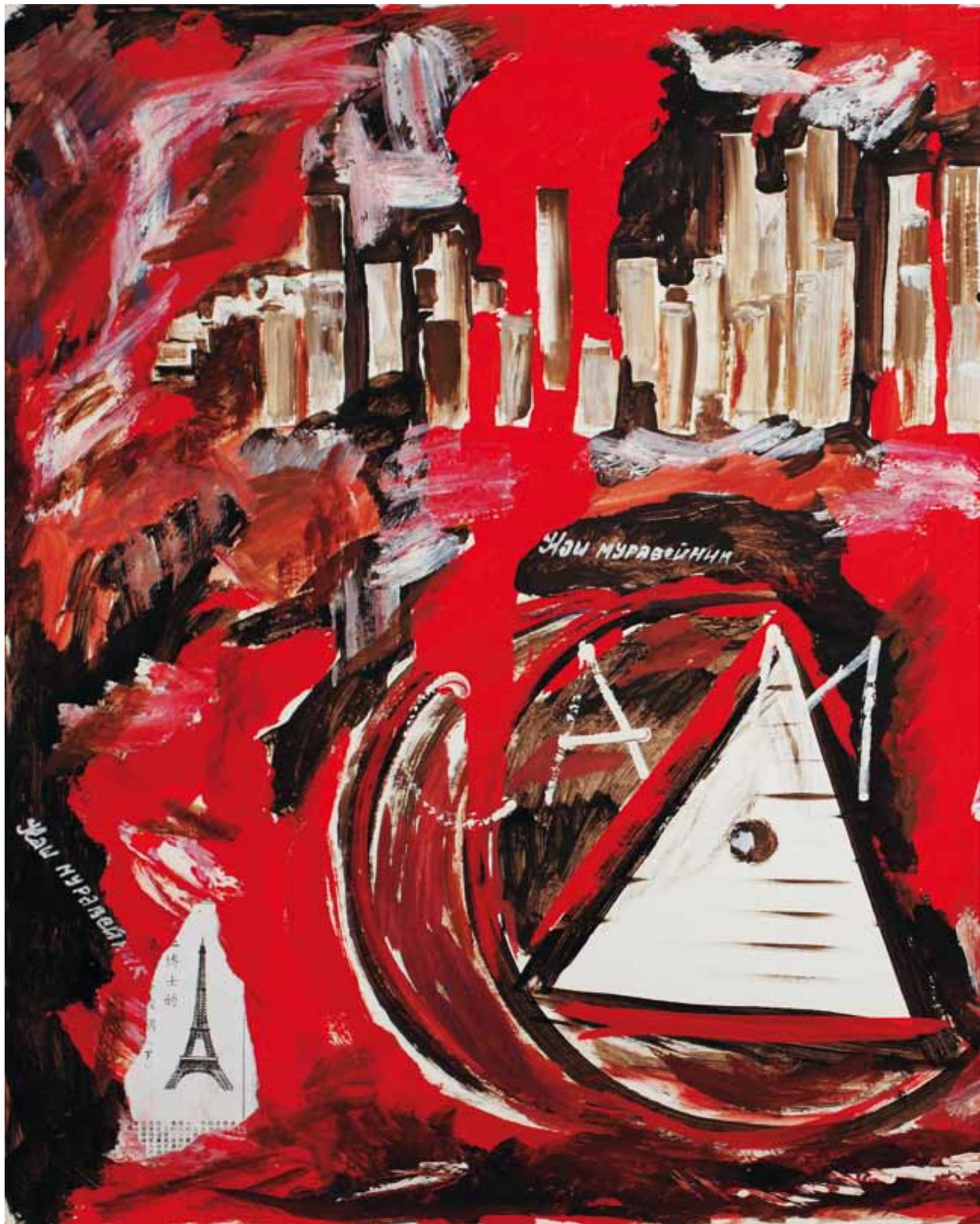
And This Is Completely Real (Red Room)

1986. Painted performance/installation
During the whole period of the performance the camera captured the painted work by Natalia Abalakova. The home was open for visitors all that time.
8 mm film by Igor Aleinikov

And This Is Completely Real (Red Room)

1986. Painted performance/installation





Natalia Abalakova

Sketch of a Red Room

1983. Gouache on paper. 62 x 86.
Artist's property, Moscow



An Attempt to Melt the Snow, or the Point of Departure. Investigation of the Circle series

1982. Action.
Body, snow, breath.
13 works
Photo: Vadim Zakharov.

Vicious Circle. Investigation of the Circle series

1982. A proposal of action for 'Mukhomor' and 'Collective Actions' groups.
13 works

Pissed Circle. Investigation of the Circle series.

1982. Action.
Body, snow, urine.
13 works

Blood Circle. Investigation of the Circle series.

1982. Action.
Snow, blood.
13 works

Cover-up. Investigation of the Circle series.

1982. Collective action.
13 works
Left to right: Anatoly Zhigalov, Nikita Alexeev, Natalia Abalakova, Sven Gundlah, Nikolai Kozlov, Alexey Sobolev.



The Untraceable Leaves Its Trace in Unpredictable Consequences

1993. Installation. Tables, white cloth, lightboxes with drawings on black and red carbon paper (A4), eggshell, ventilator, tape recorder, wires. L-Gallery, Moscow

White Nights. Installation

1991. 6 plexiglass boxes 60 x 80 x 150 with fallen leaves. "TOTART: Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov. Works from 1961–1991," Manege Central Exhibition Hall, St. Petersburg

The Body of Love Melting in Sweet Anguish of Creation

1997. Installation. Bathroom shelves, two ice-cream cones, ground, text Bloom's Day

Natalia Abalakova

With a Red Wedge
1990. Collage. 65 x 50.
Artist's property, Moscow

1987. Installation.
Exhibition of TELL in the Harbour,
Leningrad, USSR

Occasion for Acquaintance

1987. Installation.
Exhibition of TELL in the Harbour,
Leningrad, USSR



Natalia Abalakova

My Forefathers Used to Keep Hunting Falcons a Thousand Years before Christmas. From "One of the Ways Leading to Heaven" series.
1988. Oil on canvas. 150 x 150, 150 x 200, 150 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow

Natalia Abalakova

Ave, Eva
1987–1990. Triptych.
Oil on canvas.
150 x 130, 150 x 200, 150 x 130.
To be installed with Totems by Eva Zhigalova: three cardboard pipes (h 70, ø 10; h 104, ø 10; h 70, ø 10), gouache, 1987–1990.
Artist's property, Moscow

Natalia Abalakova

Water in Which You Can't Step Twice
1991. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
200 x 150, 150 x 200, 200 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow





Natalia Abalakova

**Beauty Will Save the World
(Self-Portrait)**

1987. Mixed media on canvas.
150 x 150. Artist's property,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Demonstration of the Method.
From "One of the Ways Leading to Heaven" series

1988. Triptych.
Oil on canvas. 150 x 130,
150 x 200, 150 x 130.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Stop Before It's Too Late!
From "One of the Ways Leading to Heaven" series

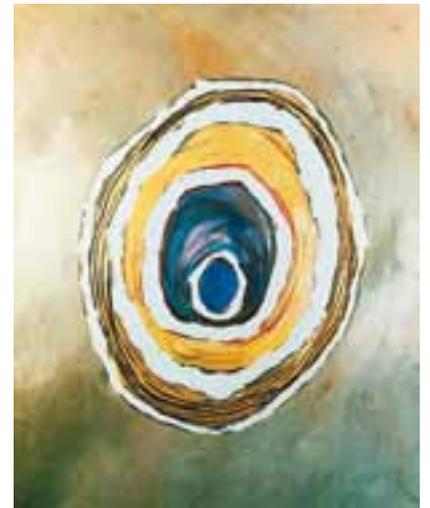
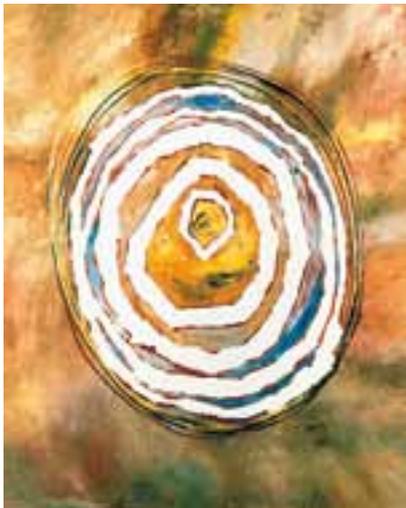
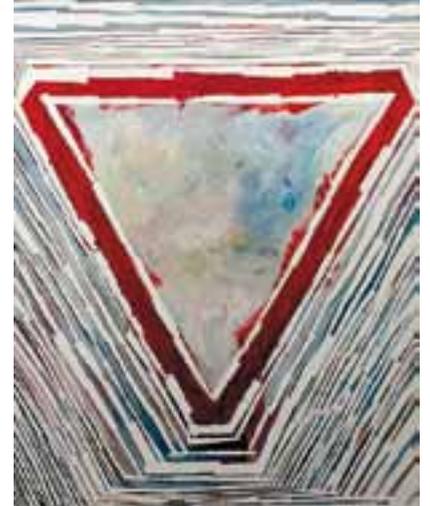
1988. Triptych.
Oil on canvas. 150 x 130,
150 x 200, 150 x 130.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Himmelweg.
From "One of the Ways Leading to Heaven" series

1988. Triptych.
Oil on canvas. 150 x 130,
150 x 200, 150 x 130.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

**Landscape with
Red Bear and Barrels**

1987. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow

Don't Trust the Deer!

1988. Oil on canvas. 110 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

**Landscape with
Red Bear**

1987. Oil on canvas. 100 x 200.
Artist's property, Moscow





Anatoly Zhigalov

Arm-wrestling (XYZ)

1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300

(two parts, 200 x 150 each).

Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Hands and Grid

1988. Oil on canvas. 150 x 150.
Collection of Anatoly Breiter, Israel
Anatoly Zhigalov

Handle with Care!

1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

**Red Square:
The Last Glance of the
Retreating Geometrician**

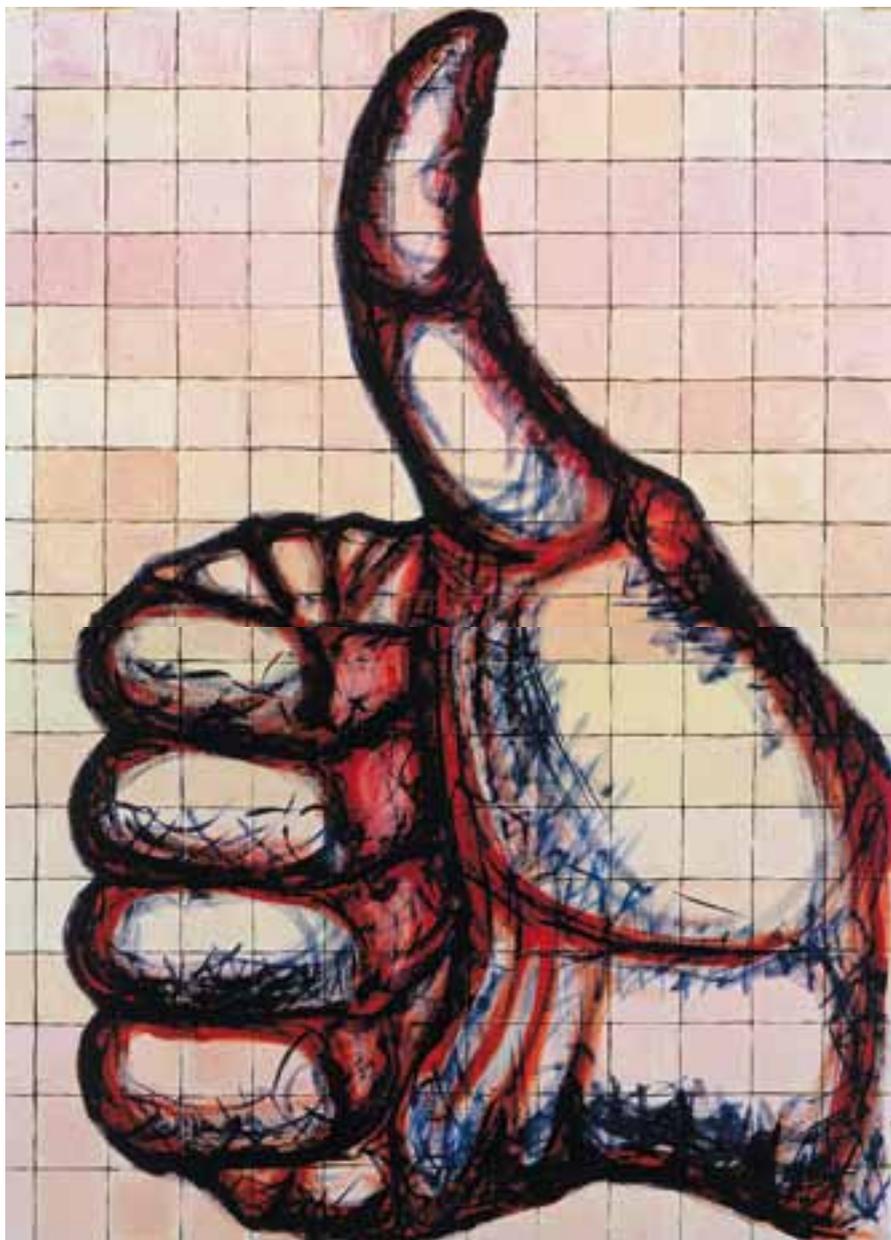
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow

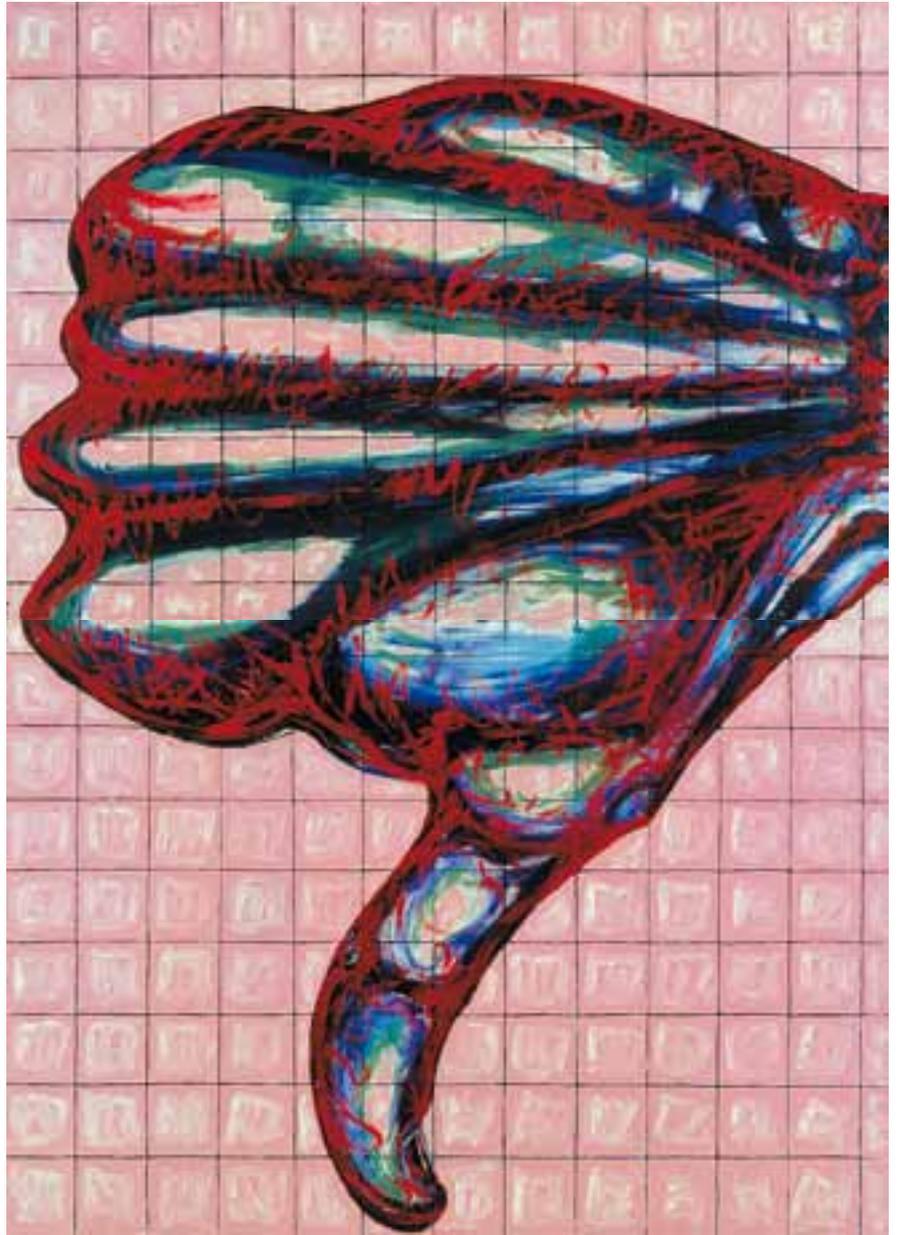


Anatoly Zhigalov

Panem et Circenses!

1987. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125
each), 150 x 200, 170 x 125
(two parts, 85 x 125 each).
Collection of Aliko Kostaki,
Greece

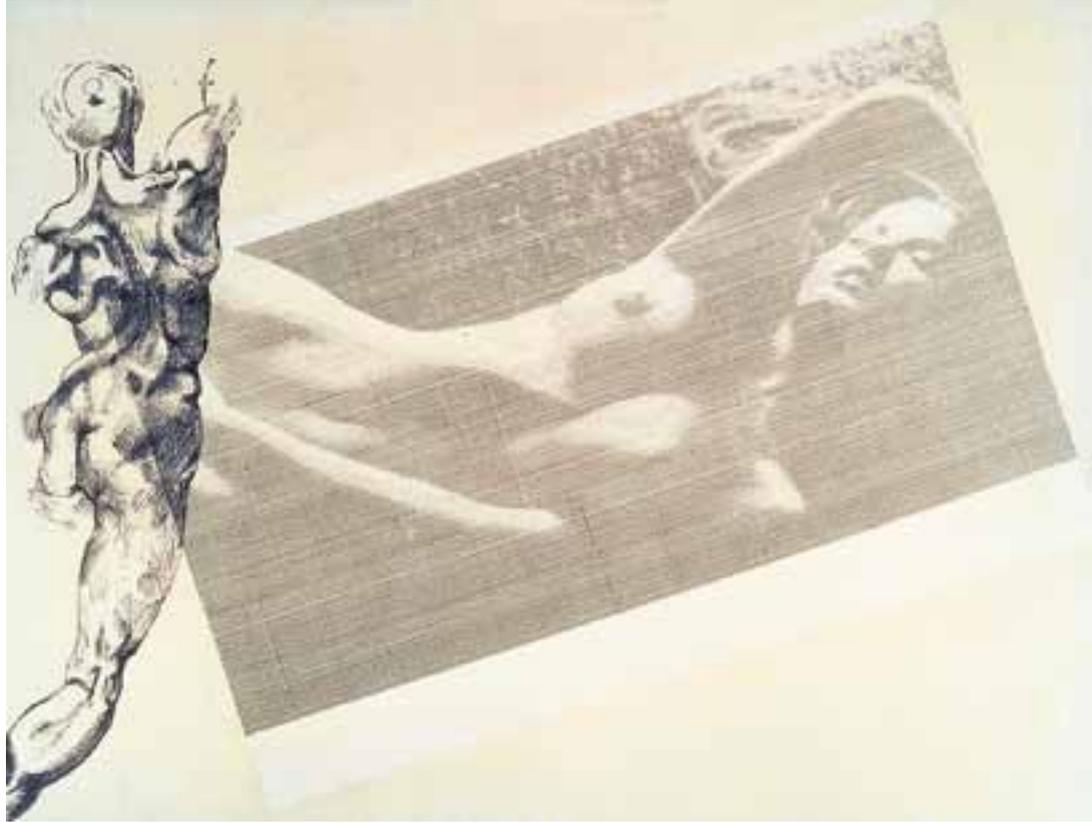




Anatoly Zhigalov

What Do You See?

1987. Triptych. Mixed media on canvas. 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each), 150 x 200, 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each).
Collection of Alike Kostaki, Greece



Anatoly Zhigalov

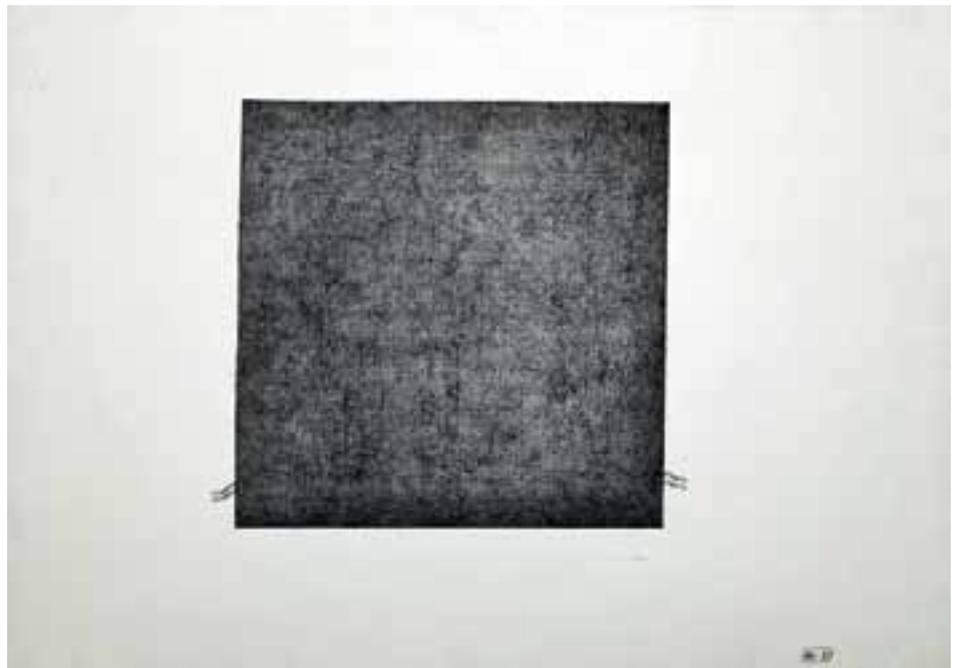
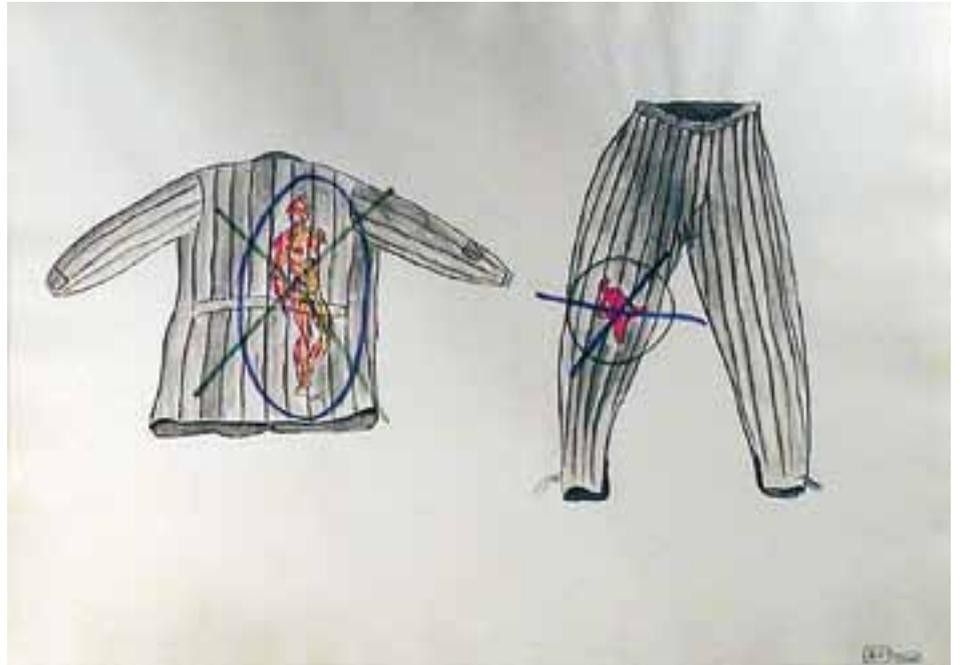
**Cotton Jacket and Cotton
Pants. From "Anatomy
of Culture" series**

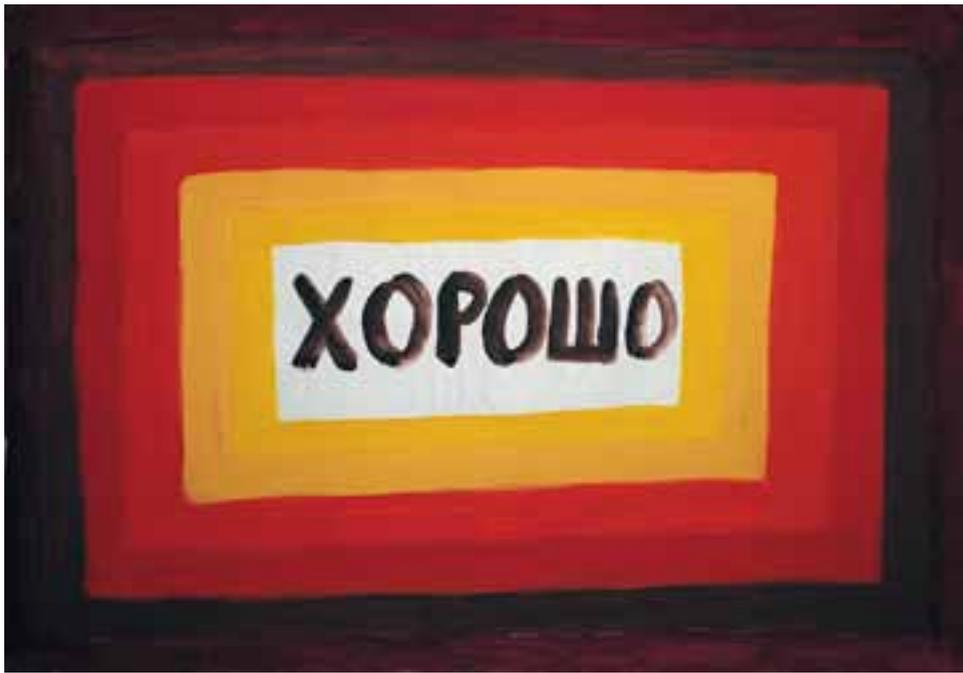
1987. Mixed media on paper.
42 x 59. Collection of Alika Kostaki,
Greece

Anatoly Zhigalov

**Wedding Night of Cotton
Jacket and Cotton Pants,
or Black Square.
From "Anatomy
of Culture" series**

1987. Ballpoint pen on paper.
42 x 59. Collection of Alika Kostaki,
Greece





Anatoly Zhigalov

Good

1987. Gouache on paper. 60 x 84.
Artist's property, Moscow

Bad

1987. Gouache on paper. 60 x 84.
Artist's property, Moscow

Love

1987. Gouache on paper. 60 x 84.
Artist's property, Moscow

Encounter

1988. Mixed media. 41 x 58.
Artist's property, Moscow



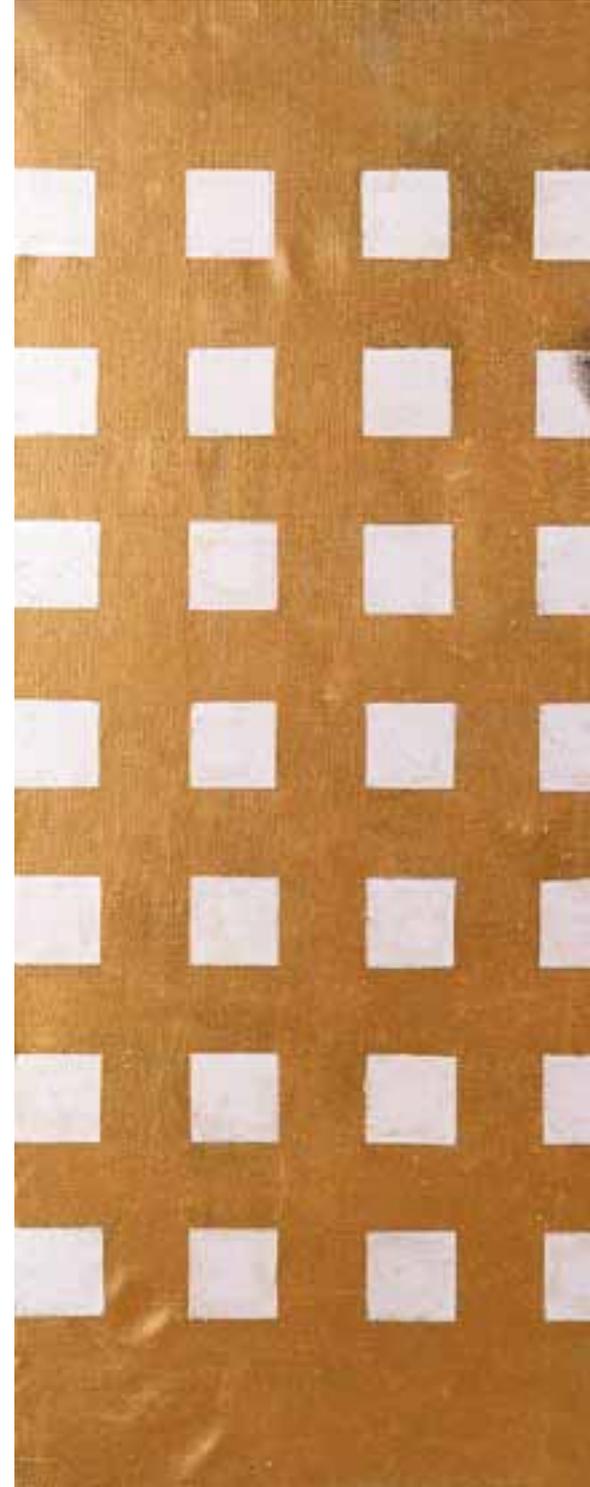


Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden and Black Grid 1
1988. Part of a triptych.
Mixed media on canvas. 85 x 65.
Artist's property, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden Grid 2
1989. Part of a triptych.
Oil and bronze paint on canvas.
85 x 65



Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden and Black Grid 3

1988. Part of a triptych.
Mixed media on canvas. 85 x 65.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden Grid with a Little Red Square (Golden Structure 1)

1988. Mixed media on canvas.
150 x 150 (lozenge).
Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Red Triangle

1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each)



Anatoly Zhigalov

Footprint of the Last Geometrician Left Right Before Ascension

1990. Oil and permanent marker on canvas. 180 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow

Feet and Red Fist

1989. Oil and permanent marker on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow

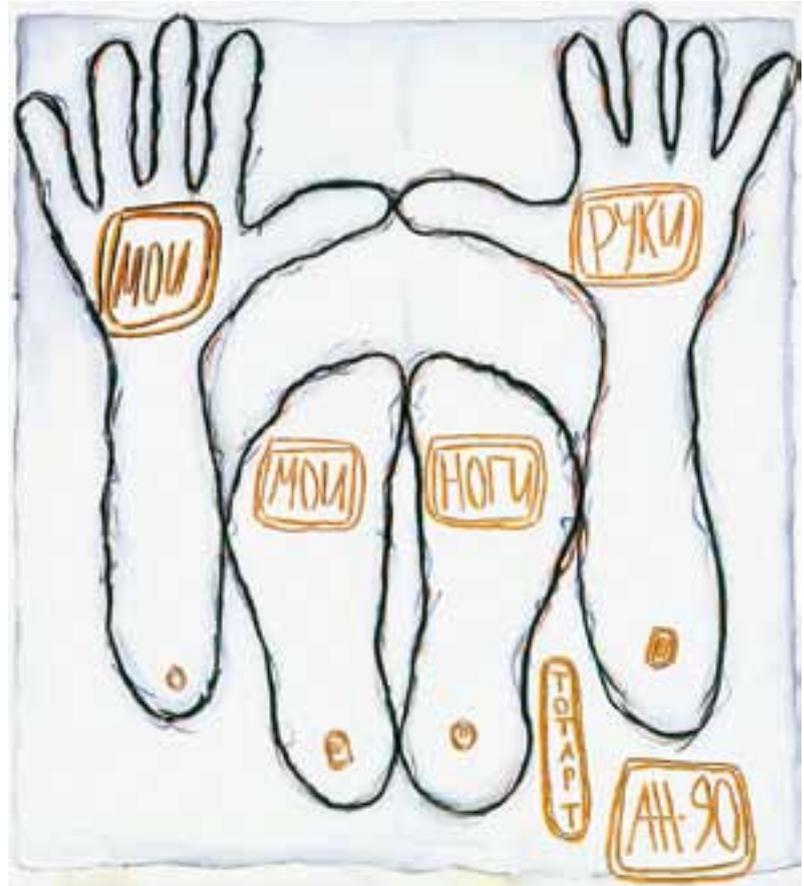
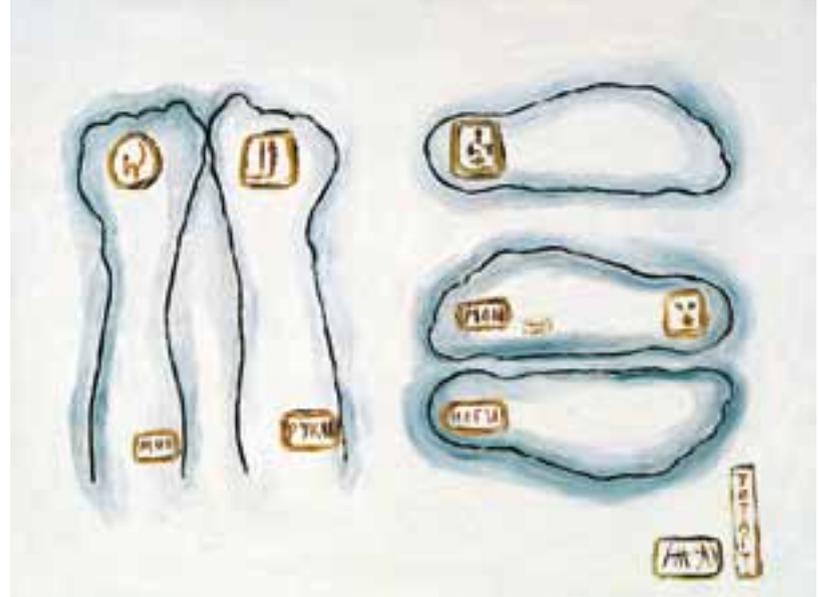
Anatoly Zhigalov

My Hands, My Feet — 2

1990. Oil on canvas. 150 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow

My Hands, My Feet — 1

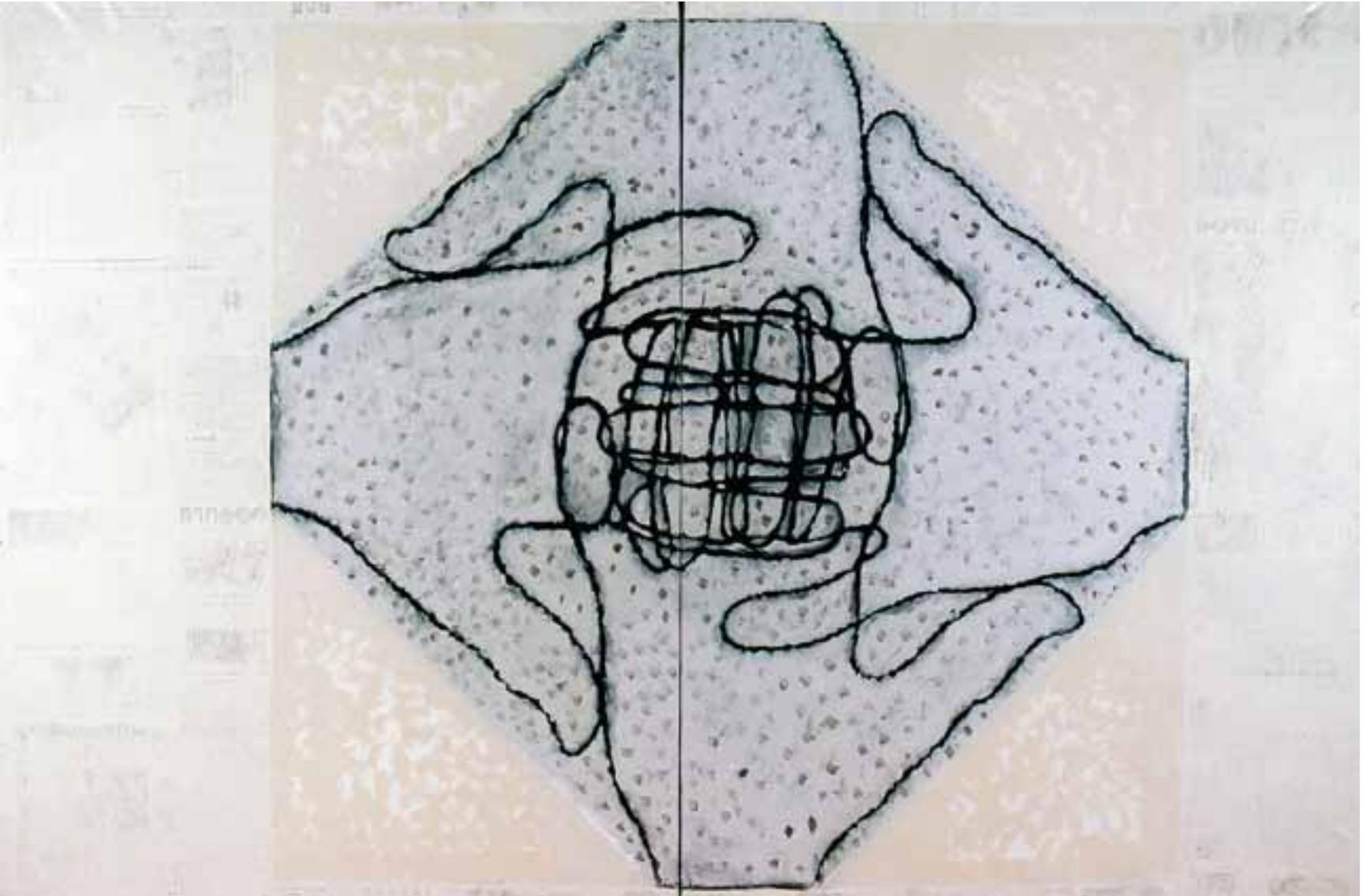
1990. Mixed media on canvas. 200 x 180. Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Hands of the Four Cardinal
Directions**

1989. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow



VOYAGE TO THE EDGE D

TOTART. Natalia Abalakova /
Anatoly Zhigalov

A red wheel—is an extreme of polysemy. Already, in the contemporary Russian humanitarian discourse, wheels are perceived almost as an archetype, also having brightly expressed social undertones. Notwithstanding their cultural archetypes: the buddhist wheel of Samsara, myths about celestial carriages existing in almost every global civilization, including the Jungian image of a UFO as an overflowing feeling of guilt of a modern person; the images of the visions of prophets, manifold signs left by unknown visionaries on the stone tablets of history; Marcel Duchamps' ready-made "Bicycle wheel," a sign of eternal return and rebirth.



In video projects, the wheel exists in the concept of loops and circuits, as a movement in a circle, when subjects interpret each other in multi-screen projects. “Looped body” [trans. (from Rus.) Zakoltsovanoe Telo], an enchanted, charmed, virtualized Body as a structural subject folded on itself, exists in multi-screen video installations especially when the counterpoint to the subjects of the elevated, poeticized creativity, a theme of crude physical labour and individual and collective labour processes emerges.

Painting itself is conjured as a sign-ideogram, as a modality of a single conceptual exhibitional project, and tends more towards “painting after the death of painting,” which presumes the test of strength for visual language itself; it is more of a

reflection of painting on painting, and the creation of new cultural codes, where each work becomes a sign, a ready-made of commercial signs — the trace of a mythological chain of a total archive of culture.

Sacred geometry is made profane; transforms into signs of orders, calls, warnings—everything returns to the origins, where each sign could be a symbol for everything, and thus becomes tainted all the easier, with everything including the political; a square transforms into a wheel, and the wheel becomes a square; however, behind this relativism of signs, a glimmer of nostalgia for some forbidden space of truth and justice remains.



TOTART

View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
2012

Natalia Abalakova

**Trip to the End of Democracy
(Russia)**

1990. Mixed media on canvas.
200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150
each). Artist's property,
Moscow





Natalia Abalakova

**Trip to the End of Democracy 2
(China)**

1990. Mixed media on canvas.
200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150
each). Artist's property,
Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Trip to the End of Democracy 3

(I Like You, Bobby) (America)

1990. Mixed media on canvas.

200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150

each). Artist's property,

Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

On the Other Side of Democracy

1991. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
200 x 200, 200 x 400, 200 x 200.
Artist's property,
Moscow





In the video documentation of the action we see two fragile figures plodding toward each other across a huge snowy field, then they unfold a slogan on the ground, with the inscription, “In Such a Cold Weather Art is Impossible.” As a result, the inscription becomes accessible only to angels, perhaps. And the message that they, possibly, read, sounds extremely pessimistic. The only suggestion to a positive solution to the problem lies in the fact that participating in the action are a man and a woman; a clear incarnation of yin (cold) and yang (flame). This slogan appeared once more, in 1998, as a name for the performance in the gallery Spider & Mouse, but there, it received a life-affirming continuation — “In Such a Cold Weather Art is Impossible; But if to Have a Little Patience...” What was important there, was that men's and women's garments were used.

Concerning the celestial bodies, then they have never been TOTART's relevant referential group. In reality, the message is addressed to colleagues and friends from the group, “Collective Activities.” This TOTART action directly imitates the characteristic content of Collective Activities' performances — a snowy field, a slogan. And of course, what Nikita Alekseev in his recollections of Collective Activities' early actions called, “an ascetic feat in the field of contemporary art” — (“Discomfort, the necessity to walk on foot from the suburban train, to get cold and soaked, and then, to return home tired.”) But the participants of the group TOTART, and their few spectators, did not have to travel far: the action was held on the Orehovo-Borisovo field, and occupied apartment buildings are seen in the photograph. But for “Collective Activities,” the irony was excluded as a matter of principle, or was so strongly hidden, that for outsiders it was almost impossible to decipher it. Whereas here, the artist-character almost comically mourns their bleak fate, as if continuing ceaseless kitchen conversations about the possible ways of producing art of “world caliber.” (One, that perhaps necessitates more comfortable conditions?). And another self-ironic motif: the slogan, of course, addresses the “universe,” but contains in it not only Russian, but English texts. Possibly, the rationale was that it could potentially be visible to American astronauts. However, despite the possibility of such an interpretation, no political meanings or appeals to the “Cold War” arise. Moreover, this category of celestial inhabitants could have decided that a trap awaits them — during their movement on the field, the artists placed red flags. The same ones that are placed while hunting wolves. And wolves, by the way, cannot distinguish colours.

A. K.



In Such a Cold Weather

Art Is Impossible

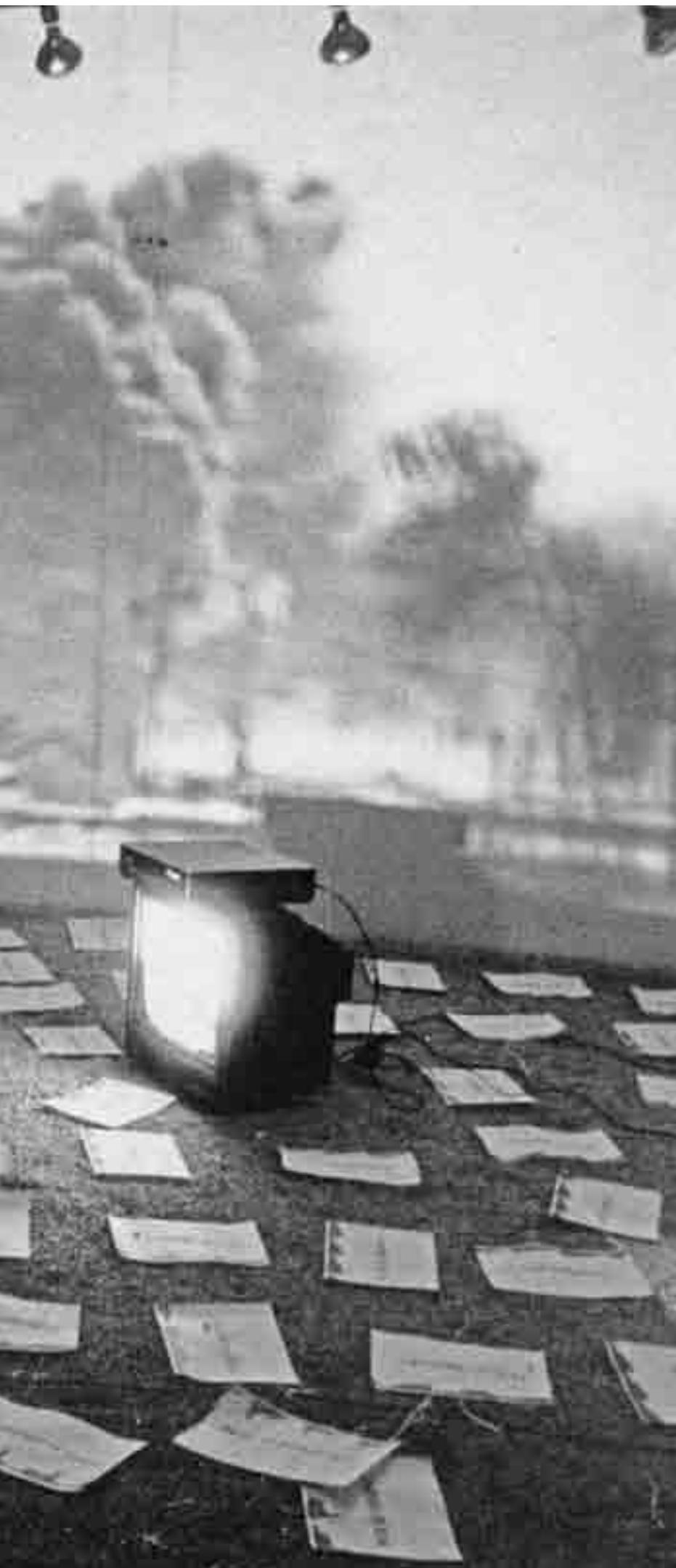
1984. TOTART-action

Photo: Igor Aleinikov

The artists meet in the middle of a field, unfold and spread on the snow the poster with the black inscription saying "In Such a Cold Weather Art Is Impossible" in Russian and English. Here one can sense the wordplay: cold (frost) — cold war — the climate hostile to art.
16 mm film by Igor Aleinikov







Place of the Artist

1996. Performance/video installation
Photo: Vladimir Maiboroda

Once I fell into the trap of the mirror and escaped it but instantly fell into another. I see and transmit images through numbers, passing by the feelings. This helps me to see the untraceable...

As a whole, the totality of TOTART has a meta-political, aesthetic and project-oriented focus. This is the creation of total reality in specific conditions of existing surroundings and materials within the framework of the exhibition.

The art of surpassing art, the act of purification of the collective memory is the destruction of fragmented history, the perceiving of physical reality of space and time.

Place of the Artist

1998. Multimedia project.
TV Gallery Art Media Center, Moscow



North Wind

1994. Performance/installation
Photo: Vladimir Maiboroda

Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov are sitting in front of a pillow, turn on vacuum cleaners, take knives and start cutting the pillow, while vacuum cleaners catch the flying down and feathers. After the pillow is cut open, the artists stand still in the down blizzard until the audio recording and light turn off.
Video documentation
by Sergey Kovalsky

North Wind

1994/1995/1998. Object.

Sleep Well, Darling object is on the left podium, remains of the destroyed Sleep Well, Darling object are on the right podium. The monitor displays the video recording of North Wind performance of 1995 at 21 Gallery. The object was installed at Traces, Voices, Places exhibition at L-Gallery in 2009. Collection of the National Center for Contemporary Art

North Wind

1998. Multimedia project.
TV Gallery Art Media Center, Moscow

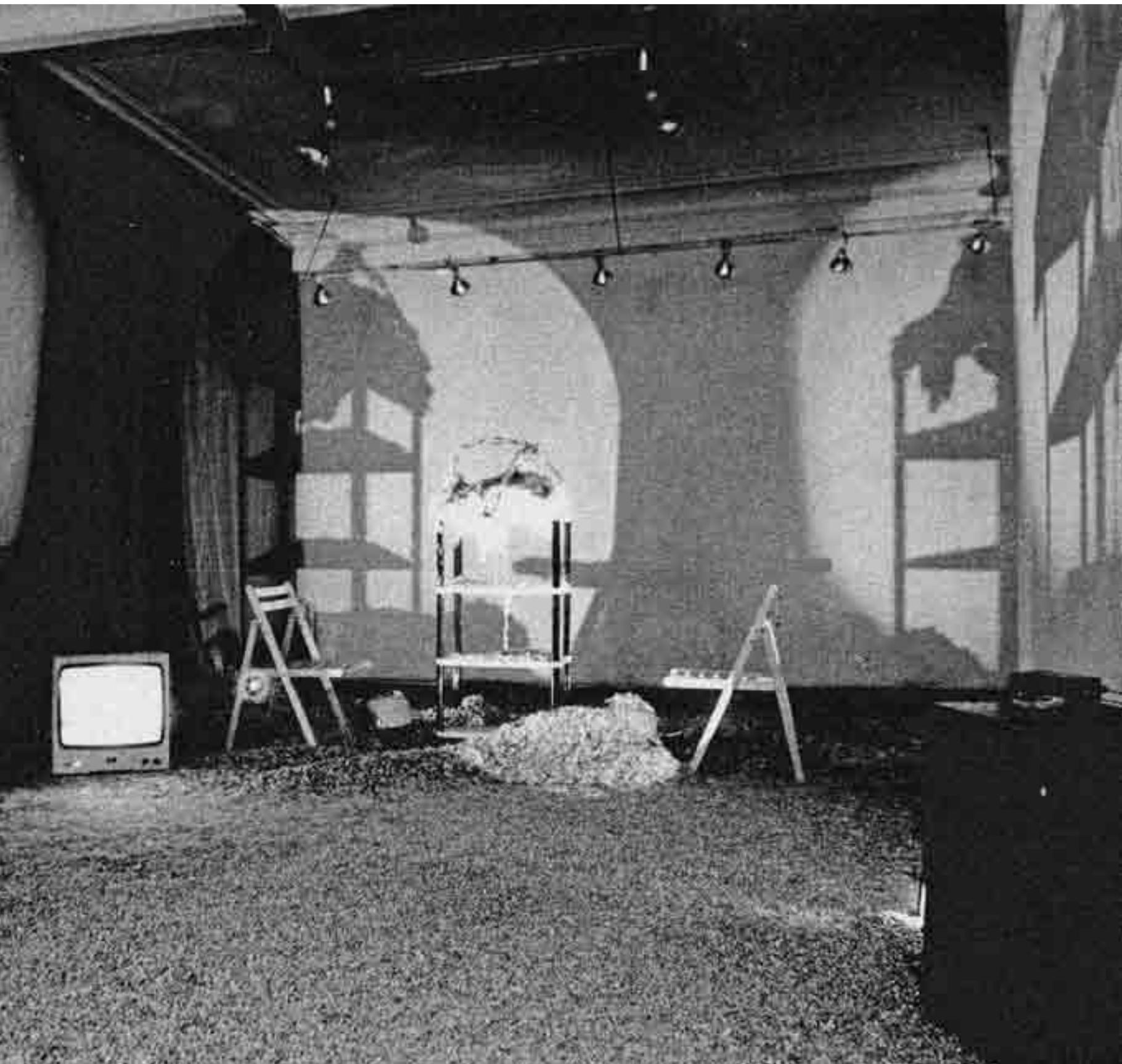


North Wind

1994. Performance/installation

North Wind

2009. Repetition of North Wind performance as part of Space Liturgy #3 project. 4th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, TSUM Department Store



God's Grace

2001. Single-channel video.
Kukart-5 Festival, Tsarskoye Selo

Golden Toilet Bowl

1994. Multimedia project.

Wanderers in the Night video festival. "Experimental video, computer animation, and projective synthesis." "Reservation of Arts" at Petrovsky Boulevard, Moscow
The monitor displays the static image of a toilet bowl with babbling water, superimposed on the NBC coverage of the attack on the White House in Moscow in 1993. The screenplay text of the Golden Toilet Bowl is placed on the walls. A real toilet with a bowl and photographic installation on the rear wall can be seen through the door hole only.

Anatoly Zhigalov

Composition on a Dutch Newspaper

1990. Mixed media. 58 x 42.
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Golden Book

1985. Double-sided graphic object. Bronze paint and glue on newspaper. 58 x 82. Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Silver Book

1985. Double-sided graphic object. Aluminum paint and glue on newspaper. 58 x 82. Artist's property, Moscow



Golden Law

2007. Performance with
Classical TOTART-Object — 2,
or Golden Law
City Sculpture project, Izhevsk
Photo and video: Anfim Khanykin



Golden Ladder
1985. Performance



Praesence, Praesence
1984. Performance
Phot by Vladimir Polischuk

In this work the “aggressive” attitude of artists towards the spectators gives way to a “passive” one. The artists as living sculptures become objects of contemplation and possible actions or reactions of the spectators.



Invitation in May
1984. Action
Photo: Vladimir Polischuk

Artists are sitting back to back on a chest and hold trays with spicy and salty sandwiches on their heads. The visitors eat sandwiches and appease hunger, but start feeling thirsty. At the same time, they liberate the artists from their burden and open up the way to beverages hidden in the chest.

Here one can see sort of a may-pole, the involvement in action, the unity through food. The spectator is the one who creates the artwork.



Even Guard

1986. Performance
Photo: Igor Aleinikov

Four participants stand in pairs facing each other and holding mirrors to communicate with each other. Spectators enter the room one by one and interchange with one of the “guards.” Other participants can watch the action through the door hole.



DisputeArt – 2

1985. Performance
Photo: Igor Aleinikov

A conversation without communication. A dialogue of two deaf persons that consists of one-minute (measured by chess-clock, as in chess-play) purely improvisational monologues concentrated on the theme of art. The artists sit at the table facing each other. The spectators can watch the action, standing uncomfortably on the steps at the room's entrance

or listening to the “dialogues” on the radio anywhere in the studio, without seeing the speakers. Whereas the spectators can choose between comfort and discomfort, the artists are put in uncomfortable conditions.
16mm film by Igor Aleinikov



**Tsar Bell and Tsar Cannon,
or Vain Efforts of Love**

1984. Installation in the apartment
of the artists Moscow
16 mm film, 1min. 10 sec.



**Golden Room, or 16 Positions
for Self-Identification**

1985. Performance. 16 mm,
17 min. Music by TriO: S. Letov,
A. Kirichenko, and A. Shelkoper



Girl and Buda

1984. Film performance
by Gleb Aleinikov and Eva Zhigalova.
Camera: Igor Aleinikov
16 mm, 17 min.
Music by Natalia Abalakova,
Aleinikov brothers,
and Anatoly Zhigalov



Floor Polishers

1984. Performance
Photo: Igor Aleinikov

This is the ritualization of an everyday activity and, at the same time, the reference (through hint of "pornography") to the asexuality of the totalitarian society where everything is banned.
16mm film by Igor Aleinikov



During the perestroika, there was a common expression, “In the USSR, there is no sex!” However, in reality, things were a lot more complex. The catch phrase was first uttered by the representative of the Committee of Soviet Women during a teleconference “Moscow-Boston” in 1996. Her American interlocutress asked a question, whether there were advertisements in the Soviet Union, where “everything revolves around sex.” The resulting loud laughter in the audience drowned out the explanation, which was made by another woman from the Soviet side — “We have sex, we just don't have advertisements!”. The situation became strange — the American acted as a critic of consumer society, where female sexuality is exploited. And her Soviet counterparts, did not see anything negative in consumerism. From that moment on, it became clear that “Big Brother,” who previously strictly controlled consumption, and sexuality, had to go. Nothing exceptionally sexual is observed in TOTART's performnce “Floor Polishers” [trans. (from Rus.) Poloteri] (1984). Maybe only a suggestion — Natalia and Anatoly are polishing hardwood floors in an empty room, taking off their shirts in the process. Meanwhile, a simple action is transformed into some sort of a reality show — a loud television is on in the room, and specially invited spectators are observing unfolding events through a keyhole. And with full accord with Guy Débord's idea that in a society of spectacle, the spectator turns into an image, Igor Aleinikov's camera carefully captured the spectators of the performance.

The camera also affixed a certain disappointment in the audience — through the keyhole, nothing observed resembled a shocking scene, as revealing as the one peering back through little holes in the door in Marcel Duchamp's last installation, “Étant Donnés...” Unfortunately, the observer does not always receive the desired enjoyment from peeping — exactly like in Roy Lichtenstein's painting, “I see the whole room!... And there's nobody in it!”. And there was nothing left for the voyeur, but to follow Sigmund Freud's advice, and to sublimate their mania into art. And to remember the iconographic source of the seen spectacle — Kazimir Malevich's assiduous and sweaty “Floor Polishers”. This analogy returns us to the sphere of gender problematics — two men are working in Malevich's piece, but in this case, we have a man and a woman. Their gender roles are not manifest — both are occupied with the same task. And there is absolutely no gender wars, which Ulay and Abramovich so ardently explicated.

But such is our specificity. In her text, “A gendered aspect of contemporary art,” Natalia Abalakova sympathizingly cites Ludmilla Bredihina's idea, which, as applied to the Amazonian women of the Russian avant-garde had stated, — “The Russian feminine had spent the majority of the century in communal trenches of various kinds — it is reasonable to expect gender mutations here.”

A. K.

Anatoly Zhigalov

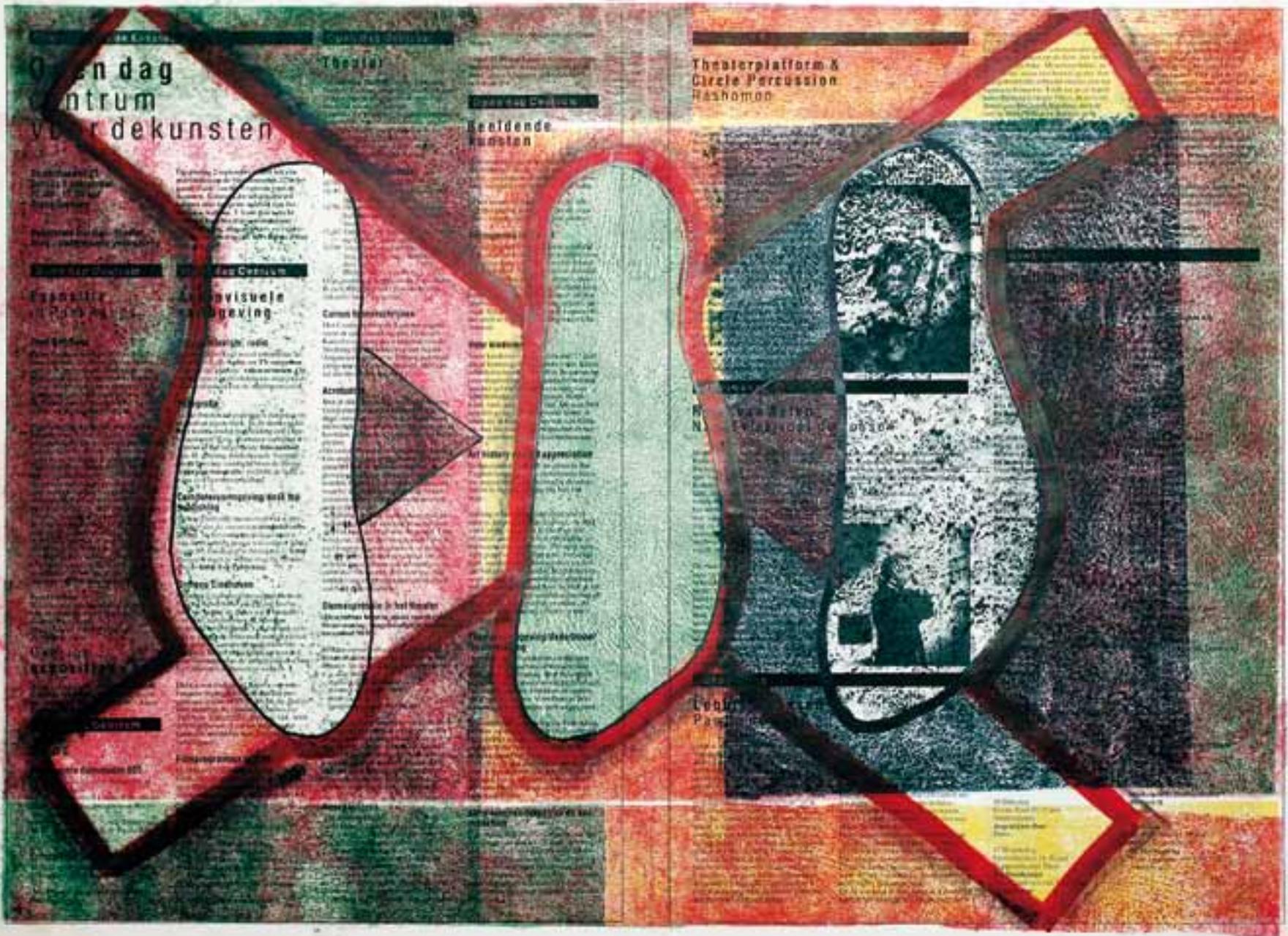
Feet and Cross

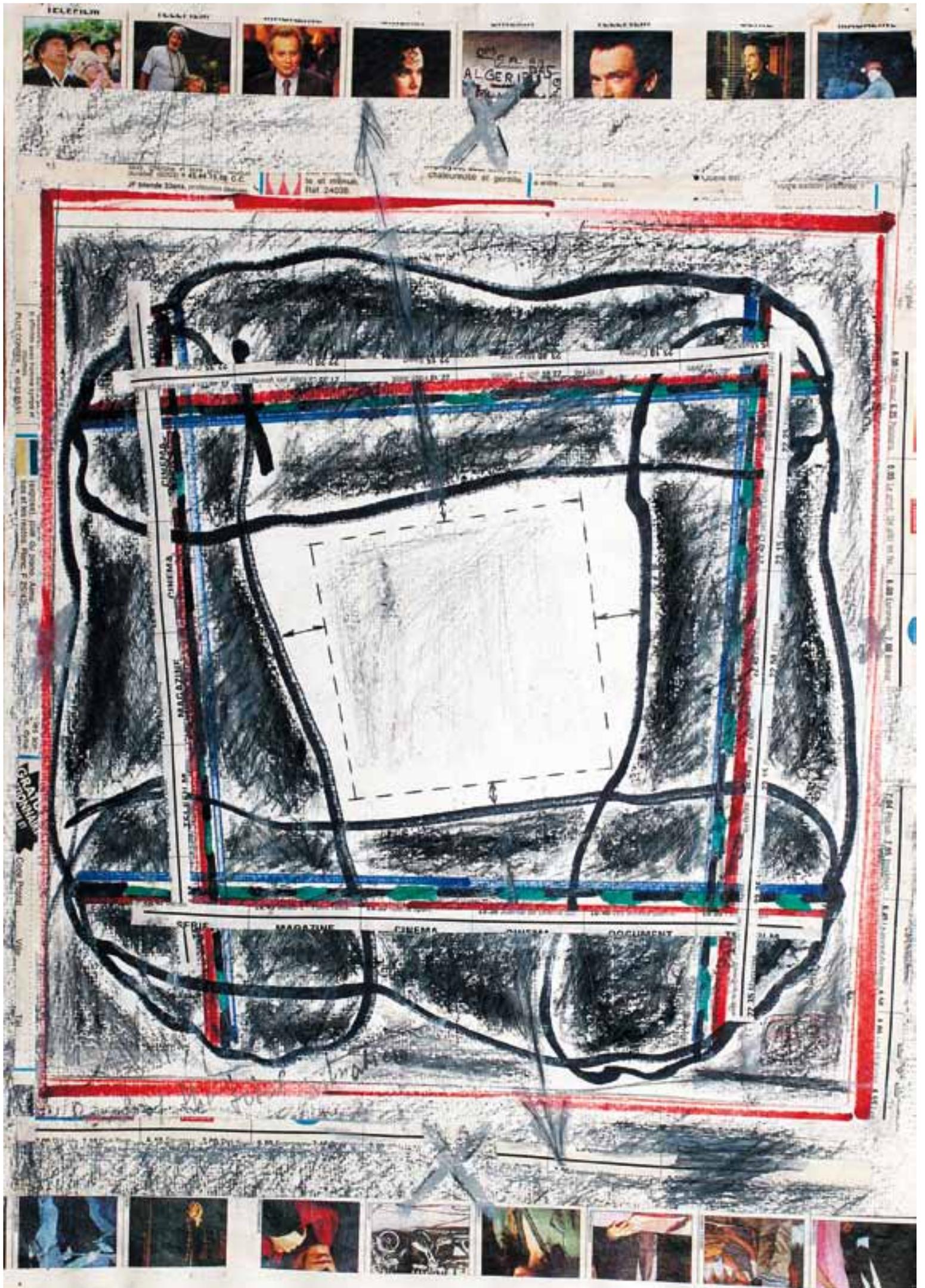
1990. Mixed media. 44 x 58.
Artist's property, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

Feet Square

1996. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow





Между тем

«Золотой» завод раздает бюджетные миллиарды



В МОСКВЕ

В СТРАНЕ

В МИРЕ

БЕЛЫЕ МОСКОВИЧКИ ВОЗВРАЩАЮТ КЕ «ИВРОСАДСМ»

Министры культуры и образования Москвы в пятницу приняли решение вернуть в музей «Ивросадсм» (Израильский еврейский музей) в Иерусалиме 10 картин, вывезенных из музея в 1970-е годы.

В Северной Осетии видят угрозу

В Северной Осетии, где в последние дни участились случаи терактов, власти считают, что это может быть связано с деятельностью боевиков.

Вор у вора дубинку украл

В Москве совершили очередную кражу. В этот раз вор украл дубинку у другого вора, который находился в тюрьме.

В Чехии устроили митинг

В Чехии устроили митинг в поддержку демократии в бывшей Югославии. Участники выступили с требованием к властям прекратить военные действия.

В Буэнос-Айресе разбегались беглецы

В Буэнос-Айресе разбегались беглецы из соседней Аргентины. Они пытались пересечь границу, но были задержаны.

Иностранцы тратят деньги на отдых в Москве

Иностранцы тратят деньги на отдых в Москве. Многие туристы выбирают Москву для посещения музеев и театров.

В южнорусских лесах будут привлекать туристов

В южнорусских лесах будут привлекать туристов. Власти планируют организовать туристические маршруты по живописным местам.

Иностранцы доказывают свою невиновность

Иностранцы доказывают свою невиновность. В суде рассматриваются дела о незаконном вывозе валюты.

В Голландии разразился пожар

В Голландии разразился пожар. В результате пожара погибли несколько человек, а многие здания повреждены.

Итальянцы обвиняют вилланы из Германии

Итальянцы обвиняют вилланы из Германии. В Италии обвиняют вилланы из Германии в незаконной торговле наркотиками.

Финансирование уголовного правосудия студентов

Финансирование уголовного правосудия студентов. Власти планируют выделить средства на обучение студентов в области уголовного права.

В Чите с женой покончено

В Чите с женой покончено. В городе Чита произошло самоубийство, связанное с семейными проблемами.

Державные учреждения закупают оборудование

Державные учреждения закупают оборудование. Власти планируют закупить новое оборудование для государственных учреждений.

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Министерство культуры просит о помощи

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«Метель» — фильм о хитроумной злодейке

«Метель» — фильм о хитроумной злодейке. Фильм рассказывает о жизни и деятельности известной преступницы.

Политическая жизнь в России

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АН-93

Anatoly Zhigalov

Feet Triangle on a Newspaper

1993. Mixed media. 59 x 42.
Artist's property, Moscow

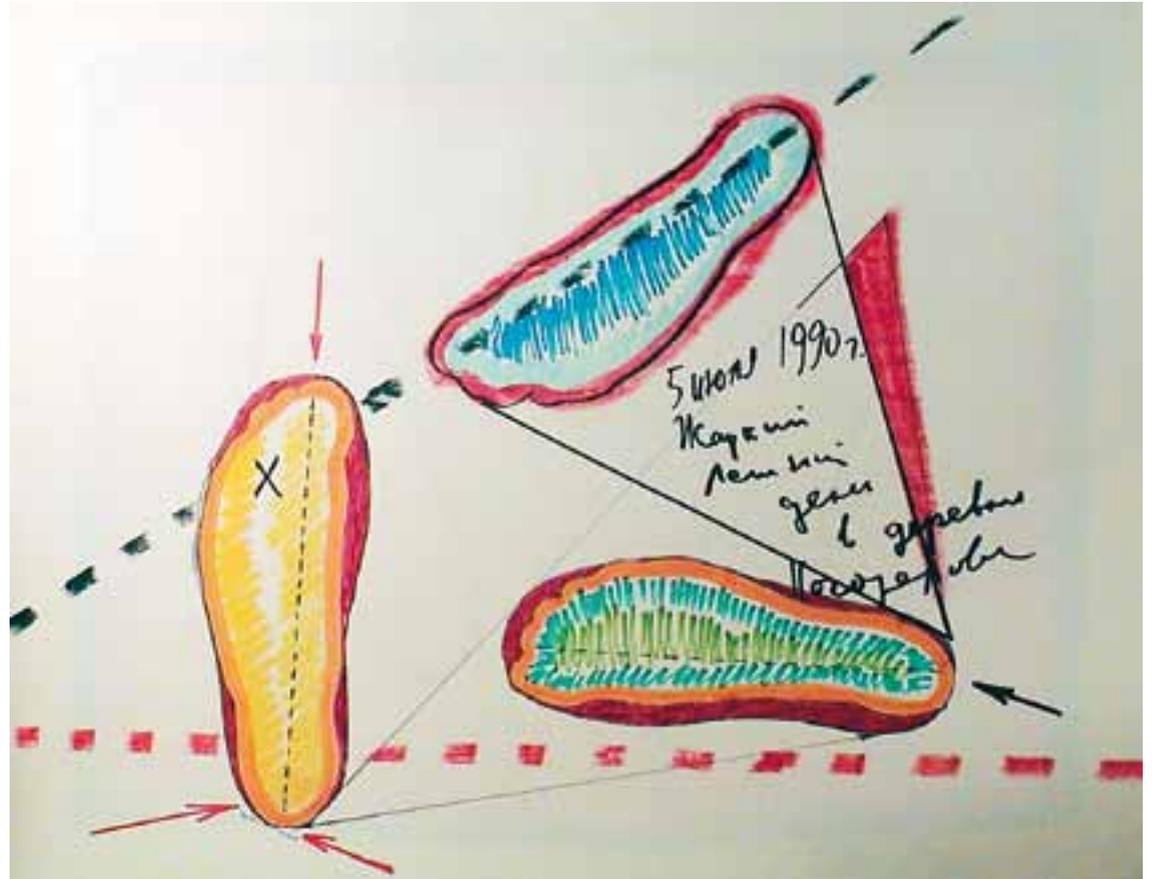
Anatoly Zhigalov

July 5

1990. Mixed media. 61 x 87.
Artist's property, Moscow

Pharaoh and Pyramids

1990. Mixed media. 61 x 87.
Artist's property, Moscow



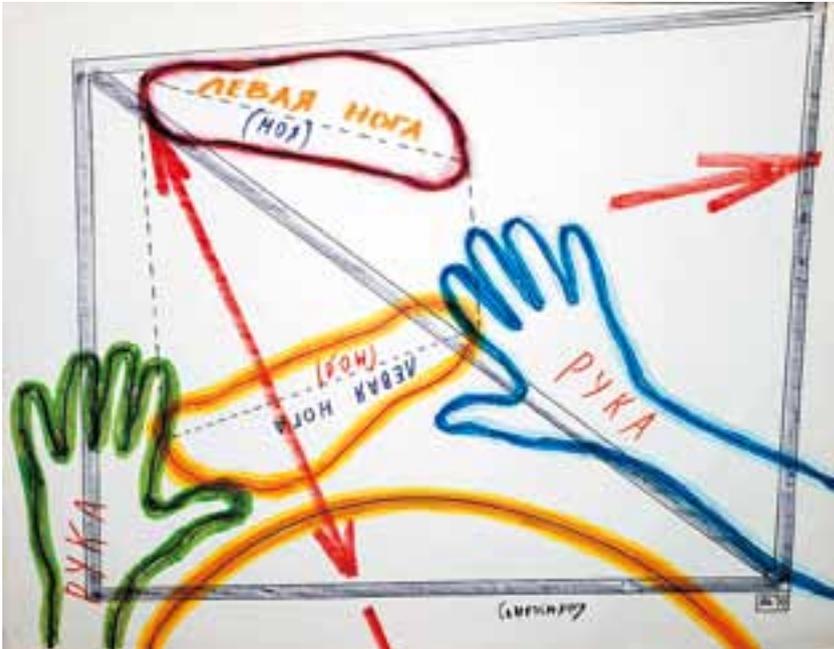
Anatoly Zhigalov

Constellation

1990. Mixed media. 61 x 87.
Artist's property, Moscow

Project Composition

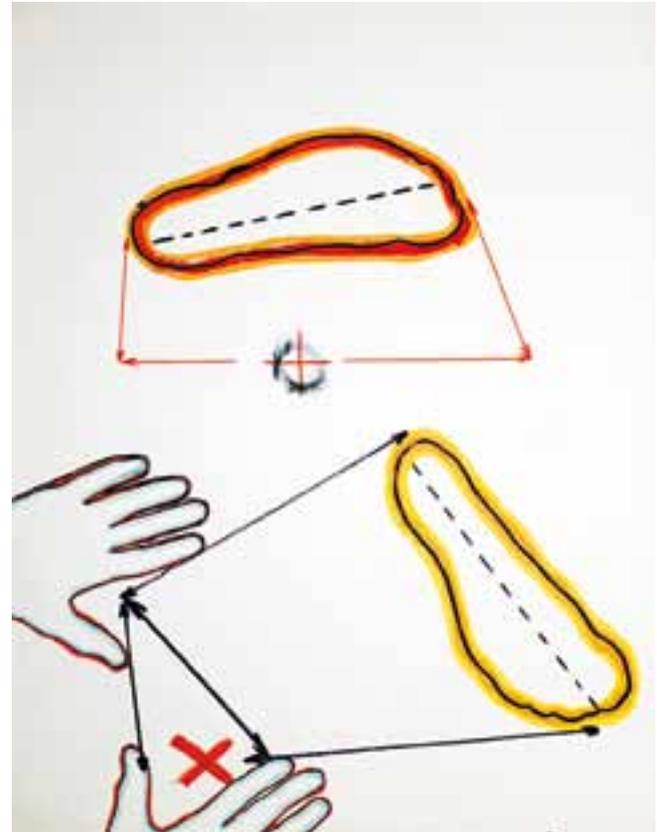
1990. Mixed media. 63 x 49.
Artist's property, Moscow

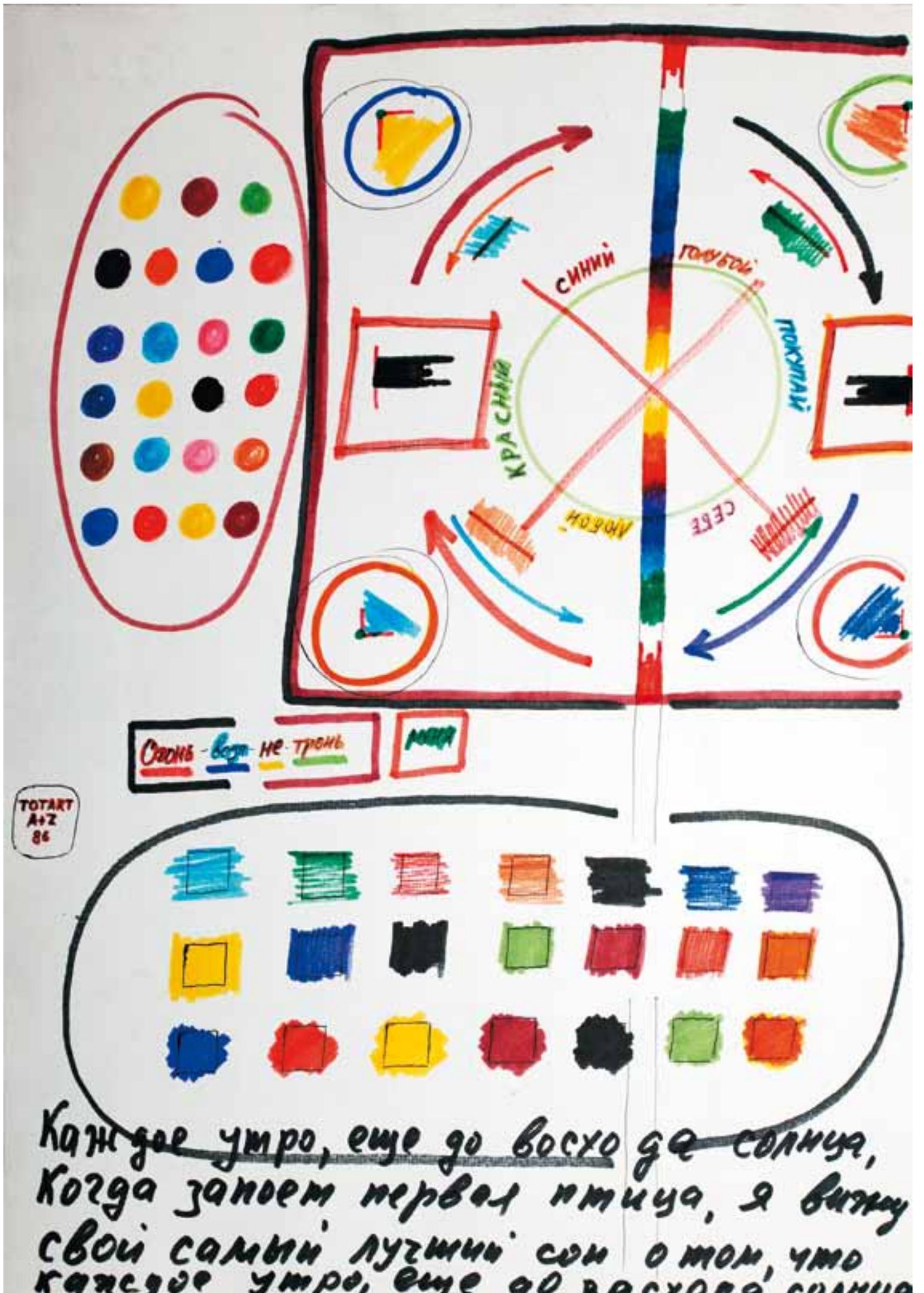


Anatoly Zhigalov

Project

1986. Mixed media. 42 x 30.
Artist's property, Moscow





Anatoly Zhigalov

On Ants and Pyramids.

TOTART-object

1989. Mixed media. 49 x 63.

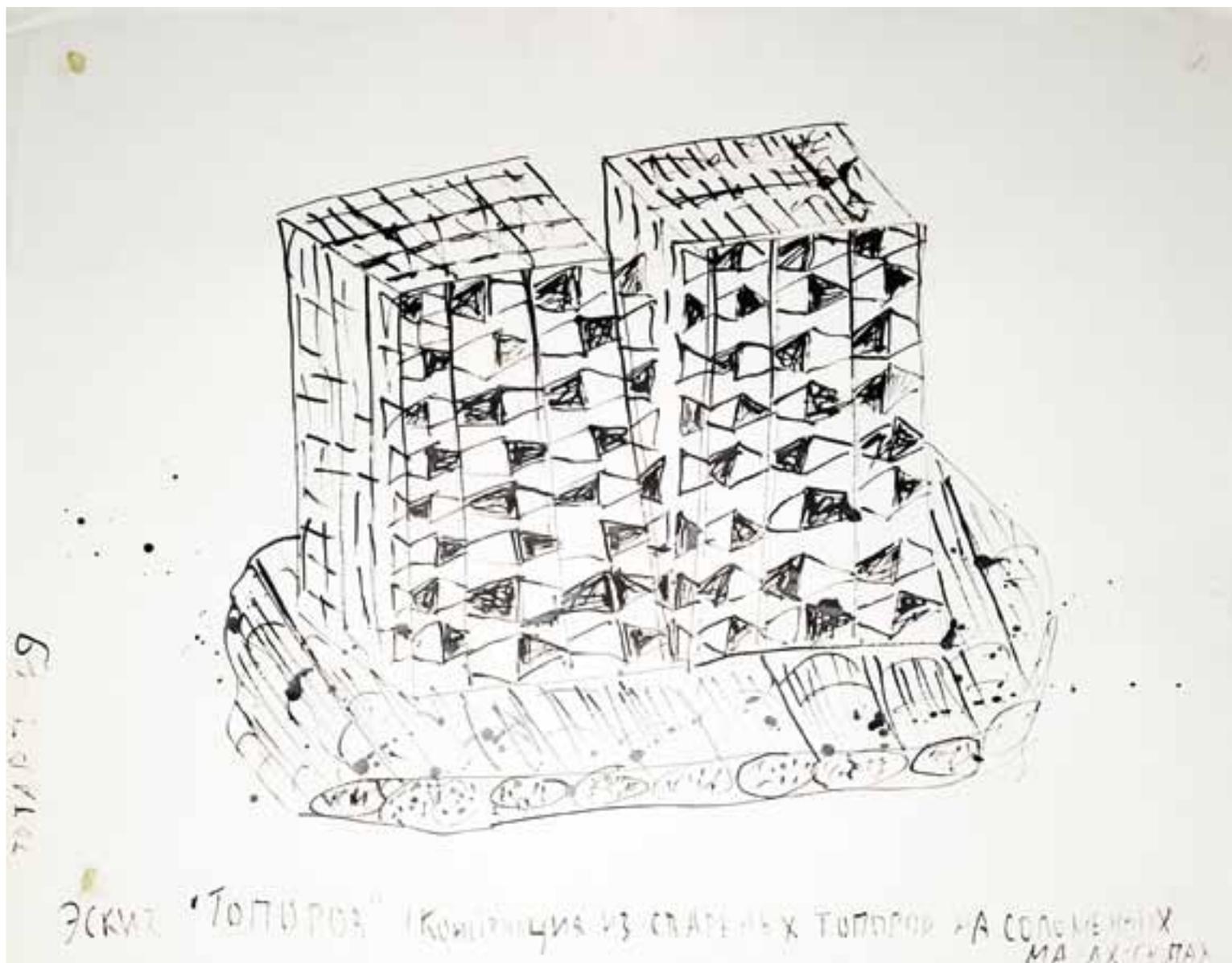
Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Project of a Sculpture
with Axes. TOTART-object**

1989. Ink on paper, mixed media.
49 x 63. Artist's property, Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Toilet Bowl, Sphere,
Axe. TOTART-object**
1989. Mixed media. 63 x 49.
Artist's property, Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

Foot and Eggs
1996. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
Artist's property, Moscow





Q. 71C479 101 -96

Natalia Abalakova

Sheet from Fire series

1987. Mixed media. 15 x 37.

Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Sheet from Fire series
1987. Mixed media. 15 x 37.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Sheet from Fire series

1987. Mixed media. 15 x 37.

Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

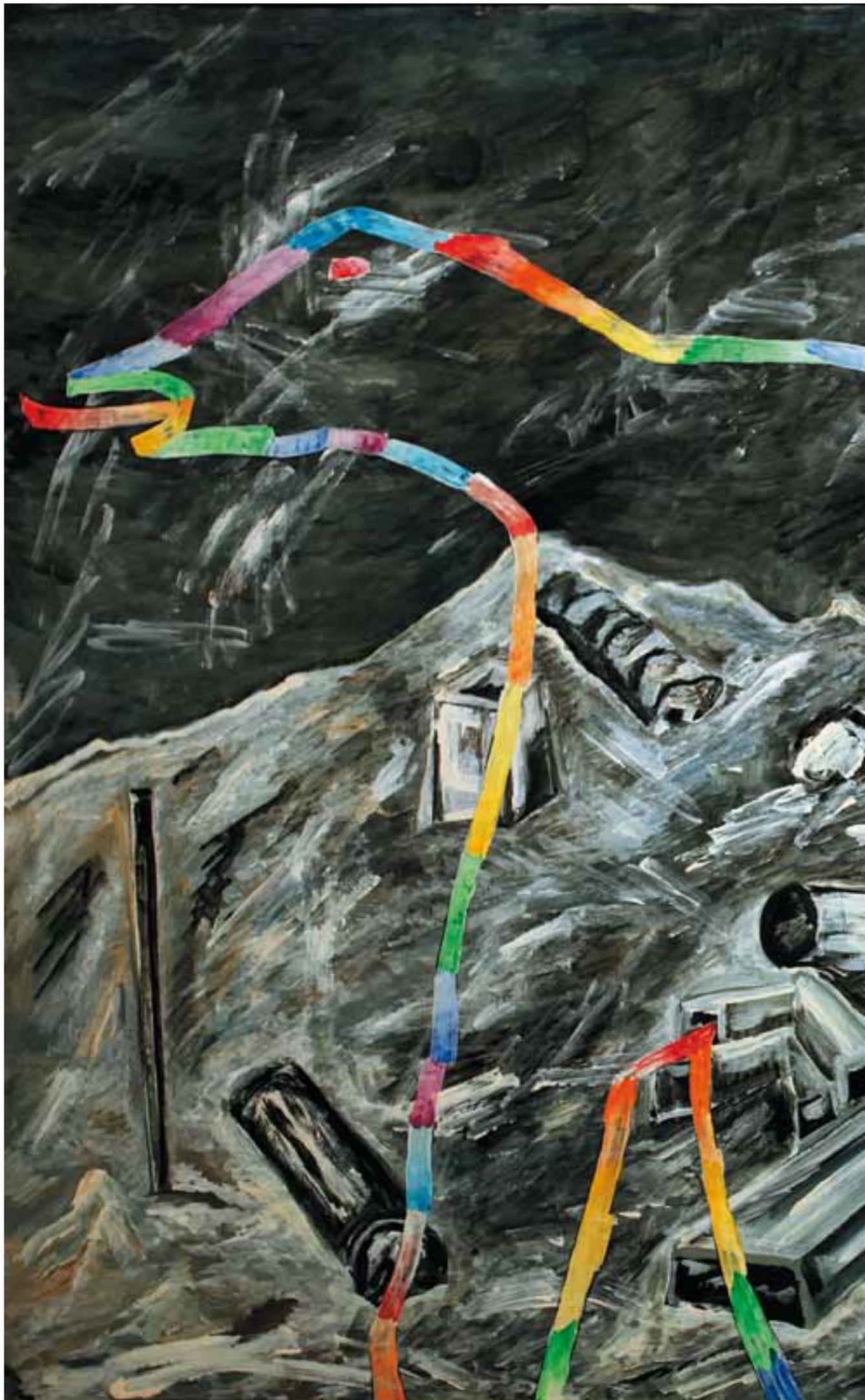
Sheet from Fire series
1987. Mixed media. 15 x 37.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Spectral Bear

1987. Tempera on paper.
62 x 86. Artist's property,
Moscow





Natalia Abalakova

Tree

1990. Oil on canvas. 200 x 180.

Artist's property, Moscow



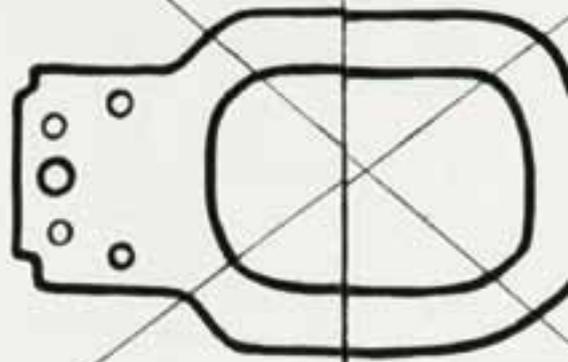
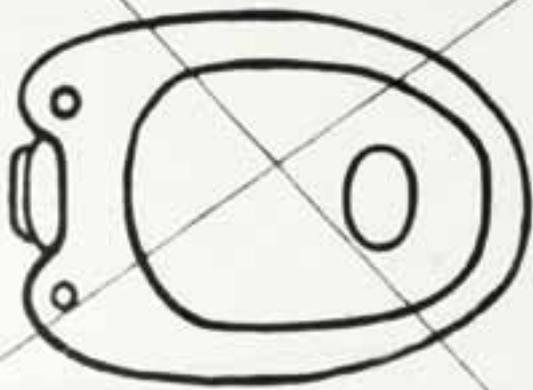
Natalia Abalakova

Van Gogh's Ear (Sunflowers)

1991. Oil on canvas. 200 x 200.

Artist's property, Moscow





Орехово-Зуевское
производственное объединение
«КАРБОЛИТ»
Союзпластмассовая переработка
МХП

СИДЕНЬЕ ДЛЯ УНИТУАЗА

ГОСТ 15062-80

ПАСПОРТ

Заводской №: 5227

Количество

Цена 6 р 10 к

Прейскурант 112 - 01 ч 1

Дата 23 2008



ОТК-14

Anatoly Zhigalov

Toilet Seat

1989. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300.
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Up! – Fragile

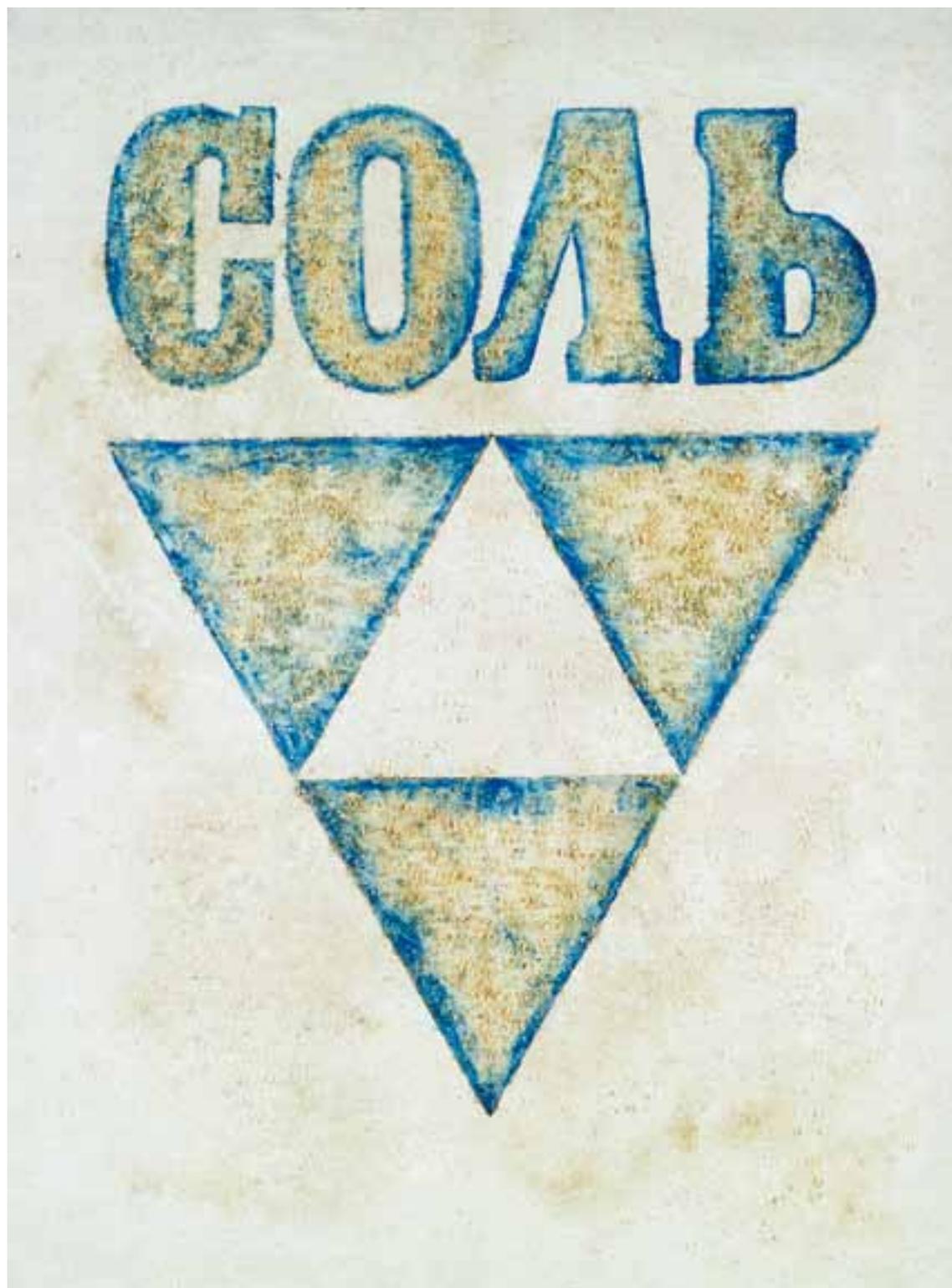
1989. Oil and sand on canvas.
200 x 200. Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Salt

1991. Oil, sea salt and varnish
on canvas. 200 x 150.
Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Canned Green Peas
of Marrowy Variety**

1991. Diptych. Oil on canvas.

150 x 200, 150 x 200.

Artist's property,

Moscow



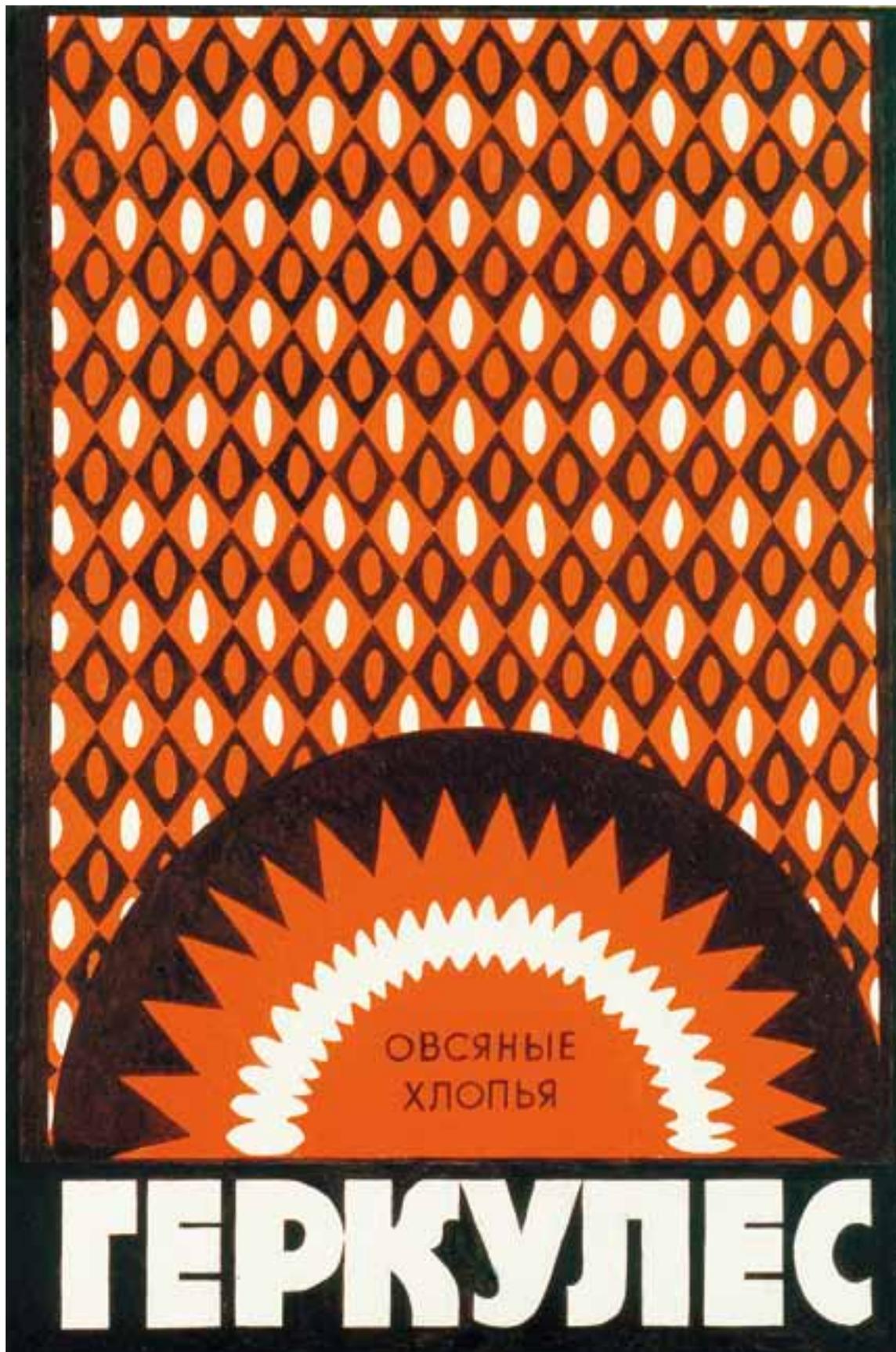
ЗЕЛЕНЫЙ
ГОРОШЕК
КОНСЕРВИРОВАННЫЙ
МОЗГОВЫХ СОРТОВ



Anatoly Zhigalov

Hercules (Golden)

1991. Mixed media on canvas.
180 x 150. Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Egg Slicer

1990. Triptych. Oil on canvas.

150 x 45, 150 x 20, 150 x 45.

Artist's property,
Moscow





Яйца
1960
1960
Яйца: белок и желток, 100 г, 1 шт. (в упаковке)
100 г, 1 шт. (в упаковке)

Яйца
1960
1960
Яйца: белок и желток, 100 г, 1 шт. (в упаковке)
100 г, 1 шт. (в упаковке)



White Nights
1991. Object

Anatoly Zhigalov

First Category Dietetic Eggs
1988. Triptych. Oil and sand on canvas. 120 x 120, 120 x 150, 120 x 120. State Tretyakov Gallery

TOTART
View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
2012

BUDDHA'S SMILE (IN RE LATION TO A STATE OF EMERGENCY)

TOTART. Natalia Abalakova /
Anatoly Zhigalov

The transformation of models of contemporary art into a digital format, raises the question about how much art is currently a part of the system of social communications and whether in such a (virtualized) state, it can reach the general public, the modern spectator, similar to how cinema once “filled one’s dreams,” and to bring the artist to the thought that “owning dreams” of the spectator does not necessarily mean to paint the world pink, but quite the opposite — to issue delusions.

Even in those cases, when the conversation revolves around these seemingly untransmittable phenomena, such as death or a global catastrophe—the only conversation in art is about the translation or retranslation of thoughts about the phenomena itself, already translated into the language of culture. In play with that language, and in the creation of a system of images with its aid, the vision of the artist itself is determined, which is always “partisan,” i.e. exists in language through which the process of identification itself takes place. Could an artist enter into new communities? Could artistic practices (and we are interested in optical media in this case—film, video and photography) become open to language, another language, as well as to other cultures? Using optical readymades, i.e. a televised image, is it possible to see News anew and to uncover its ideological planes, bringing them to ground zero, a mysterious base layer where everything is equal?

The insidiousness of technology with video editing is that even through ironic fractures of any deconstruction, there shines an unceasing melancholy for a new Utopia. “A dismembered” and prepared television image becomes not only a sign of a permanent revolution of the spirit, but also its ironic-utopian reconsideration. The metaphors of a new time do not at all signify a belief in progress, or some progressive historical development, as it was believed in the nineteenth century. They could also express the directly opposite — the unpredictability and fatalism of the human lot, the growing alienation of a growing number of people from participation in the affairs of their own history. It is possible, that the fragmented vision of optical technological means and adaptations (reflecting, like any kind of prosthesis, the element of human fragmentation), in part — of the video camera, could elect any kind of natural phenomenon for a metaphor — for example, water, as an image of natural cleanliness and creative energy, preserving the reflection of the totality of everydayness, and to try to correlate it with weapons of war, created through human invention, with their possibility of total annihilation in a direct proximity to which the fragile and vulnerable human body leads its unreliable and dangerous existence — but even contemplating this, our human eye is still drawn towards the sequence of reveries about purification and awakening.

This project — is an attempt of creating and mastering the totality of the exhibition space, a total presence (and absence) in a situation of a total summons, which is exactly what the artists have been preoccupied with for over thirty years, and by and large, for their whole life; in this space, along with the creators of the Project, the spectator is offered to “ascend” “to the Edge D.” And having reached this “edge,” to be on the “other side of D.,” in some cultural space, where there may be many answers, origins and meanings, and along with it — and this is probably the most important thing — unrelenting questions.

Panel Discussion
2005. Installation

Natalia Abalakova

Don't Forget to Turn Off!
1995. Triptych. Oil on canvas. 200
x 150, 200 x 150, 200 x 200.
Artist's property, Moscow

TOTART
View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
2012

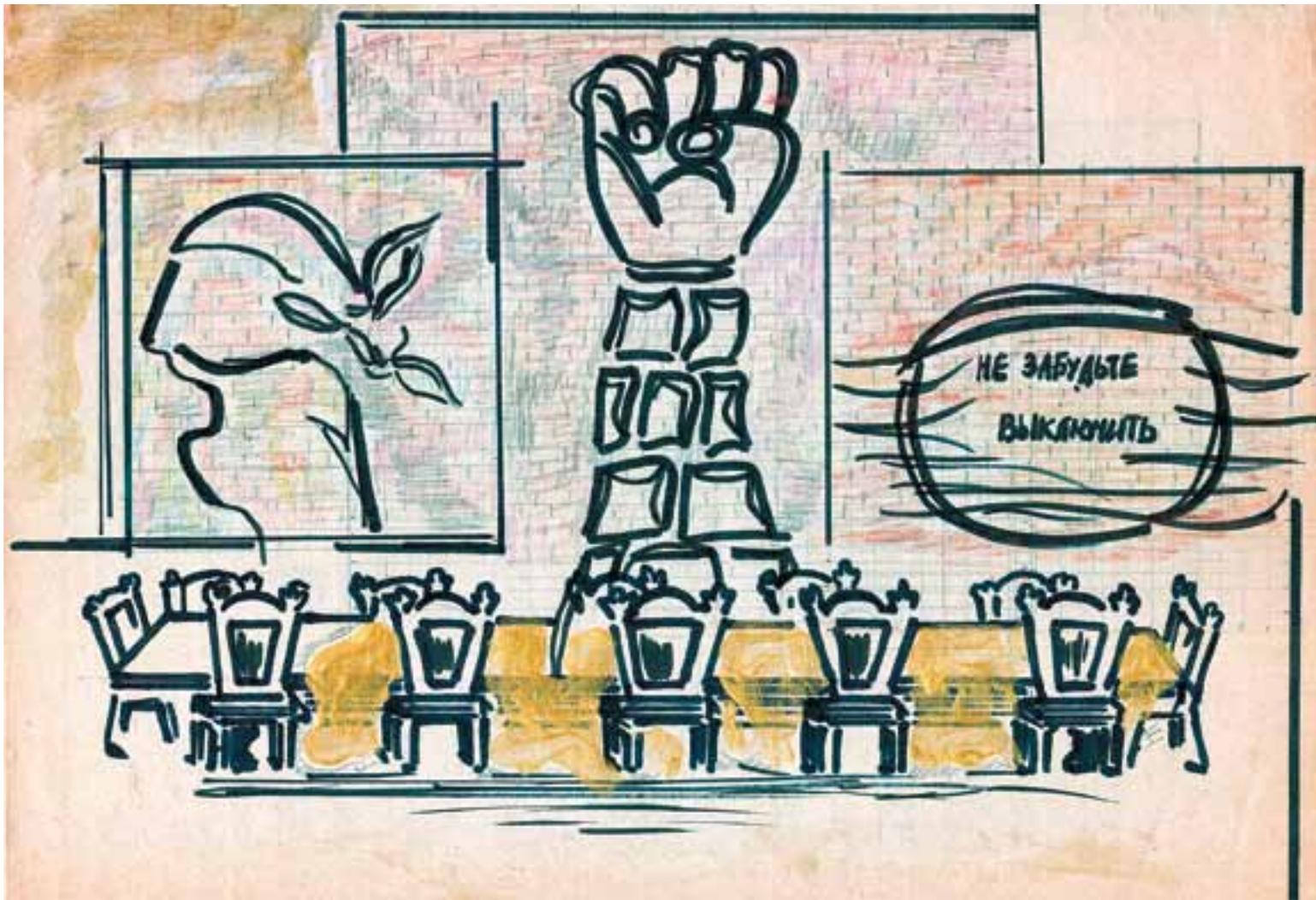


Natalia Abalakova

Panel Discussion. Project

2005. Mixed media. 21 x 29.

Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Project of Total Installation

1996. Mixed media. 42 x 29.

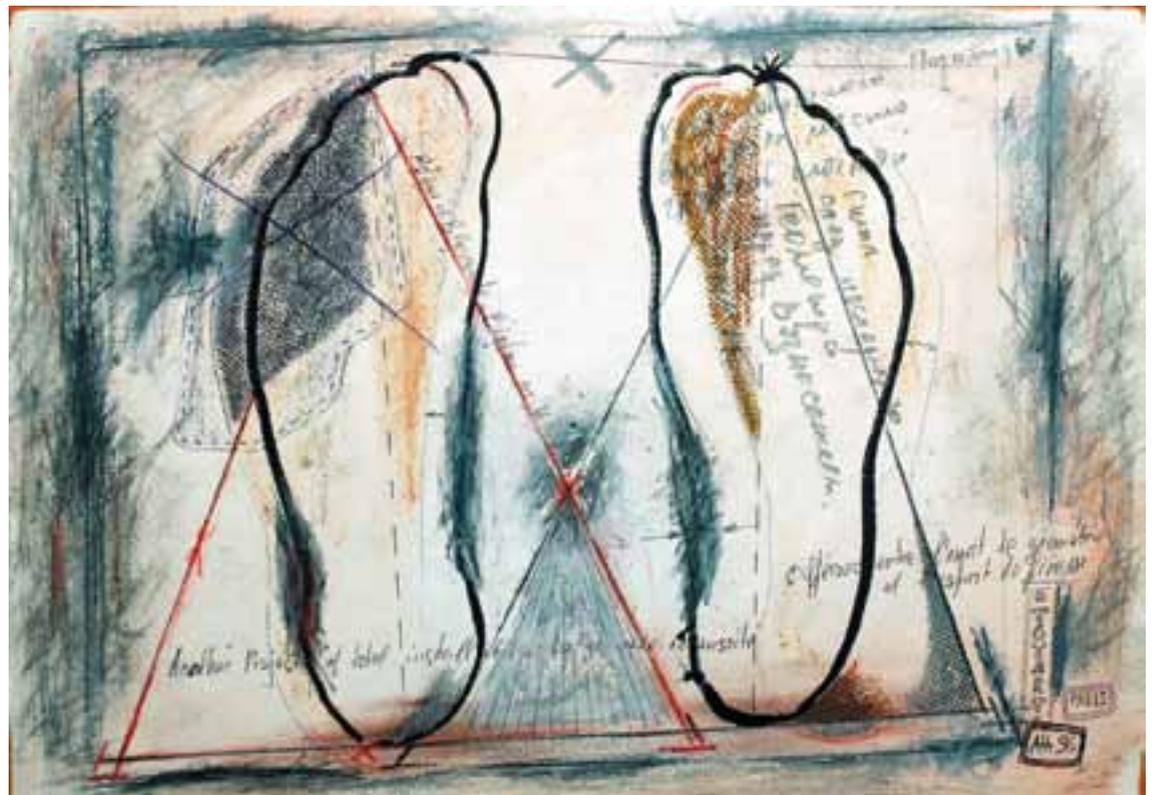
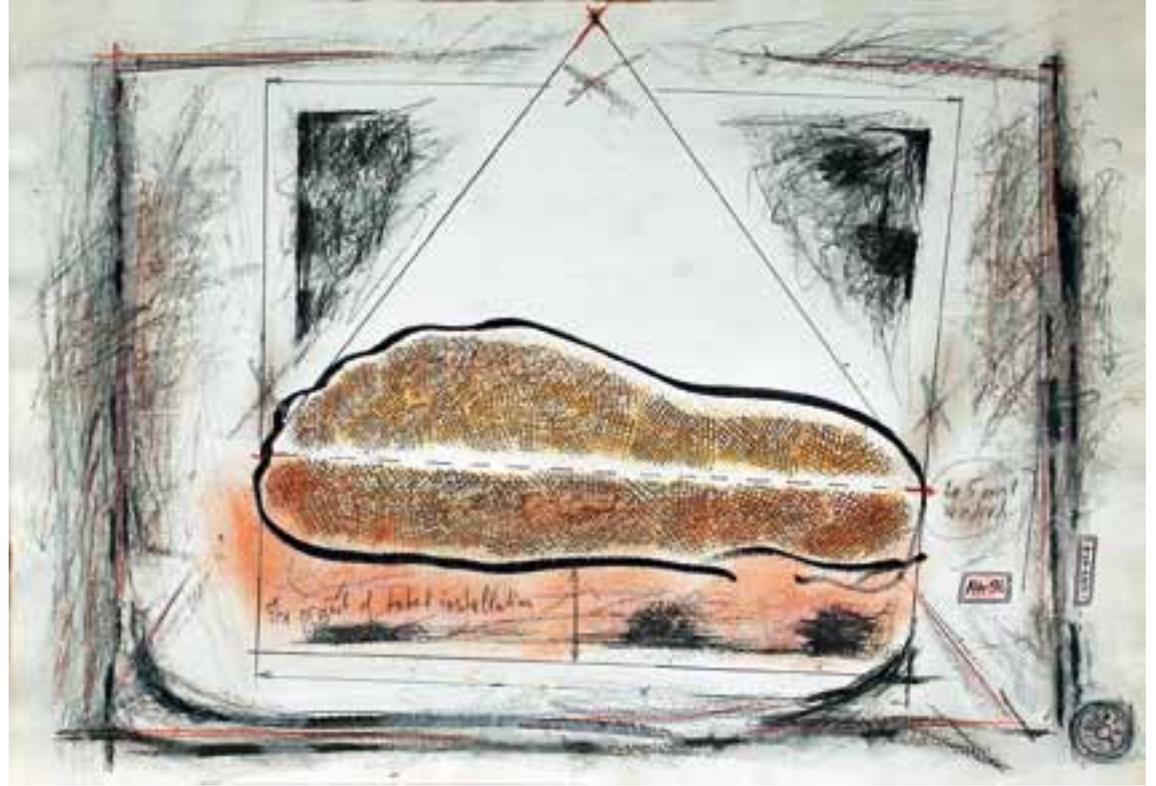
Artist's property,
Moscow

Anatoly Zhigalov

Project of Total Installation

1996. Mixed media. 42 x 29.

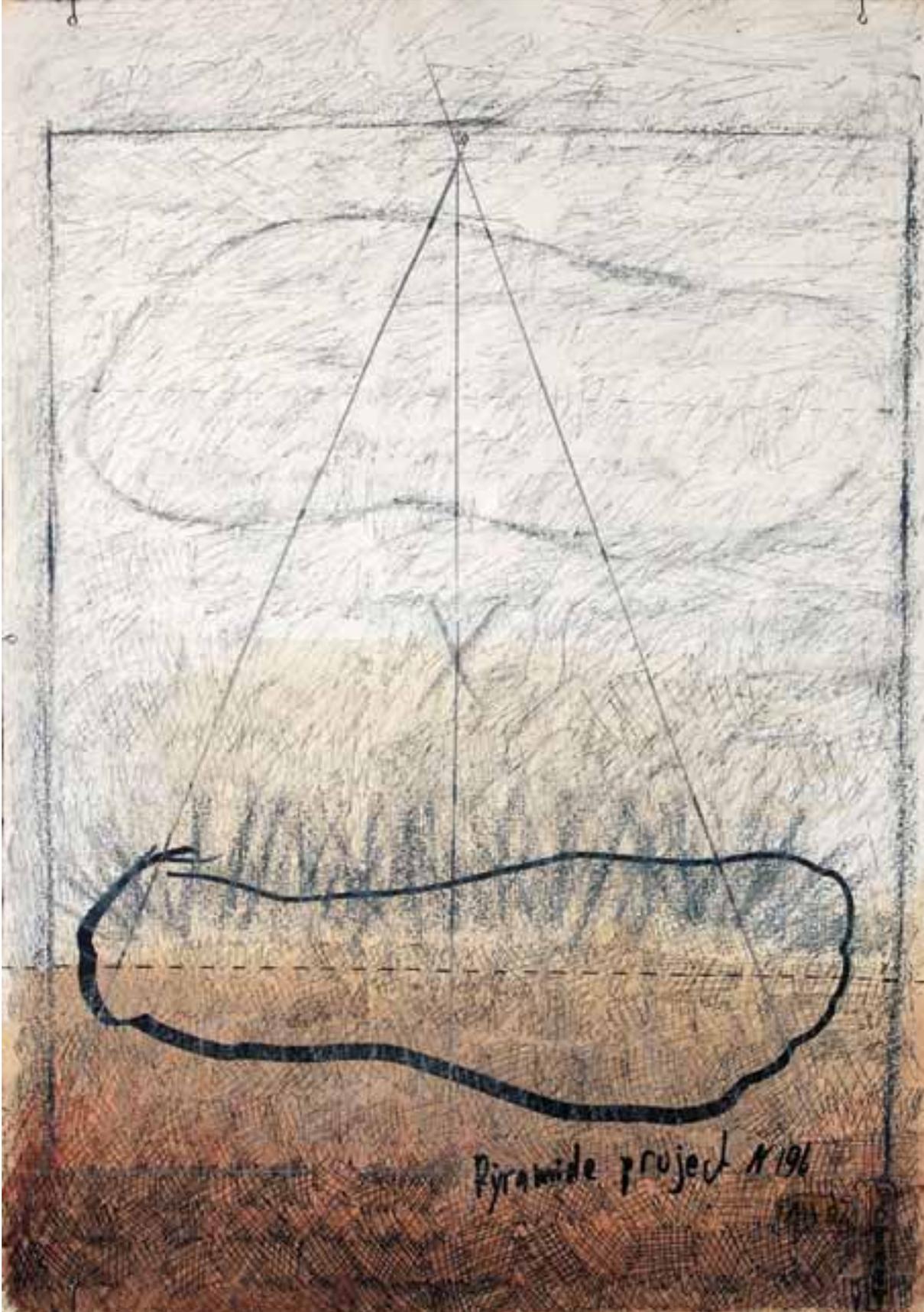
Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

Pyramid Project #196

1990. Mixed media. 42 x 29.
61 x 87. Artist's property,
Moscow



Anatoly Zhigalov

**Composition with
Carbon Sheets**

1989. Mixed media. 49 x 63.
Artist's property, Moscow



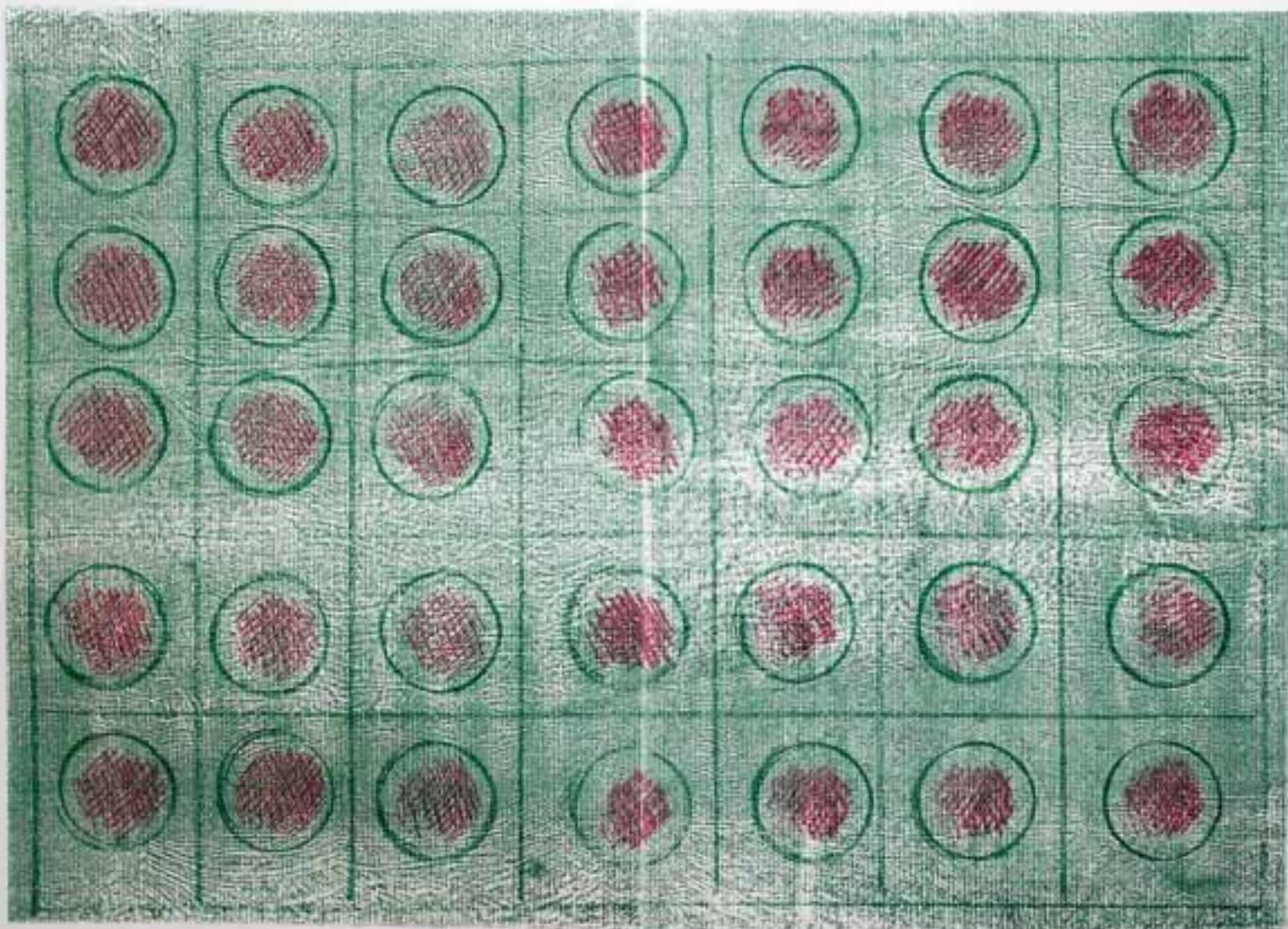
AM-29

Anatoly Zhigalov

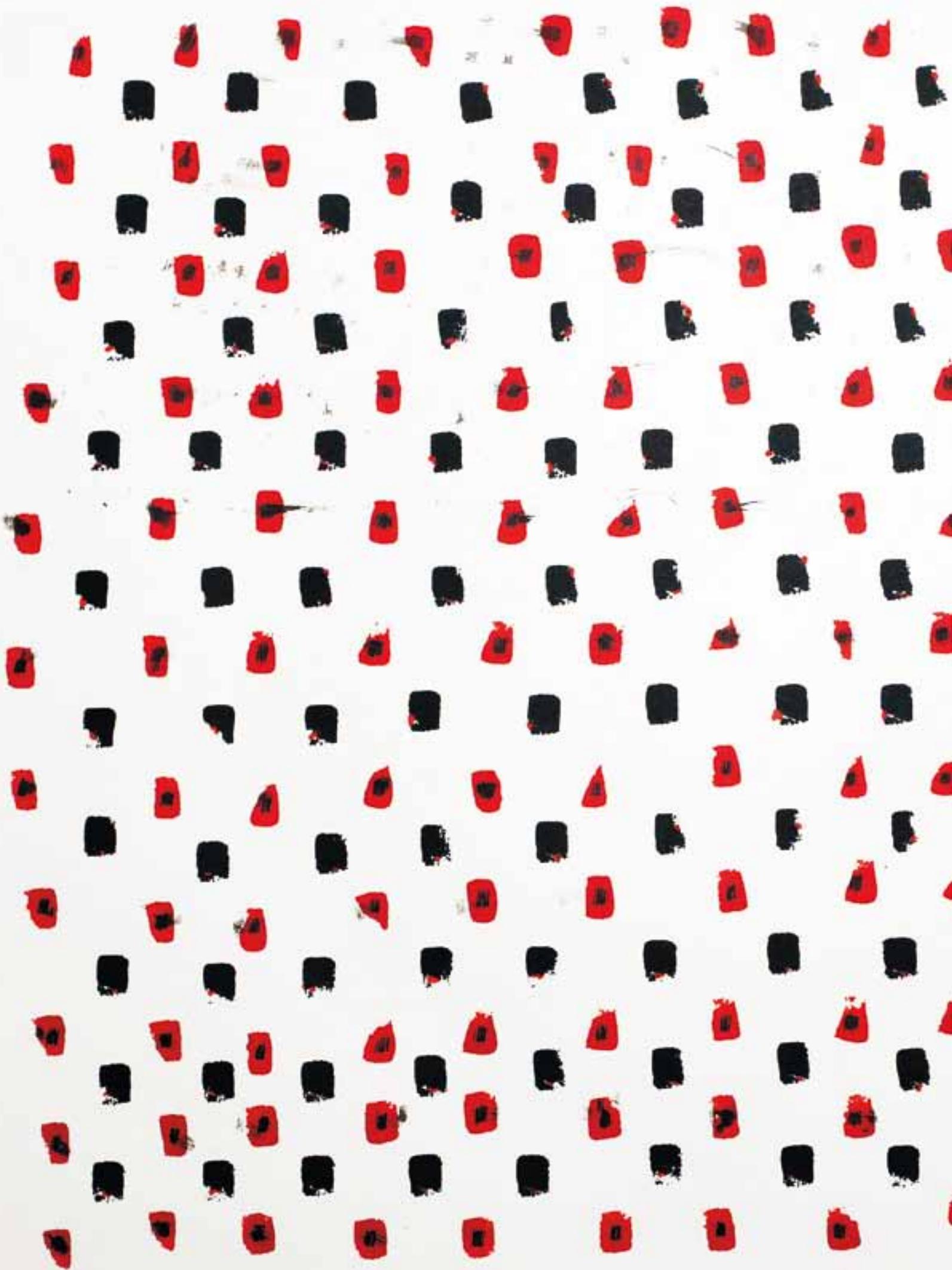
Green Structure

1989. Mixed media. 49 x 63.

Artist's property, Moscow



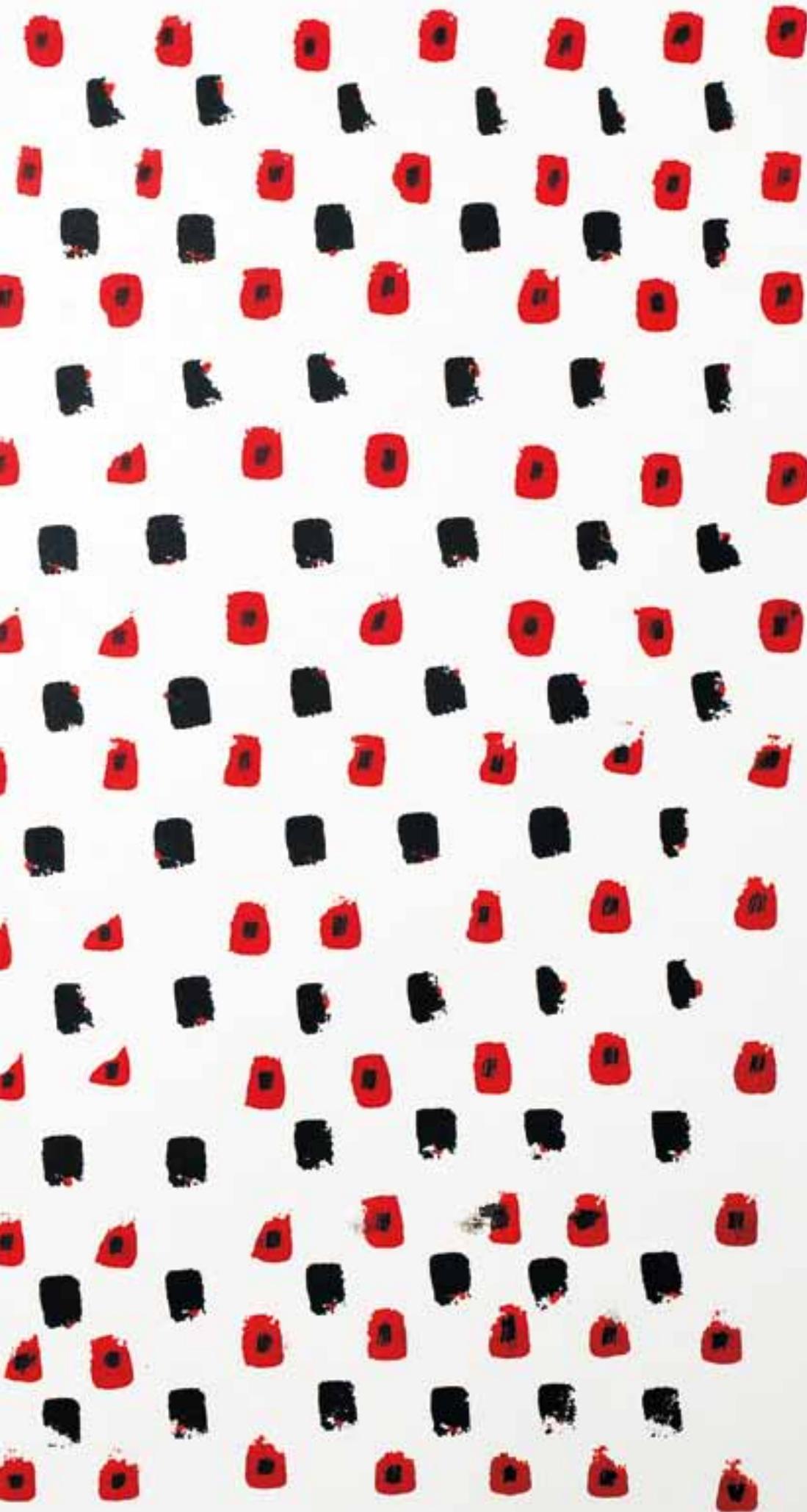
AZ-83



Anatoly Zhigalov

Structure

1989. Permanent marker on paper.
49 x 63. Artist's property, Moscow



14-89

Homeland/Motherland

2002. Diptych.
2 colour photos on banner
fabric. 105 x 150

Europe/Asia

2006. Photo-performance.
Digital print on banner fabric.
100 x 300





Vremya Vstrechi Izmenit.

Nelzya

1997. "Reconstruction."

Collective project.

Performance

Spider & Mouse Gallery,

Moscow

Photo: Kumi Sasaki



Ghost of Freedom

1990. Photo: Pavel Grokh

Location: A bunker under the former Stalin monument.

Material: Man & woman, pebbles, chalk.

Illumination: 2 light projector in both sides of a corridor.

Duration: More than one hour.



During performance time the artists are walking toward each other from one end of the corridor to the other.

(Because of the President Havel's visit the entrance to this underground space was closed and only a few lucky people managed to see the performance. This circumstance made the performance esoteric-true "Ghost of Freedom.")

Ostsee Stones

1990

Performance

Binz, Germany.

Photo: Ezhi Vankevitch,
Sven Vikhert

Keeping Watch

1990

Performance

Binz, Rugen, Germany.

Photo: Ezhi Vankevitch,
Sven Vikhert



Da Sein

1990

Performance

Binz, Germany.

Photo: Ezhi Vankevitch, Sven
Vikhert

A square and inscription
made from seaweeds.





In 1990, Anatoly and Natalia were invited to participate in a workshop in a small German town of Binz. They arrived there into an atmosphere of collective unity and goodwill: the Iron Curtain has just fallen and Germany reunited. In this short historical moment the future for Eastern and Western Germans, and for those artists invited to participate in the project from Eastern Europe — appeared bright and beautiful. The meeting place of the workshop also predisposed participants' relaxed state — the town is located on the Rügen Island, which was, at one time, a famous resort destination, but has become considerably dilapidated in the period of the GDR. And here, the group TOTART showed a completely amazing ability of dissolving into their context. At home, they frequently needed energy for conquest, at times, reaching the point of explicit self-torture — it is enough to recollect the insects that covered Anatoly Zhigalov's body in a series of performances with the anthill. And here, the former nonconformists have transformed into simple guests of leisure, indulging in melancholic thoughts, and observing the way Baltic waves wash over footprints left in the sand. Or, lay out a path of beachstones towards each other (“Ostsee Stones”).

It is important to note that the idea on non-spectacular art would only be invented in ten years, by the artists trying to flee the “society of the spectacle.” But in this case, an outside observer sees tourists, whom it is impossible to implicate in escapism. Neither does any particular suspicion in premeditated artistry materialize, when the man and the woman gather sea weeds and lay the phrase *Da Sein* on the beach. Although, a small inaccuracy could be detected — the key term in Martin Heidegger's philosophy is either written as one word, or hyphenated (one of the possible English versions of the translation is “here-being”). However, the invisible hyphen could be interpreted as evidence of discontinuous being, recalling Meister Eckhart or Jaspers, or the dadaist and theologian Hugo Ball whose diaries are entitled *Die Flucht aus der Zeit*, “Flight out of time.”

But these philosophical exercises cannot last too long — Joseph Kosuth's treatise, “Art after Philosophy,” has been written two decades ago. And moreover, late autumn is already in the air, and the calm Baltics will soon be immersed in storms. And the profound existence of *Da Sein* will soon be dissolved in the world of natural elements. The black square laid out of seaweed and fulfilling the role of the absent hyphen, a kind of avatar of Kazimir Malevich, will also disappear. That same radical philosopher who detested all this “green world of meat and bones” and wrote, “transfiguring the world, I approach my own transfiguration, and maybe, in the last day of my transformation, I will change into a new form, leaving behind the present form in the fading green animal world.” (K.S. Malevich. “God cannot be discarded.” 1921). By the way, the result of this elemental performance will undoubtedly appeal to ecologists: factories did not poison the air making materials for painting, nor did any components of the installation have to be chucked into the garbage.

A. K.



**During Such a Cold Spell,
Art is Unthinkable – but
if You Have a Little Patience...**

1998

Performance

Photo: Igor Aleinikov

Traces

1997

“Reconstruction.”

Collective project.

Performance

Spider & Mouse Gallery,
Moscow

Classics

1995

Performance

Photo: G. Kuzmin

Seminar “New technologies,”
Pereslavl-Zalessky, Russia



Footprints (Voices)

Action
2002
(Graphics, photos,
2 video films)

During a two week journey to Ukrainian Jewish places A.Z. drew footprints in any places in attempt to make some contact with the spirit of Jewry exterminated during the Great War while N.A. shot him with video camera having been shot in her turn by one of the members of the expedition. The results of this expedition were exhibited as video installation «Voices» in Kiev, Jerusalem and St. Petersburg.



It is!

Installation at alternative.
Art event the youth festival "Go!
Where to go?," Moscow

Observation of this work leaves a certain feeling of uneasiness from the unexpected transparency of the display. However, the uneasiness is not at all of the same quality that emerges because of an unexpected appearance of an indecent picture. Of course, the status of a work of art douses the voracious gaze of a voyeur: only young schoolchildren blush at the sight of nudes at the Hermitage, whereas art critics study with interest all sorts of perversions presented to them in galleries. The artist's inventory of what could be “shown” is immeasurably richer than that of a simple exhibitionist. But in this case, of course, nothing of that sort is observed. Moreover, by and large, we are really dealing with some sort of a deviation, which is, the norm. And the resulting uneasiness imparts a mundane character, and is very similar to the feeling felt by observers, when a happily married couple after decades of being together, suddenly begins to argue “who's boss,” remembering a broken cup, or a mysterious phone call at midnight. But Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalia Abalakova are only a married couple with many years of experience, but are also comparably experienced as members of the group TOTART, having spent colossal efforts on the exploration of effects, emerging from the dissolution of art into life and life into art. And, it should be noted that this is a unique case—frequently, such types of investigative projects are fairly unstable, as was the case with Abramovich-Ulay or the marriage of Jeff Koons and La Cicciolina. However, to the critic, certain ambivalent feelings emerge as well. Primarily, I received answers to all the questions that interested me in an interview for the catalogue of the project “Dynamic couples” (2000). “N.A.: What works instead of us, is a delegated body that we have called a ‘structured object.’/ A.Z. “More like, a structured subject.” And now, it becomes clear that there was no terminological contradiction — the object and subject had dissolved into each other, leaving no residue. But for me, what arises, is a problem of professional quality. The action is accompanied by a substantial essay, also containing highly thorough descriptions of all the cultural, iconographic, and psychoanalytical codes and allusions. Undoubtedly, this text should be interpreted as an inseparable part of the project. But at that moment, my work is done, everything is already catalogued and analysed in the body of the work under discussion. So, all that is left for me to do is to accept the longstanding invitation from Susan Sontag, and to forever abandon reading into socio-historical, psychoanalytic, and other subtexts foreign to the work of art, and to “reveal [its] sensual surface.”

A. K.

Action!

Performance. 2002. Black-and-white print on paper. 86 x 126



Natalia Abalakova

Invincible Vulnerability

2009. Triptych. Digital colour print.
75 x 300







ParadiZoo

2004. Digital print on banner
fabric. 200 x 300 и 300 x 400

**Investigation of the Essence
of Art in the Context of Life
and Art. Artistic Intelligence**

2003. Digital print on banner
fabric. 300 x 400



Rarely Used Device N

Triptych. 2011. Digital colour print.
30 x 120 each

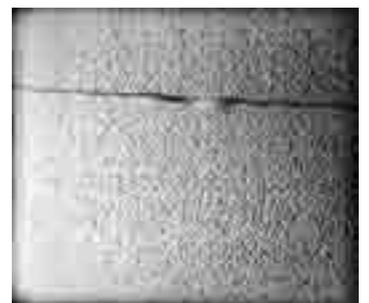
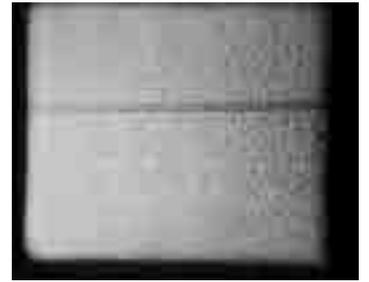


Happy End

1984. Camera: Igor Aleynikov

16 mm, 17min.19 sec.

Music by Michael Nyman



Masada

2007. Double-channel video.
Single-channel version, 2010
Fragment

Masada

2007. Double-channel video
Fragment



Four Columns of Vigilance

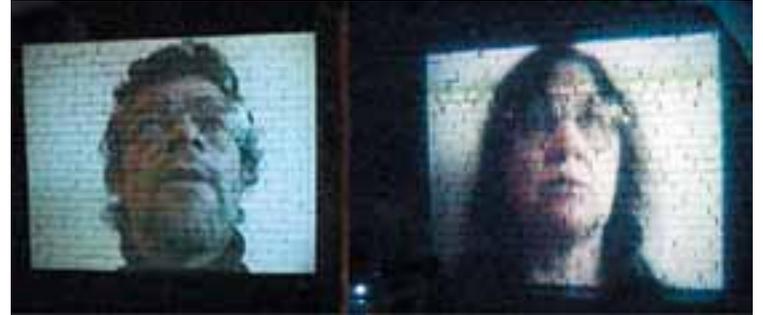
2000. Interactive multimedia project. 2 monitors, a computer, 11 fragments of photographs with interiors of a country house (A4 copies), a fragment of photograph 50 x 60 am, 12 A4 copies with verbs, a table for computer and monitors, a chair. All in a box or in a corner measured 5 m x 2,5 m/2 x 2,5/, with the table arranged diagonally. A dialogue between Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov in "exchanged" voices. Natalia Abalakova reads examples with 11 Russian verbs in Anatoly Zhigalov's voice, and vice versa. "Dynamic pairs," April — May 2000, Manezh Exhibition Hall, Moscow; Multimedia project, Museum of Non-Conformism, Saint Petersburg (double-channel video), 2002

Four Columns of Vigilance

2000. Double-channel video. Museum of Non-Conformism, Saint Petersburg

Four Columns of Vigilance

2000. Interactive multimedia project. Russian Lettrism, Central House of Artists, Moscow



**Games of Water,
Dreams, and Fire**

Video Sculpture. 2006.
Three-channel video 15 min. 2009.
New version 15 min. Single-channel
version 2009. Fragment

**Games of Water,
Dreams, and Fire**

2006/2009. Single-channel video
15'. New version 15 min. Fragment

**Games of Water,
Dreams, and Fire**

2006. Video sculpture. Fragment

**Games of Water,
Dreams, and Fire**

2006. Video sculpture. Three-
channel video 15 min. Sea Level,
Manezh Exhibition Hall,
St. Petersburg, Russia, 2009



Foucault Pendulum

1996–1997. Still from 5-channel video. Emergency Exit workshop, Moscow. Was first exhibited at Kukart III International Festival at Tsarskoye Selo, in 1997



TOTART

View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
2012

Natalia Abalakova

Yes-Yes. From

Summa archaeologiae series

1981. Collage. 61 x 86. Collection of
Norton and Nancy Dodge, Zimmerli
Art Museum, New Jersey, USA





Natalia Abalakova

**Asian Motifs. From Summa
archaeologiae series**

1981. Collage. 62 x 86. Col-
lection of Norton and Nancy
Dodge, Zimmerli Art Museum,
New Jersey, USA



Natalia Abalakova

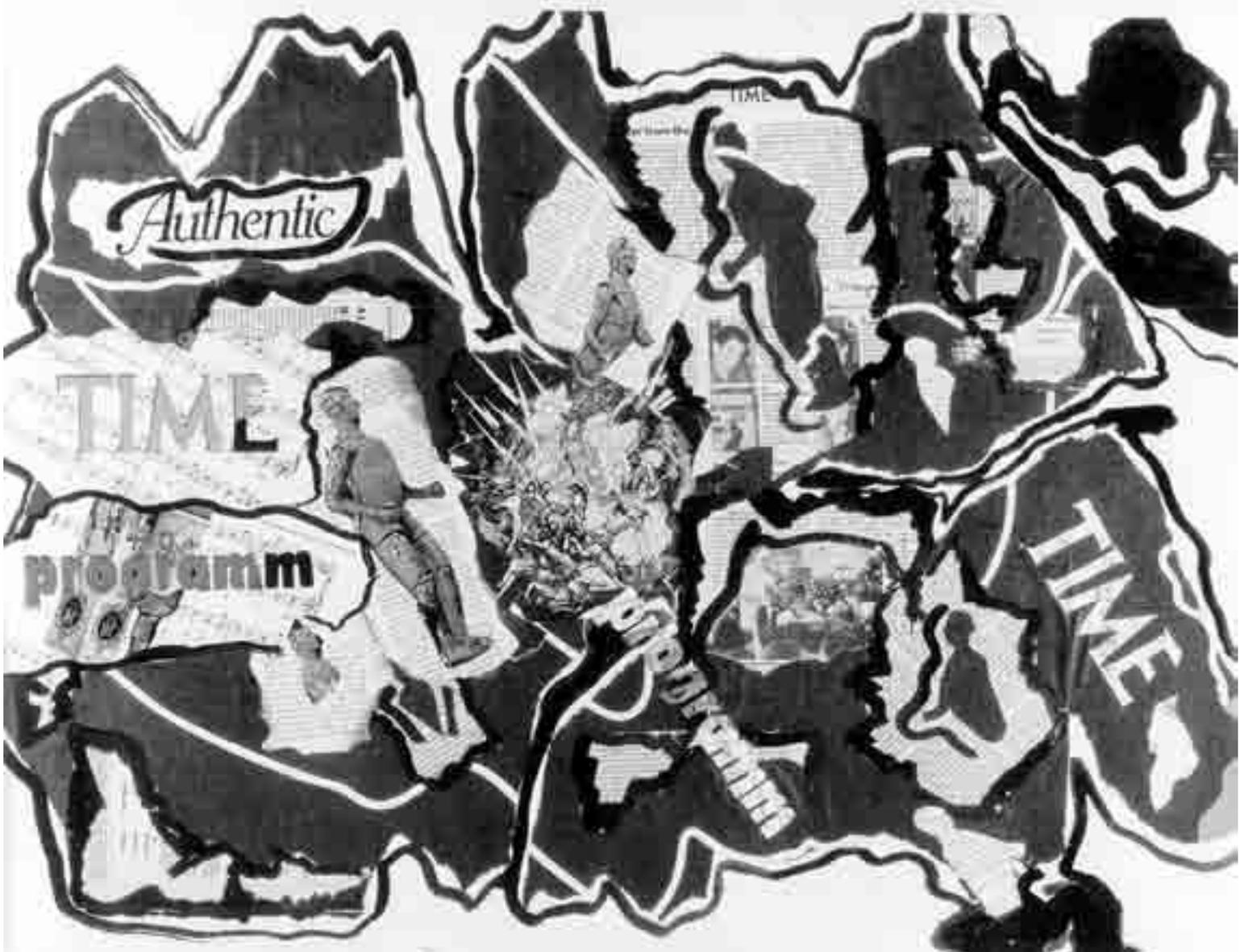
**Asian Motifs. From Summa
archaeologiae series**

1981. Collage. 62 x 86. Col-
lection of Norton and Nancy
Dodge, Zimmerli Art Museum,
New Jersey, USA



Natalia Abalakova

**Authentic Time Program. From
Summa archaeologiae series**
1982. Collage. 62 x 86. Artist's
property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

**Project. Myth. Concept. From
Summa archaeologiae series**

1982. Collage. 62 x 86. Collec-
tion of Norton and Nancy Dodge,
Zimmerli Art Museum, New Jersey,
USA

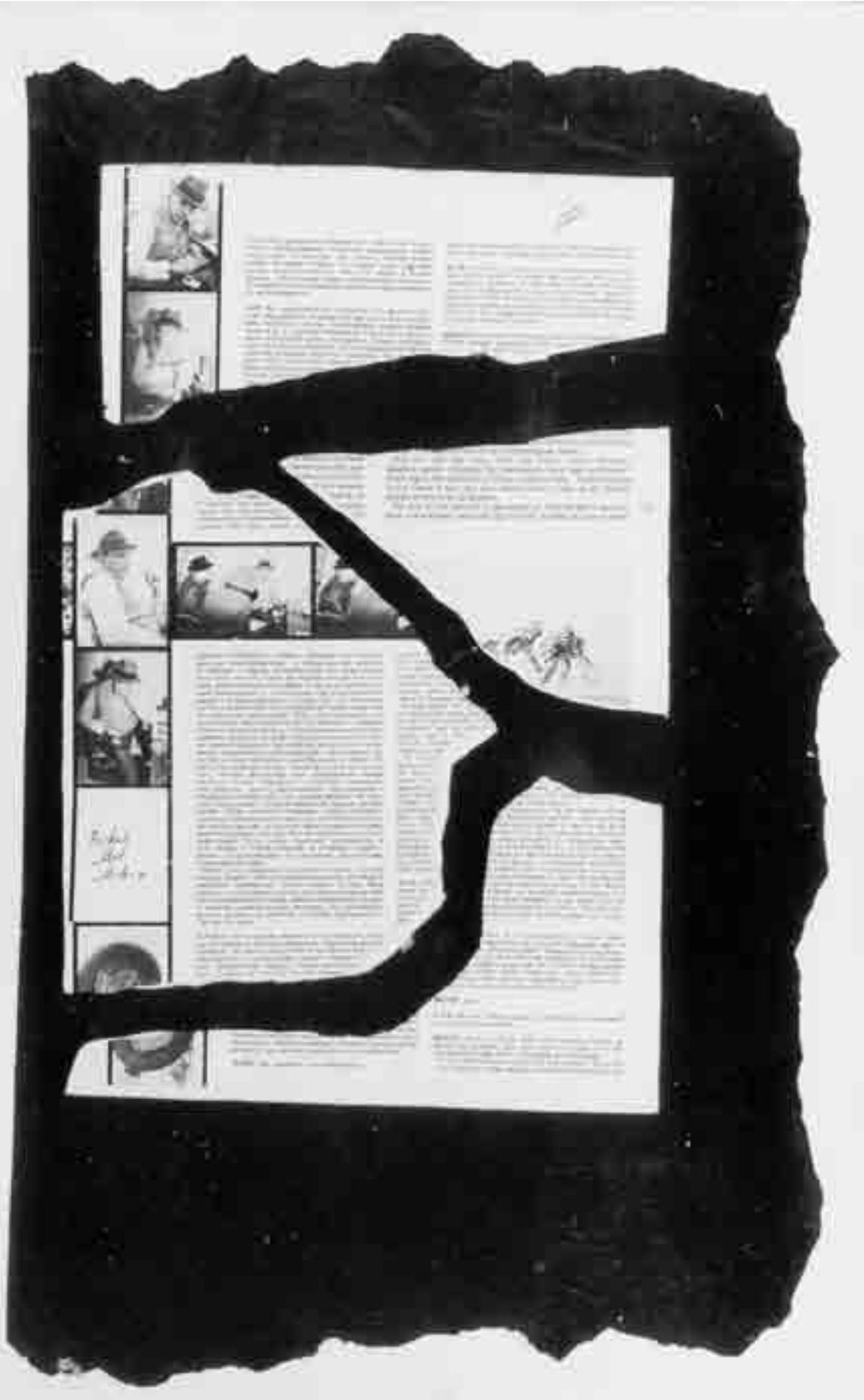


Natalia Abalakova

Dialogue between Beuys and Beuys. From Summa archaeologiae series

1982. Collage. 62 x 86. Collection of Norton and Nancy Dodge, Zimmerli Art Museum, New Jersey, USA

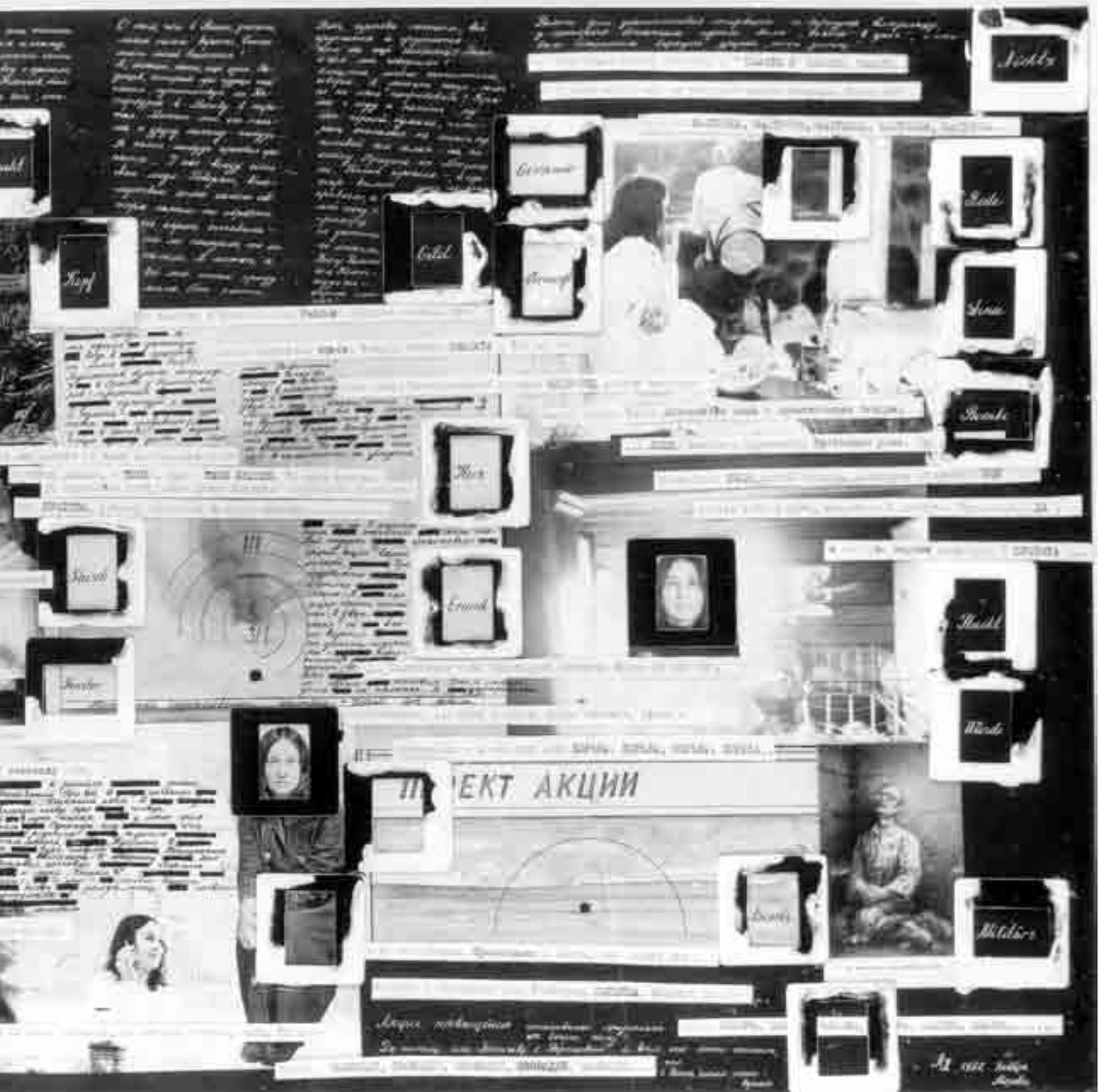




Natalia Abalakova

**Dedication Action. From
Summa archaeologiae series**
1982. Collage. 81 x 102. Artist's
property, Moscow

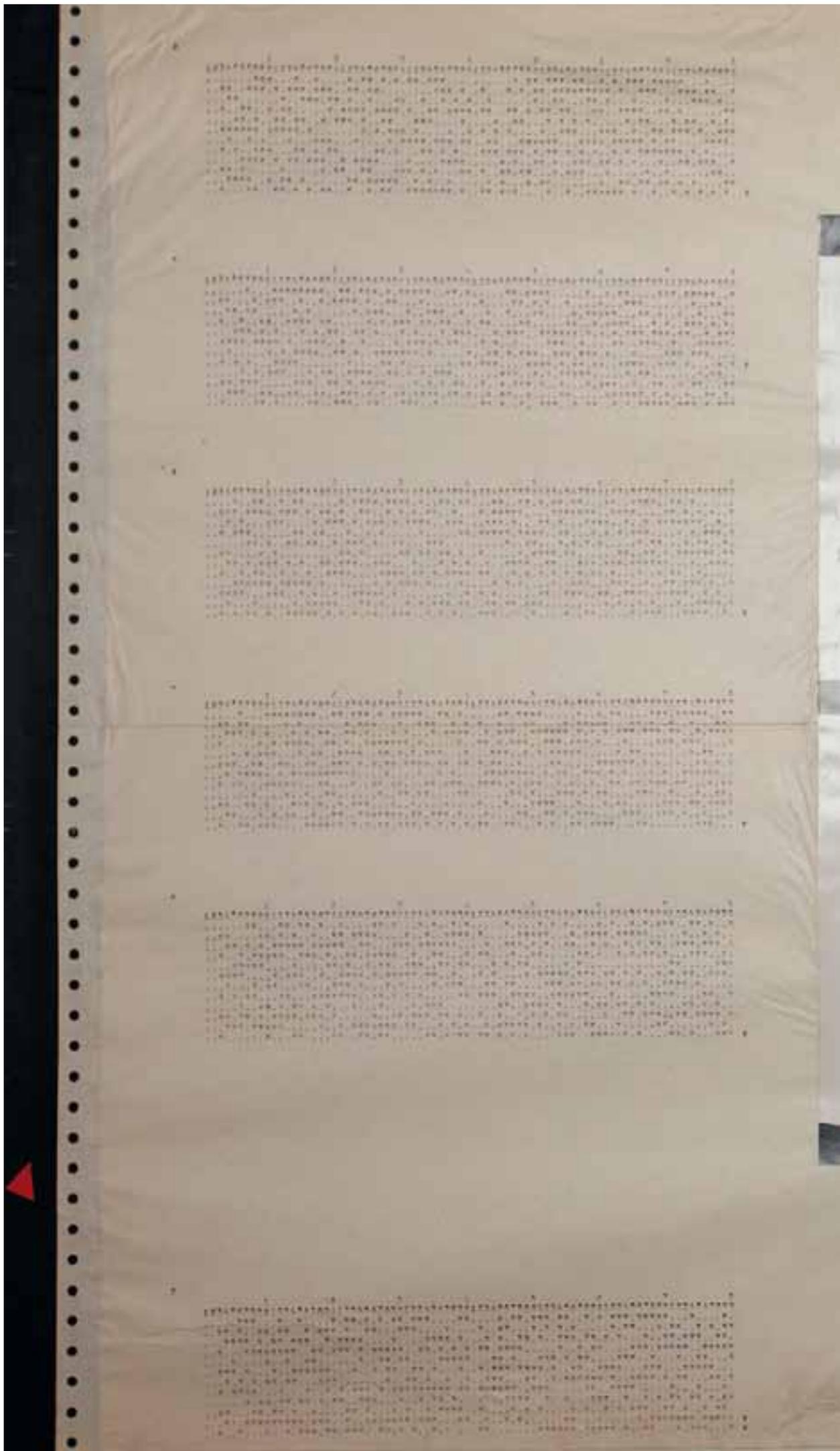




Natalia Abalakova

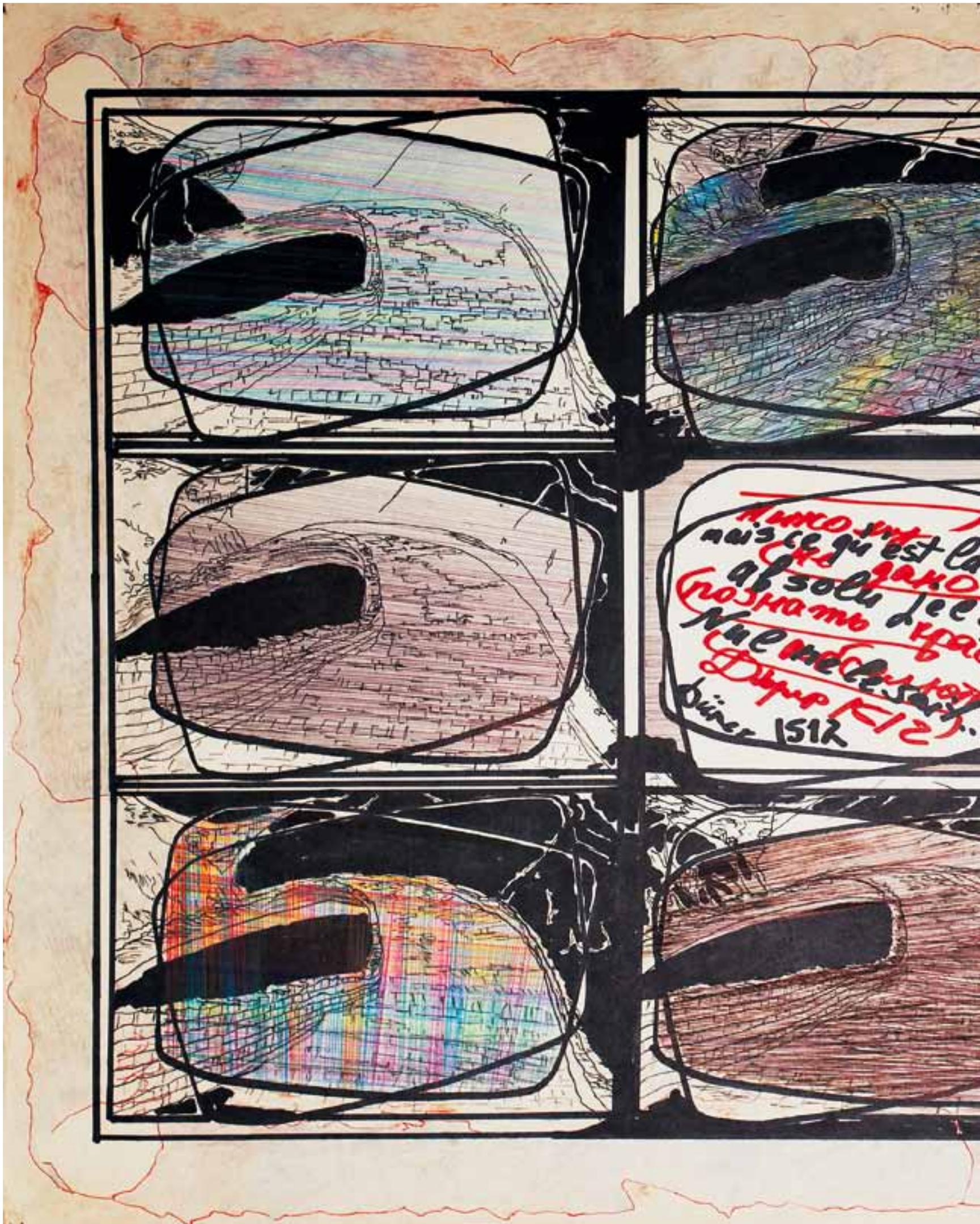
**Poem of Letters. From Summa
archaelogiae series**

1983. Collage. 62 x 86. Artist's
property, Moscow





АН 1985



Natalia Abalakova

San langue ni text

1996. Mixed media. 43 x 61.
Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

Sans langue ni text

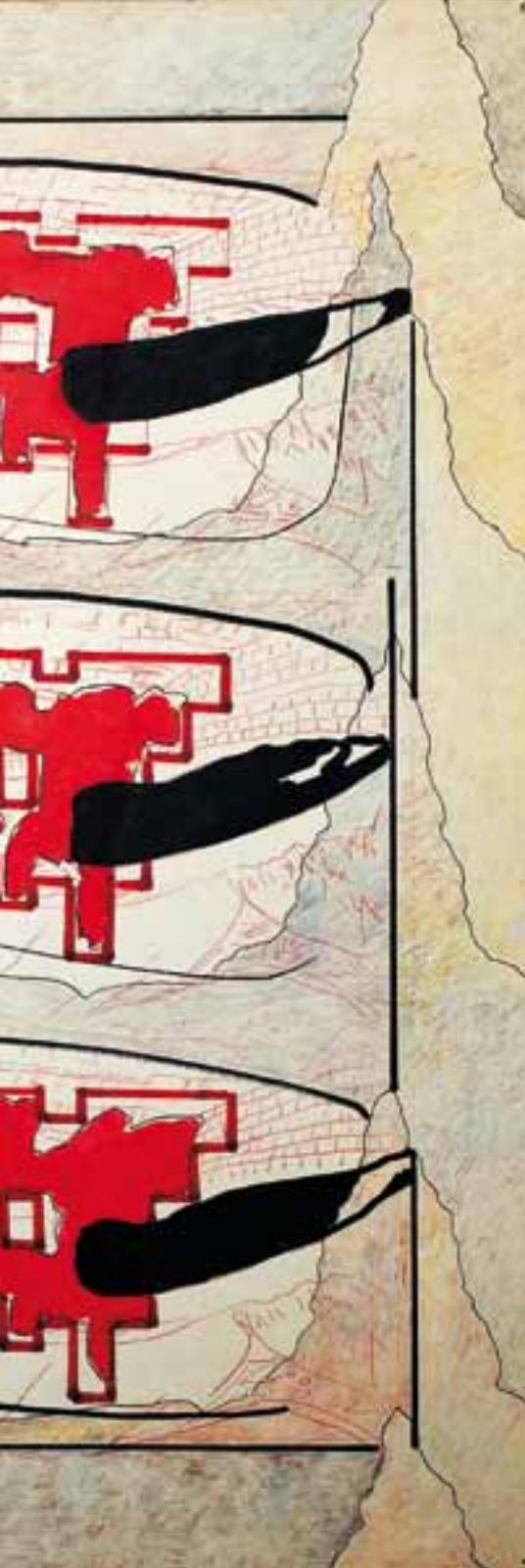
1996. Mixed media. 43 x 61.

Artist's property, Moscow



Natalia Abalakova

**Poem of the Circle. From
Summa archaeologiae series**
1983. Collage. 62 x 86. Private
collection, Glasgow, UK



ان



حتى العاد صدام حصار
لرهاب الذرية



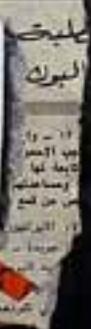
سروالد
عبدالله مالك



لغصن
الشمس



الشمس
الشمس



Handwritten signatures and notes at the bottom of the page.



Natalia Abalakova

Project of an Action.
From Summa archaeologiae series

1982. Collage. 70 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow

pp.208-209

Poem of the Triangle.
From Summa archaeologiae series

1983. Collage. 62 x 86.
Artist's property, Moscow

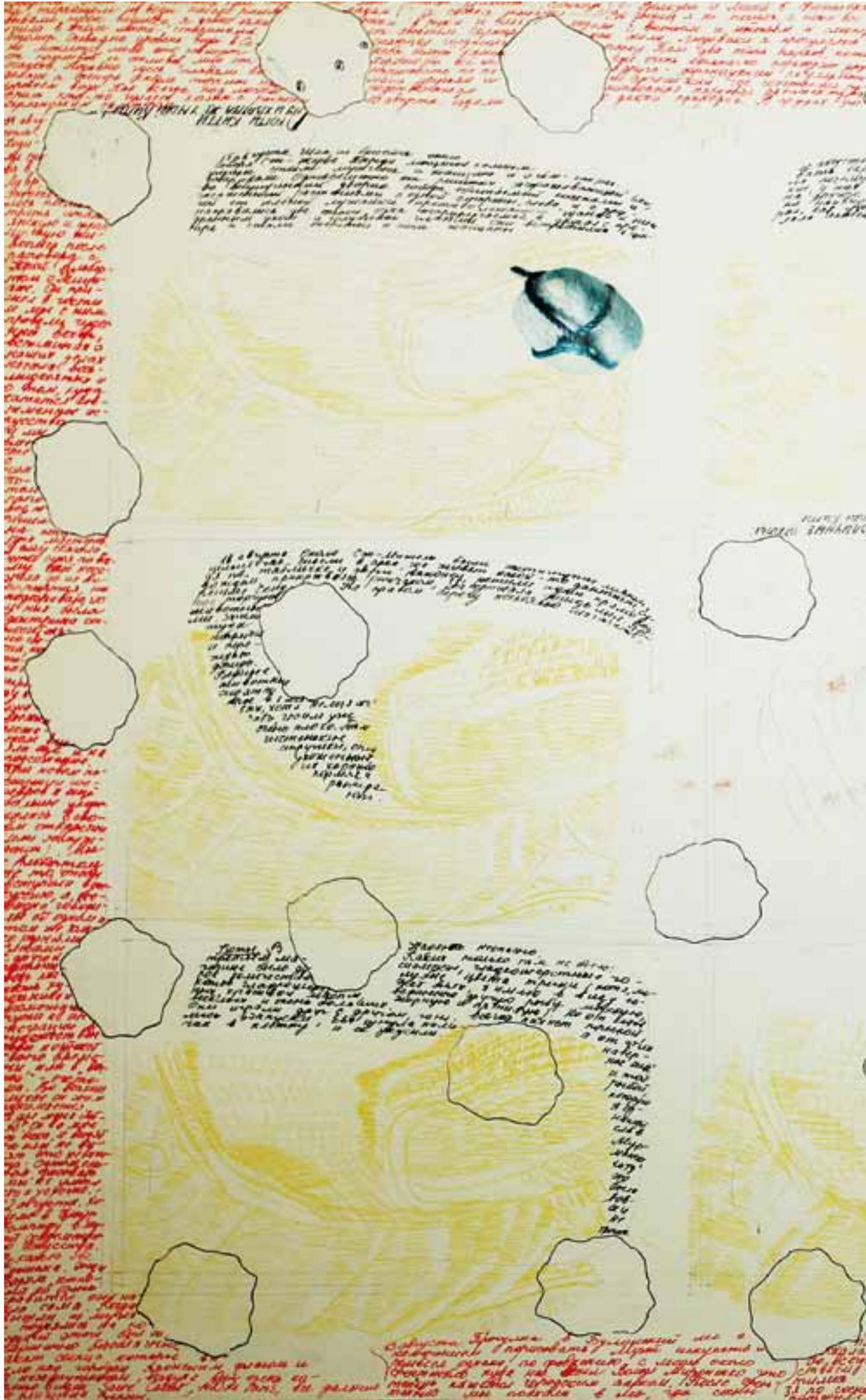


Natalia Abalakova

San langue ni text

1996. Mixed media. 43 x 61.

Artist's property, Moscow





Natalia Abalakova

**Poem of the Square. From
Summa archaeologiae series**
1983. Collage. 62 x 86.
Artist's property, Moscow







TOTART

View of the exhibition.
Moscow Museum
of Modern Art, 2012

...AND SO ON...

Karina Karaeva

Camera lens — a mechanical apparatus
that reduces any manifestation
of individual beginning, any manifestation
of privacy

Achille Bonito Oliva

The group TOTART (Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov) works on the edge of unsettling the system of traditional art, or more accurately, of the art which is on the experimental border with the traditional. The disappearance of any state of art, acting outside the positive, or negative actions, is transformed in TOTART's behaviour into a counteraction. The work of artists with the position of the "here and now," spreads beyond the boundaries of imagination about what is an image, and whether it exists at all. Similar to the work *Happy End*, a minimalistic action is turned into a unique collage of narration, where there is an absence of narration per se. If the challenge is to investigate the state of an artistically created world, then before anything, it is of merit to speak of the impossibility of an adequate judgment about its real definition and state in the context of culture. The introduction of the collage into fine, visual and multimedia art is simultaneously a consequence of a crisis, and an attempt to comprehend the world in a new way; it blocks an adequate, "clean" perception and impression. TOTART proclaims a new stage of absence of reality and the impossibility of defining it within the boundaries not only of the academic, but also of avant-garde art.

The collage as a possibly foundational structure of the world, made up of a system of coordinates different in composition, content and character, forms a new imagery. How else to call a multiplicity of meanings, emerging out of relations inside the horizontal and vertical reality of coordinates, than by a collage inside the real artificial world: "The horizon of the infinite — this is larger than the horizon of the whole, but "the whole" (all that exists), everywhere taken away, pushed out as well as inside "itself." Whiter than a line traced, or one that should be traced in order to orientate oneself and determine the direction of movement. It is a gap or rupture of the horizon itself, and we are — inside this gap. We are the gap, an accidental trace of some rupture."¹ Here the collage is inside and outside of the horizontal rupture, whereas the "text" belongs to the vertical coordinate. "...and so on..." is in part about this. The verticality determines the conceptuality and the "other" meaning of the image/text. The visual horizon possesses mobility and is, by and large, finite. The vertical consciousness is infinite, indivisible, whole and uniform, and that is why its responsibility lies in the region of understanding, interpretation and comprehension. In this way, the horizontal possesses structural visuality, while the vertical decodes the image.

The connection between nature and art transformed into a vi-

sual equivalent is an example of the superiority of a new definition of a cultural gesture. Initially, any artistic manifestation is built on the synthesis of reality as an ideal surface and of the context of art, absorbing in itself not only the experience of the artist, but, before all, their determination to designate their own civil credo through art...

Traditionally enclosed in a specified format, the collage is transformed into a formula the unknowns for which are interchangeable. Although the collage has the property allowing it to be simultaneous in a fragmented visual cycle. The multiplicity of definitions of the state of the collage allows speaking generally about its subjective visual nature. Thus, the horizontal inside the structure of the collage is undoubtedly disrupted at the outset. The visual philosophy of the collage is manifested in an eclectic state. As an example of a system of relations, the collage doubles, on one hand, traditional visuality, on the other, it discriminates classic structure in a specific form. Meaning expressed through the collage is spread beyond the particularly artistic. The dissipation of the state of the collage is a process of a conscious destruction of tradition, the consequence of relations towards the academic as the static, unchangeable image, self-sufficient in its own expression. The property of the collage is a disruption, the usage of habitual images in a unique context — investment into a specific form. The utilization of an object, the transformation of its status, or a discovery of a new characteristic for the system of the collage serves as artistic execution. The displacement of substance of a ready-made object is in some way the consequence of its introduction into the sphere of another interpretational system. The passage into the other imaged consciousness is also a process, connected with the direct total integration of a particular object into the artistic context. If one is to assume that any combination, any synthesis could enter the definition of the collage, then "text," composed of different visual turns, formed through the means of using non-uniform elements, modernizes the habitual, traditional visuality. Considering the divisiveness of the visual component, the "text" of a collage becomes a single form of artistic expression.

As a consequence of its exposition, the collage becomes a visual carcass, breaking the hierarchical table within the artistic composition. Formally, the collage carries a supplementing function, having no main original characteristic that would determine it as an independent creation, — it is an addition, substitution, but not the skeleton, since in the creation of an artistic text, the author "comes from" the image, but in a collage, generally, uses it as an addition. Thus, the original image "completes the construction" with the intervention from the collage. As an independent structure, the collage appears as a result of displacement. The collage is evidently too much of a taboo element in an artistic text. Thus, the collage compensates for the empty spaces inside a particular text, since "every work of art aims to find an identity with itself, the same identity which is found in the world of empirical reality (a collage strives towards that same reproduction of reality — K.K.) is forcefully imposed on all objects as a quality of identification with the subject, as a result of which, the attempt becomes futile"². A visual element in collage — this is

most likely a withdrawing, although initially, a forming stage of the disappearance of any communication proposed by the artist. This is a combination of particular reflexive movements, similar to what is seen in the “Gold Room.”

The problem of artistic exposition does not exist in video art — the initial position of the artist as an observer, as some subject, having carried out a particular artistic gesture, and thus, placing one’s own creation outside of the possibility of an adequate interpretation or evaluation, demonstrates the original genre of the relation between the artist and the surrounding environment. From here, a video could even exist solely in the consciousness of the artist. Modern relations with the spectator who could become an immediate participant in the creation of the composition (interactive video), guides this kind of visual art towards an independent platform. The structure of editing as the principle element in the creation of a cinematographic image disappears.

Video culture aims to dissolve editing in life captured in real time. Observation, the constant work of the camera, aim to become the singular arsenals of a contemporary artist’s means. It is precisely here that the collage appears as first and foremost an element of a creative consciousness. Video consumes the aesthetic function of cinema and synthesizes: a) the subjective video sight of the director, b) the collage form of the world itself. Discrete video surveillance is a goal in itself for the artist, who attempts to model an authorial behaviour and position because of this created, fragmentary visual landscape.

The objective reality (if it exists at all, and is not an interpretation of a collage state of the world), having undergone a “makeover” through the authorial instrument of deconstruction/destruction, i.e. the artist’s eye armed with a camera, is distinct in phenomenological quality — it proposes to turn to a new expressive image system, since from now on, it does not exist outside of any particular context. Here it is important to state the virgin nature of reality, which is gradually disappearing — in connection with forced verification, its meaning, its symbol, its sign is dissolved. The authentic nature of the world is undoubtedly subjected to a particular directorial/artistic “reworking.” Reality on its own is not original in this context, and does not trigger documentary fixation, especially in the video context. The paradox of a video document lies in the impossibility of distinguishing play from life, the lack of boundaries between truth and fiction. The world is such as the director, a pseudo-demiurge, who has encroached on an already captured image, who divided it into frames, conditions and symbols, sees it. Here, the collage nature of video is revealed. Documentation as a common process of fixating reality loses to the sign system of the video image. From here onwards — “a closed text” does not exist. Any abstract image acquires symbolic weight because of the destruction of its original poetics, from incorporating a new system of sign designations into its body. Reality is capable of interpreting itself, in principle it does not require deep scrutiny, only careful viewing. The collage is thus only a means. This careful viewing into a collage does not presume deep knowledge, since the possibility of direct communication turns all the previous authorial and spectatorial assumptions about

authenticity and the possibility of its (reality) fixation upside down. A collage is presented as the only possibility of interpreting the world, as an authentic embodiment. Video art, condemned to be a surrogate component of cinematographical imagery (its collage nature is also manifest in this), occasionally leaves the boundaries of the exclusive fixation of life of an amateur camera, and turns into a meaningful category of the image. Potential possibilities of a new expressive system, as well as technical achievements, having crossed into the region of high art, give a special cultural and aesthetic colouring to visual drama of video art. The aesthetic of video imagery acquires a particular weight also because of a particular authorial commentary, formulating the dialogue with visual art, architecture, literature, and perceptibly present in every artistic creation. The transformations in the human experience interpret the human physical condition through a system of certain signs, which create an individual image because of video technologies. This individual image appears as much in demand in the “Russian Roulette,” [trans. (from Rus.) *Russkaya ruletka*] as it does in “Foucault’s Pendulum,” [trans. (from Rus.) *Mayatnik Fuko*] transmitting in its message simultaneously the state of artistic dissonance and harmony, of the search for verbal balance and visual total expression.

¹ Jean-Luc Nancy. *Being Singular Plural* [trans. (from Fr.) *Être singulier pluriel*.] Minsk: “I. Logvinov,” 2004. Pp. 8

² Theodor Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. Moscow: Respublika, 2001. Pp. 10

³ Theodor Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. Moscow: Respublika, 2001. Pp. 12

1. Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalia Abalakova in front of works by Anatoly Zhigalov. Group exhibition at Korolenko Library. Moscow, 1974
Photo by Alexander Shumaev

2. Natalia Abalakova in front of her works. Group exhibition at Korolenko Library. Moscow, 1974
Photo by Alexander Shumaev

3. Exhibition at the apartment of Alexander Glezer. Moscow, 1975
Left to right: Otari Chkhartishvili, Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Larisa Bugayan-Pyatnitskaya, Alexander Glezer, Alik Goguadze, Alena Kirtsova

4. Alexander Glezer and Anatoly Zhigalov at the exhibition of nonconformist art at the apartment of Alexander Glezer. Moscow, 1975
Photo by Henrikas Dobkyavichus

5. Alexander Glezer and Anatoly Zhigalov at the exhibition of nonconformist art at the apartment of Alexander Glezer. Moscow, 1975
Photo by Henrikas Dobkyavichus

6. Oskar Rabin at the exhibition of nonconformist art. Izmailovo Forest Park, Moscow, 1975
Photo by Vladimir Sychev



3



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6

1. Exhibition of nonconformist art at VDNKh Cultural Center. Moscow, 1975
Photo by Vladimir Sychev

2. Exhibition of nonconformist art at VDNKh Cultural Center. Moscow, 1975
Left to right: Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Eduard Zelenin, Oskar Rabin, Georgy Kostaki
Photo by Vladimir Sychev

3. Left to right: Henrikas Dobkyavichus, Innokentiy Aigui, Gennady Aigui, Anatoly Zhigalov. Orekhovo-Borisovo, Moscow, 1978
Photo by Natalia Abalakova

4. Innokentiy Aigui, Gennady Aigui, Maria Aigui, Anatoly Zhigalov and Artem Aigui. 1978
Photo by Henrikas Dobkyavichus

5. At the setting of the solo exhibition by Eduard Shteinberg. Moscow City Committee of Graphic Artists. Moscow, 1979
Left to right: Mikhail Odnorolov, Eduard Shteinberg, Evgeny Shiffers, Ilya Kabakov, Anatoly Zhigalov
Photo by Igor Palmin

6. Dom operation. The first festival of performance in the USSR. Pogorelovo village, Kostroma region, 1981
Left to right: Elena Elagina, Nikolai Panitkov, Anatoly Zhigalov, Sven Gundlah, Andrei Monastyrsky
Photo by Igor Makarevich



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6

THE ADVENTURES OF “THE BLACK SQUARE”

Irina Karasik

TOTART has an analytical character — the life project of Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalia Abalakova, which is decoded as the “Research on the Substance of Art as Applied to Life and Art.” Kazimir Malevich and especially his “Black Square” are not only constantly “mentioned” in the course of this investigation, but they have become an object of serious and self-sufficient interpretation. Judging by the intensity of the reflection and by the diversity of its conceptual methods and visual forms, possibly few contemporary artists can hold their own on in comparison with Abalakova and Zhigalov. Upon first glance, TOTART’s strategy could be called critical. In many actions, the avant-garde geometric project is held to scrutiny, and the “Malevich complex” (“to sew geometric patches onto the rags of an old canvas”) characteristic of Russian art, is decidedly overcome.

The artists formulate their intentions fairly succinctly: “desacralization” of the “holy” Square, “the closure of the theme of Malevich” (“through the transformation of the Black Square into a fig leaf on the undernourished loins of Russian “free” art. The ablution of the “Black Square” in Duchamp’s “Fountain,” occupying an honourable spot on the landfill (of history) — a belated marriage of Russian and Western avant-garde (the triptych “Of Bread and Spectacle,” 1987 [trans. (from Rus.) Hleba I Zrelish’]; “the divorce from the technological pathos of constructivism.” However, the process of such a “divorce” does not carry a single-sided judgmental character, it is not coincidental that the authors qualify their relations with the avant-garde as a “dialogue-debate.” It is as if the artists are “suspended” in a free space between the deconstruction of the dilapidated, self-compromising signs, aiming to break through the symbolic layers towards the originary meaning, and the development of the avant-garde impulse. Using the “Black Square,” Abalakova and Zhigalov have simultaneously, (or, more accurately, sequentially) both “assimilated it,” and overcome it. There is space for the “constantly ironic correlation with the well-known archetype, the symbol. With it, there is a partial identification, and partly, this identification is immediately removed. This duality in the approach, on one hand, subjects the available cultural experience to doubt, and on the other, is based on it all the same, absolutely disallowing a separation from it.” More than once, the artists pointed out that TOTART “grew out of” the avant-garde. In their creativity, the criticism of “repression” of the geometric project (in the spirit of Michel Foucault: “geometry — is a technology of social control”), is in a paradoxical way combined with the deepening of the “geometric” problematic. Combining the re-

lations of this position with the ambitions of *sotz-art*, [tran.: socialist art] it is impossible not to mention three significant distinctions: primarily, it is an already perceived ambivalence of relations with the object; secondly, a wider existential context of interpretation that does not limit itself to the sphere of “Soviet specificity,” and thirdly, the experience of “personal participation” in the process of “testing” the symbol (“the artists appeal to the unconscious and purely emotional levels of perception”). It should be said that the revision of the avant-garde project is not similar to a “futile negation,” since it is based on a serious contemplation of the problematic. Before moving to sincerely critical action, the artists (and particularly, A. Zhigalov) have conducted a sizeable “investigation of the Square.” Thus, in A. Zhigalov’s abstract painting of the 1970s, the “gaze is chained to the central sign of the Russian avant-garde — the black square.” It is laid out on the canvas, as if on “a microscope’s demonstration bench.” The artist, changing optics and the conditions of “the experiment,” observes life and the metamorphoses of the “suprematist cell.” He rotates the figure, puts it at a distance or draws it near, cuts it up in symmetrical parts, lays the internal lines of demarcation, “incises” the surface, baring a black hole behind it, “banishes colour,” exchanging it for a frame of words-signs, transforms into a fragment of an imagined volume, into a space of light. In these works, Zhigalov does not directly quote Malevich’s object, rather, he develops the theme of the square, proposing an independent solution. There is no Malevich’s impersonality, no “hard, cold, unsmiling” system. Objective evidence and irrevocable results are exchanged for a process of searching and a selection of solutions, dependent on the human presence of an “experimenter.” And moreover, the artist is hardly interested in the self-sufficient geometry of forms, he is rather using it as a type of a signed, ideographic letter.

With time, the frames of the painting become overcrowded, and the development of painting itself leads the artists towards a gate into real space. The main sphere of their activities from the end of 1970s is performance, defined as a Total Artistic Act. The Square becomes one of the principal actors here as well. It “deforms, undergoes destruction,” in order to “reveal the hidden forces of culture and new meanings within it.”

Geometric reflection receives light ironic undertones in one of the so-called “winter projects” (N. 6, cultural), existing in the form of a “pure idea” — a textual scenario.

“On a snow-covered field (desirably between Nemchinovka and Romashkovo) a group of participants of the “Total Artistic Act” [trans. (from Rus.) Totalnoe Hudozhestvennoe Deystvie (THD)] in black coveralls measures a square of 100 by 100 metres and paint it black. After the participants of the action leave the location of the act, another (ecological) group in white coveralls begins to work, and paints the black square white, returning the original whiteness back to the field.”

The ambivalence of such a proposed action is evident. On one hand, it carries a commemorative character, marking a holy territory with “dominant signs”: Romashkovo and Nemchinovka were Malevich’s favourite spots; he lived here in the summers and willed to be buried here. On the other hand, the ritual is too simple, deliberately mundane, devoid of any pomp

and, instead, erases the sacral aura of the place, rather than upholding it. Moreover, the “Black Square” dies having barely emerged, as if it did not exist at all. The cause of death is the “White Square,” which, immediately indistinguishable from the background of a snowy field, disappears itself. If it was not for the efficiency of the participants, evidently removing the ecological disturbance, this action could have been read otherwise: as an acquisition of Malevich’s desired ideal. During his time, he lamented that “the ultimate culture of white has not yet reached its social status, the level of phenomena has not yet reached the white condition.”

The motive of “creation-destruction” along with a subsequent return (at a new stage, with new knowledge) to the original state, develops in such famous performances as the “White Cube,” [trans. (from Rus.) Belyi Kub] and “Black Cube” [trans. (from Rus.) Cherniy Kub] (1980). Their content is undoubtedly wider than Malevich’s problematic, but is also closely connected with it. In one of their texts, the artists directly call the action “Black Cube,” a cancellation of the “Black Square.” Here, at first, Malevich’s geometry is used (the square turns into a cube, which corresponds with Malevich, who discussed symbols “of six perfections, emanating from one side of a cube as a square, dissipating along the way, creating a void, departing into a cube or a side of the square of a cube”); however, it subsequently undergoes destruction. Inside the built cube, the artists set a sphere of newspapers on fire, they “seal up” the cube, and in complete darkness, Abalakova and Zhigalov “begin to make incisions with razor blades on the surface of the cube, letting out light and smoke.” The action continues until the full obliteration of the cube.

In another performance, participants were proposed to bandage the carcass of a cube, placed in a room in such a manner, that because of the operation, they were separated into two groups. In order to create unity, they had to destroy their creation, and thus, the bandages that were placed with collective effort had to be cut open. The meaning of the action is multifaceted, and is connected with the investigation of the phenomenon of the “Russian idea” (“collegiality,” “the philosophy of the common action”); however, for the authors, the original impulse was undoubtedly Malevich and his “White Square” as a model of complete existence, the utopia of a “clean action.” The possibility of existence of an ideal space, an ideal society is under doubt here, and geometry is accepted as insufficient. Life has placed everything in its place, becoming more complex than any kind of schemas.

In a special cycle of the actions “Investigations of the Square” (1981) [trans. (from Rus.) Issledovanie kvadrata], the central theme did not become one of restraining, “repressive” qualities of the geometric project. The artists, as had already been mentioned, share Michel Foucault’s theory, seeing the “technology of social control” in geometry, and they provide arguments — ironic, for the most part — as its proof. A real person (“a living sculpture”) is circumscribed in a square frame symbolically limiting freedom; one is either tied to the square, or “crucified” in it. However, the committed actions are not at all tragic, but rather absurd: the ropes form a construction reminiscent of a hammock, in which the “prisoner” is reading the handbook, “The School of Art.” The reduction of the square

from the pedestal of perfection, the commencement of an unnatural return of the form to the “image” (“the living sculpture”) for Malevich, is continued as an absolute demythologization of a holy object (a direct profanation of its supremacy), turned into a “Dung Square” [trans. (from Rus.) Navozniy kvadrat]. However true, this “found object” could also be interpreted as an ironic testimony to the universal, to the ubiquity and objectivity of Malevich’s discovery.

With this, the adventures of the square did not end, and in 1982, it appeared again at an exposition of the APTART gallery (Nikita Alekseev’s apartment) in the form of a plastic bag filled with black copy paper. The transformation of the original source was so significant, that an identifying tag was required — celebratory gold lettering certified the connection with the original and signaled the value of the object. Precisely the striking dissemblance of the name and the appearance gave the interpretation a particular sharpness. With their parodied object, Abalakova and Zhigalov demystified the magic of the “Black Square,” characteristic of the original, as well as the one acquired in the process of socio-cultural functionality. The symbol of infinity appeared not only as a mundane, but as a worthless and short-lived object, an empty shell, void of independent content. Its form has lost the “geometric force,” and sagged, became soft, supple and limp. It appeared that “nothing” could be made of anything at all. It should be said that a similar turn (the “softening” of form, exchange of materials, the use of an everyday object) would be used by many, choosing only different metaphors for objects and different media for materials (M. Konstantinova and O. Vukolova’s square pillows, squares made from seeds and coins by G. Izrailevich, rubber ones by A. Garunov, and ones made of improvised, everyday materials by V. Voynov). However, Abalakova and Zhigalov were, perhaps the first, the wittiest and the most radical. Nonetheless, the affair was not limited by a simple parody of the famous square. In the context of the APTART exposition, it carried a different, more important role, and the irony was intended not so much for Malevich, but for the contemporary artistic situation. According to witnesses, the “Black Square” plastic bag was persistently stuffed “with the feet of visitors under the bed, as a thoroughly hidden complex.” It is characteristic that in subsequent actions, the square was present in the form of the remains of the “Black Cube” and “White Cube” performances. Such alchemic transformations testified to a final desacralization of the cultural sign, demonstrating that through descent and deformation, a “gold” new meaning is acquired.

In the mid-1980s, Zhigalov and Abalakova returned to painting, where apparent veiled references to the “Black Square” were present again and again. The Square (as a “sign of the avant-garde”) was immersed in an “outsider environment” here — in the element of expressive and free painting (corresponding with “contemporariness”), changing under its influence; it was juxtaposed with figurative and semiotic elements, subordinated by them — primitive, archaic ones (the traces of hands and feet) or by the present-day symbols of advertisement (the brand name, a packaged product, road signs, a corporate logo). The square — flexible, malleable, living — was formed through the crossing of footsteps, was

recognizable as a formless black stain in layers of brick, appeared as a patch on prison camp jackets. Such a square was simultaneously a reminder of a great tradition, and the symbol of its crisis and conquest. The authors did not point at “succession,” but towards the “rupture,” and the “rupture with the whole “uniform,” socio-cultural fabric.” Expression, in their words, “carries the function of “relation” and real time, whereas a geometric (“assigned”) sign — certain cultural coordinates, relativized by such relations.”

In the “Red Square,” geometry is decisively joined with politics, identifying with the main square of the Russian capital (the play with the English word, which carries both meanings). The painting is perceived as a metaphor for the transformation of utopia into anti-utopia, as a process of “the death of a cultural sign.” It is not coincidental that the artist speaks here from the position of some “last geometer,” examining the deeds done with one’s hands from somewhere in the heavens (the red square is depicted in the envelopment of giant hands). In this composition, there is a theme of valediction with geometry, which contended for the social reformation of the world.

Cleansed from outsider “historical” meaning, the square as an archetype, as a symbol of the effort of ordering, as a formula of hidden energy, still continues to live and appear in Abalakova and Zhigalov’s works.

From the essay in the Catalogue “The Adventures of the Black Square.” Russian Museum, Palace Edition, Saint Petersburg, 2007. (CD attached with the catalogue)

1. Dom operation. The first festival of performance in the USSR. Pogorelovo village, Kostroma region, 1981
Left to right: Anatoly Zhigalov, Nikolai Panitkov, Andrei Monastyrsky, Sven Gundlah

2. Anatoly Zhigalov and Sergey Shablavin. 1981

3. Actiion by Viktor Skersis (SZ) at Orekhovo-Borisovo. Moscow, 1981

Left to right: Viktor Skersis, Natalia Abalakova, Simona Sokhranskaya, Anatoly Zhigalov, Sven Gundlah, Vladimir Mironenko, Sergey Mironenko
Photo by Alik Ryabsky

4. The first festival of performance in the USSR. Anatoly Zhigalov and Alexander Artuganov at Pogorelovo village, Kostroma region, 1981

5. Retro 1 performance/installation (Those Glorious 60s and 70s) at the apartment of Nikita Alexeev (AP-TART). Moscow, December 1982

Left to right: Mikhail Roshal, Vladimir Mironenko, Sven Gundlah
Photo by Georgy Kizevalter

6. Retro 1 performance/installation (Those Glorious 60s and 70s) at the apartment of Nikita Alexeev (AP-TART). Moscow, December 1982

Left to right: Sven Gundlah, Alik Ryabsky, Natalia Abalakova, Nikita Alexeev
Photo by Georgy Kizevalter



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1. Anatoly Zhigalov at the setting of Occasion for Acquaintance installation. Exhibition at the Harbour, TEII. St Petersburg, 1987

2. At the apartment of Nikita Alexeev (APTART). Moscow, 1982

Left to right, sitting: Andrei Monastyrsky, Sven Gundlah, Natalia Abalakova, Vladimir Sorokin, Anatoly Zhigalov. Standing: Konstantin Zvezdochetov, Mikhail Roshal, Alena Kirtsova, Sergey Mironenko, Henrikh Sapgir, Elena Romashko, Vadim Zakharov, Todd Bludo, Yuri Albert, Sergey Mironenko, Nikita Alexeev, Manuel Alkaide

Photo by Georgy Kizevalter

3. Anatoly Zhigalov, Eva Zhigalova and Natalia Abalakova. 1982

Photo by Vladimir Polischuk

4. One of the "kitchens of Russian art." Moscow, 1984

Left to right: Gleb Aleinikov, Anatoly Zhigalov, Igor Aleinikov, Natalia Abalakova

5. Meeting with British journalists at the apartment of the artists before the opening of New Beginnings festival and TOTART solo exhibition. 1989

Left to right: Anatoly Zhigalov, Natalia Abalakova, correspondent of The Independent, curator Chris Carrol



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THE TOTALIZATOR OF THE PAIR

Natalia Zagurskaya

In the type of situation where political and public spheres are saturated with actionism, and commercial actions and flash-mobs become the ownership of the masses, carrying out radical art-actions, as it is done by the group TOTART, is an act of no less significance, then when such actions conquered the symbolic space of traditional art. Already in the 1980s, TOTART has safely avoided the dual traps of politicization and commercialization, owing to the fact that TOTART's "anthropological" and "social" core represents a "synthesis of bodily, emotional and rational sides of human substance, finding expression in the live actions of a man and woman" (pp. 11). This "trichotomic" artistic language becomes the foundation of declared totality, since any object could serve as the means of expression of that language, becoming, in this case, a so-called, "found object." Another foundation for TOTART's totality becomes an orientation towards a pair as a foundational community. In the text, "Dear Artist," [trans. (from Rus.) Lubimiy Hudozhnik] organized as two textual columns in dialogue with one another, Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov admitting their love towards art, simultaneously confess their love to one another. In this case, art becomes a means of ascertaining the fullness of life, or in other words, actually, of its totalizing effect. The artistic couple is particularly interesting because of their specific work with the imaginary and its deliberate (de)construction. The result of this type of work becomes not solely the couple, but also, the numerous art-objects they produce. It could be said that in practice, TOTART demonstrates how to overcome a traditional understanding of a couple, which in psychoanalytical context has an inherently bourgeois formation that forms Cartesian subjectivity, and thus, excludes creative free will of the "unbearable lightness of being." However, in art, such willfulness leaves the type of weightless footprints that TOTART defines as "simultaneously not art yet, and not art already" (pp. 327) as, let's say, the tracing of a foot of the former and the latter artist (although in this case, in one image). These footprints can easily be erased with a rag — as easy as it is to erase chalk from a school blackboard, but they can also be easily reproduced. Furthermore, in TOTART's opinion, "...the untraceable leaves its print in unpredictable consequences..." (pp. 295), in interpretative consequences and — what is inherently important for TOTART — in gendered consequences.

The theme of the trace in relation to the theme of gender is an important component of TOTART's art. In one performance, which is appropriately termed, "Traces" [trans. (from Rus.)

Sledi], a man and a woman approach one another, leaving behind discernible footsteps in the sand on one end, while on the other, those footsteps are washed away by waves — as traces of a missing person; one who has a gender. In another performance, “Ostsee stones” [trans. (from Rus.) Ostzeyskie kamni], a man and a woman again, approach each other, all the while laying out a pebble path behind them, and thus, do not leave any trace a priori, but like a new kind of Robinsons, they do not only transform configurations of gender, but of nature’s elements. In this case, the trace, as a concept of deconstruction, is self-effacing during the process of its own representation.

In a specific meaning of the term, a trace, according to Gilles Deleuze, always appears as a trace of castration, a beginning in the void, with/-out. Precisely this kind of trace allows for the simultaneous existence of both the couple and the idea of TOTART. U. Sobolev who interviewed TOTART, gives the example of Marina Abramovich and Ulay’s performance illustrating with/-out: “they traveled to China and started walking toward each other from two distant points along the Great Wall. They walked for around a year before meeting, and they encountered each other only to part again. I think that this is one of the twentieth century’s greatest masterpieces of art. This, I call Parting,” — defines TOTART (pp. 321). Considering that earlier, among actions typical for Abramovich and Ulay were those where they would spend 17 hours with their hair tied together, their parting had to be presented on the same scale.

In a sense, with/-out is the only form of a couple’s existence: a repeating nomadic movement of Fort-Da from with to without and back again, permanently circumscribing its fundamentally disappearing space, a fundamentally unrealizable ambition to walk along one’s own footsteps again. In this case, TOTART’s recipient could, of course, place a bet on this couple, but would never learn the outcome considering its processuality, i.e. of the artistic couple.

To use my terminology, which defines a profound thinker as a bachelor; a depressive thinker-idealist, as, figuratively speaking, someone who dreams of breaking up an engagement, then a superficial thinker who is especially attune to all kinds of traces, resides in a couple and contemplates its “problem”. Pierre Klossowski considers the problem as the possibility of projecting the couple, independently of children, and namely, in the possibility of projecting the couple in a thought. However, TOTART goes further than Klossowski’s thought, and in 1981, calls the birth of their daughter Eve — “Our Best Work of Art” [trans. (from Rus.) Nashe Luchshee Proizvedenie”].

As a result, in their fundamentally “coupled” works, TOTART also represents that kind possibility. In gender theory, couples like these are often marked by the concept of a copula. In part, in feminist psychoanalysis, it is understood that, for example, a copula as opposed to a couple, represents in itself the subject-subjected relation, and its distinct characteristic is the trait that a woman retains her family name and pseudonym. However, it seems to me that in relations between such artistic pairs as TOTART, it is better to use the concept of a couple, considering that the philosophical meaning of the concept of copula assumes the relations of a subject and a predicate. Moreover, it is possibly worth considering Gail Rubin’s famous critique of reductionist feminism (and not only her), narrowing gendered relations exclusively on copular relations.

Understood as the aforementioned concept of the couple, TOTART’s trace is proclaimed as a space of rupture, of contrast to continuity in art, and signifying TOTART’s ambition towards ontological uniqueness. On the other hand, TOTART, notwithstanding Robinson’s resistance towards all kinds of classifications (pp. 19), generally works within the stream of Moscow conceptualism, with which it partially identifies. In part, references to emptiness, and simultaneously the state of energy and suggestiveness of the “trace,” allow making clear parallels with the work of “Medical Hermeneutics” [trans. (from Rus.) Meditsinskaya Germenevtika] — despite the fact that the latter contend on the representation of profound thought. At the same time, it should not be omitted, as it has been frequently noted by various researchers as well as by the participants of the school of Moscow Conceptualism — in both cases, what is demonstrated is more of an influence of a trace, than an event. However, one of Moscow Conceptualism’s distinctive characteristics is precisely an underlined attention towards documentation chronicling an event. Such an approach, according to its scholars, should have been a strategy to resist historic narrativity, as well as its transformation into museum art. In contrast to the given strategy, in a caption to “The Artist and Politics” [trans. (from Rus.) Hudozhnik I Politika], N. Abalakova turns her attention on somewhat of an opposite: that during the search for fullness of life, possible only when history is expelled from consciousness, the “drama of the destruction of history” absent from reality, and resisting the act of documentation (Pp. 307) is regularly played out. Therefore, it is not the act of documentation that is foremost for TOTART: it is, more likely, the readiness of presenting one’s entire museum to the communal network of the Internet, which the artists are actively pursuing in the last few years.

In the video performance/installation, “The Place of the Artist” [trans. (from Rus.) Mesto Hudozhnika], this space is demarcated with the aid of copies of a postcard from an anonymous mail artist; N. Abalakova wears “I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WAR” as a mask on her eyes, sitting opposite to a screen projection of her own digital image. The action is finished by projecting the explosion of the White House in Grozny, and is accompanied by the following poetical text: I was once captured in the trap of a mirror; I avoided the mirror, but got into another trap; I see and pass on the images with the help of numbers, avoiding feelings. This allows me to see the untraceable... (Pp. 305).

It is noteworthy that N. Abalakova denotes The Place of the Artist, the woman’s half of TOTART. In this case, it is the woman’s half in the couple that transgresses the limits of the trace into the untraceable, avoiding, in the artist’s opinion, the trap of the mirror stage as a launching pad for the transition from the imaginary to the symbolic. Instead, the artist attempts to clasp with the real, described by a digital image that claims to “avoid feelings” and not to leave any trace — i.e. the clasp towards the horrific and terrifying “real of the real.”

In connection to this, TOTART proclaims the totality of presence and situation. Thus, as early as 1996, TOTART works with the consequences of the lust for the real, permanently delaying the end of history by the “drama of its destruction” and problematizing postmodernism, in part with the deconstruction of its critique of metaphysics of presence. In contrast to the procedure of deconstruction, TOTART focuses on the temporariness and ephemerality of presence “here and now,” the expression of which is performance itself, understood as a performative. A constant correlation between expression and action, the plan of content with the plan of expression, the subject with the predicate, and object-language with meta-language, summarizes TOTART’s scope of performative activities, permitting to live through the “drama of the destruction of history,” rather than describing it. As a result, it could be said that paradoxically, the video performance The Space of the Artist is a specific and artistically independent “cyberwar,” using Paul Virilio’s expression.

In this case, the condition of the artist in society is particularly telling. Paying more attention to semantics of such actions, would it have been possible to avoid a situation where a terrorist occupies the niche of radical artistry? Despite Karlheinz Stockhausen’s radical proclamations, an artist and a terrorist are different at the root. A deconstructive consciousness is a “consciousness that does not get weary of reactualizing the end of the world, using any kind of event: Stalin’s death, Cuban missile crisis, the events of the Sino-Soviet border conflict,” while contrastingly, artistic creativity, “makes the question whether there is life after death redundant.” Whereby, N. Abalakova answers this question: “the pots are boiling over in the kitchen, a stinky fish is on the stove, I’m ironing clap, clap — and the diapers are ironed, and the collage is done” (Pp. 270). As a result of the Soviet communal lifestyle, there appears a “third woman,” recognized by Gilles Lipovetsy as the most relevant form of womanliness: free both from forced domestication, as well as from a similarly forced careerism. Attention is drawn towards threshold situations, created by

TOTART at the moment of their inception. Relating to this, both TOTART’s actions and texts appear as exemplary processual art, an eternal totalizer, since it is in and through themselves, that their belonging to art is endlessly determined. If “an artist creates something different, always different”; “modeling the possible, as opposed to the existing” (pp. 351), then they are always in some sense, standing on the threshold. TOTART brings attention to the fact that radicalism is not always made manifest in an extreme gesture, but in a gap between the material trace of a gesture and its potential, projected, although marginal extreme. Thus appear the outlines of the space of contemporary art as a performance of thought and the space of the couple: in the words of A. Zhigalov, “to live and work together — as a man and a woman, a husband and wife — this is heavier than living with a dog” (pp. 353). Could we not assume in this context, that Zhigalov hints at an insufficient radicalism in Oleg Kulikov’s art? However, it is worth mentioning that Kulik’s creativity is in some ways a performative copulation of a pair Bredihin — Kulik. In these, as well as other cases, it is important to transmit a threshold at which copulas live and trade to a recipient, meanwhile, preserving the gap as a right to a private life. Thus, the fact that a simultaneously concrete and abstract man and woman are involved in the performance is consistently underlined in TOTART’s art. Hence, any performative artistic gesture of the couple becomes authentic not for any one individual, but for the project, representing a painful threshold on one hand, and its propagation/estrangement on the other: “creativity — is possibly the only type of expression where anarchic tendencies have a positive result. Art, even the most radical, is constructive in its very nature,” — declares TOTART (pp. 357).

In this sense, an early work, “Black Series” (1980) [trans. (from Rus.) Chernaya Seriya] is demonstratively on the threshold. In an appended fragment of text later attached from the performance of “Russian Roulette” [trans. (from Rus.) Russkaya Ruletka], which is read out by two voices (a male and female), it is proposed to “contemplate simultaneously two opposite centres of two parallel planes with the same persistence and invariability,” since “in the end, during the experience of such a contemplation, there is nothing but a sphere in the centre of which there are two focal points of visual analysers, combined in one cyclopean point” (pp. 46). Such an optic of cogito allows to structure the binary and with it a total subjectivation of a couple. This kind of optic is strengthened also by a unique temporality, which assumes the “fixation of “pure” time as such (the cosmic aspect), a “wounded,” tragic time (the historical aspect), artistic time, taking both former types of time in itself, and in this combination, rendering the holistic “cathartic” action, the subjective time of the artists through an artistic act” (Pp. 48). The performance “Solstice” [trans. (from Rus.) Solntsevorot], in which Germany attacks the USSR, is in this way therapeutic. In conclusion, I would like to add that in these assertions, the most likely intention is not to focus on the time of the artist, but on a time of an artistic couple. In this case, the performance itself could be analysed as a metaphor of tension between gendered attraction and anxiety, which allows,

alongside other possible variations, to decode TOTART as a Totalization of Art. In connection, the wide-ranging Foucauldian theme of geometry as a technology of social control also becomes more intimate, more private, or to be more accurate, “coupled,” even more since according to TOTART, “geometry is conceived in two dialectically opposing hypostases and in unity of their oppositions” (pp. 234). In another passage from Russian Roulette, anticipating an early cycle of “Russian Winter” [trans. (from Rus.) *Russkaya Zima*], the room as a “space of the six planes” is rounded, melts and dissolves, turns from a solid into a liquid, moreover, “in the short time for which it took to throw away dirty socks” (pp. 23). Possibly, relevant art is, today, the only social space in which a reflexive approach towards such a situation is possible, as paradoxical as it may seem.

(Review of the Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov’s book TOTART. *Russkaya Ruletk* [trans. (from Rus.) “TOTART. Russian Roulette”], Moscow: Ad Marginem, 1998, pp. 416. In the Periodical *Gendernie Issledovaniya* [trans. (from Rus.) “Gender Research”] No. 18, 2009, Khiarkov Centre for Gender Research [trans. “Khiarkovskiy Tsent

1. Eva Zhigalova and Anatoly Zhigalov at TOTART exhibition The Untraceable Leaves Its Trace in Unpredictable Consequences. L-Gallery, Moscow, 1993
Photo by Evgeny Salnikov

2. TOTART. Works from 1960-1990. Glasgow-Moscow exhibition. Sadovniki Gallery, Moscow, 1990
Photo by Grigory Kuzmin

3. TOTART. Works from 1960-1990. Glasgow-Moscow exhibition. Sadovniki Gallery, Moscow, 1990
Photo by Grigory Kuzmin

4. Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov, Marina Bessonova, Galina Kurierova. 1990
Photo by Larisa Kashuk

5. At TOTART exhibition The Untraceable Leaves Its Trace in Unpredictable Consequences. L-Gallery, Moscow, 1993
Left to right: Igor Makarevich, Elena Elagina, Anatoly Zhigalov, Georgy Kizevalter



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1. Eva Zhigalova at her solo exhibition (curated by Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly Zhigalov). Laboratory Center of Contemporary Art, Moscow, 1993
2. Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalia Abalakova at Anatomy of Culture exhibition. Velta Gallery, Moscow, 1993
3. Anatoly Zhigalov and Sergey Kovalsky at 21 Fingers from the Life of Artists exhibition. 21 Gallery, Free Culture Foundation. St Petersburg, 1994
4. At Endure a Little Bit More, And Things Will Go Well exhibition. 21 Gallery, St Petersburg, 1997
Sergey Kovalsky and Anatoly Zhigalov (left)
5. At Endure a Little Bit More, And Things Will Go Well exhibition. Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow, 1997
Left to right: Galina Elshevskaya, Liza Morozova, Marina Perchikhina, Nina Drozdetsskaya, Marina Bessonova
6. Anatoly Zhigalov and Igor Burikhin at TOTART exhibition Endure a Little Bit More, And Things Will Go Well. Spider & Mouse gallery, Moscow, 1997



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A LUCKY ARTIST

Vladimir Salnikov

Natalia Abalakova is a lucky artist. She had received her first lessons on drawing and painting from her family. Natalia's father, a civil engineer of power plants, was a good drawer. Of course, he was artistically talented, but it is also important to acknowledge that he belonged to a now-disappearing civilization, where every person, more or less educated, possessed the kind of basic drawing skills that in our time, develop only after several years of dedicated professional discipline. The artist's family was much more cultured than many other Soviet families of the country, which, having just overcome a cultural revolution, had inherited a European culture in the simplified version of the Stalinist cultural canon. This was an epoch of renaissance from an agrarian nation into an urbanized and industrialized one, transforming peasants into workers and servers, and the heirs of workers and peasants — into the intelligentsia. These people broke away from their maiden culture, with its dominance on spectacle, on the visual, of which Walter Benjamin was in such awe during his visit to Moscow, and which was destroyed in a short span of time by Soviet Kulturträgers [trans. (From Ger.) "culture-makers"]. Because of the October Revolution, people of words came to power — political writers and journalists. These people, paraphrasing Mayakovski, did not believe in sounds, or attitudes, or an invented colour, but believed in the word. Soviet Russia was literature-centric. However, in Abalakova's family, culture was focused on the visual arts. There were pre-revolutionary and contemporary books in the library of the house, a large collection of postcards with reproductions, and it was not uncommon to visit museums. The future artist's father dedicated a lot of time to, what is now called, a visual upbringing. At the same time, little Natasha was taught to use materials and instruments, and not only for drawing, but also for graphics; she was taught the rudiments of woodworking. There was a woodworking bench, and the girl was learning how to work at it. Such an approach was absolutely in the spirit of traditional progressive pedagogy — let us say, the pedagogy of Maria Montessori, in whose main principles, Tatiana Lvovna Suhotina-Tolstaya discerned the embodiment of her father's ideas. Moreover, in every respect, this method was found in the stream of the way that art was taught in the West since the 1950s (counting the methods of post-War modernists) — through the development of sensoriality, and consequently, through an unmediated familiarity with the quality of materials, with substances and instruments. "A sensorial percep-

tion constitutes the main, if not, practically the only foundation of intellectual life,”¹ — contended Montessori. Two of Natalia Abalakova’s almost-academic miniatures from 1976 speak about the success of that family pedagogy — “Still Life with Bird,” [trans. (from Rus.) Naturmort s Ptitsy] and “Still Life with Bird and Red Wineglass,” [trans. (from Rus.) Naturmort s Ptitsy I Krasnim Bokalom] are painted virtuosically. To understand the art of many non-official artists, it should be kept in mind that due to their contradictory position in the system of Soviet artistic production — their withdrawal, or incomplete presence in it — the majority of truly creative works, works that were not done for money, had a vividly expressed conceptual character.

One or two examples of a newly discovered interpretation would suffice to describe a tendency — and it was already possible to move on to develop something different. That is why the artistic heritage of non-official artists is frequently small, especially when discussing painting or sculpture. An artist connected with the market, i.e. preoccupied with manufacturing, must constantly produce goods. However, Russian artists of the so-called second avant-garde, discovering avant-garde and contemporary art for themselves, as much as the artists of the historic avant-garde, Malevich and Rodchenko for example, who were not connected to the market, concentrated on creating merely examples of their plastic conceptions. Natalia Abalakova has a wonderful painting “Fresco” (1969) [trans. (from Rus.) Freska], an image of an ornament, a stucco moulding, which just begs to be in a larger series. But alas! There is only one. Only a painting from another decade, “Shells” (1976) [trans. (from Rus) Rakovini] supports it. Nevertheless, all of the artist’s subsequent paintings spawn precisely from these paintings, from her black and white palette. Black charcoal and white-wash — the most important colours. Despite Abalakova’s long-standing association with conceptualism — a persistent artistic tendency, having finally reduced nationalist fine art (expressive, even in its version of immateriality) after socialist realism to a fable, or even more frequently, to a maxim, a pun, or an oxymoron, — the foundation of the artist’s creativity still remains in the percepts and affects (let’s rephrase, “not corresponding with perceptions and emotions”), and not in ideas and “conceptions.”

“... Philosophy extracts concepts (which must not be confused with general or abstract ideas), whereas science extracts prospects (propositions that must not be confused

with judgements), and art extracts percepts and affects (which must not be confused with perceptions or feelings)”².

It should be noted that the twentieth century, and even the last third of the nineteenth century, were abundant with creators of percepts and affects. The views of French philosophers that I cite are in large part formed based on these artists’ experience. On the same basis, Abalakova and Zhigalov’s art is distinct from the art of other Moscow conceptualists. This, considering that the complexity and multi-layeredness, the polysemy of Abalakova’s “conceptions” (and especially, as combined with Zhigalov’s creations), is often much greater than with the majority of their companions, who built their work on the premise that, “it shouldn’t be too heavy,” and executing them according to another principle — “work should be made like shit.” Another quality of Abalakova’s artworks, if we are to use Levatski’s jargon from the 60s, 70s, — is in its non-estrangement from the material, from the substance.

This principle was successfully expressed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: “... A painter — is just a painter,” “for whom paint — is only of the kind which is squeezed out of a tube, and a smear, is precisely the trace of the bristles tied onto a paintbrush,” for whom the colour blue — is not the colour of water, but “the colour of liquid blue paint,” and nevertheless, the feeling — at least, in its right — is not the same as the material. ... For as long as material lasts, sensations in these moments possess eternity.

If the sensation is achieved in the material, then the material is entirely transferred into sensation, into percept and affect.”³

As a reminder, this principle was extremely important for the Russian avant-garde, claiming, at least in its manifests, the materiality, substantiality, and objectivity of a work of art. It was rejected by local conceptualism, and even earlier — in the practice of the Union of Artists’ traditional professional art, which has largely become production on paper and canvas, granite and marble of similarity to reproductions. Because, largely, artists were trained on reproductions, and not on the originals. Abalakova’s initial affinity with material is seen in the lightness with which she mastered the trade of a sculptor and a ceramics artist (under the supervision of Gennadiy Alaverdov). For Zhigalov, the late 1950s brought about the artist’s connection with material, and in the early 1960s, Zhigalov experimented with painting. Notwithstanding

the fact that both international, and Moscow conceptualism, appeared as a counterbalance to the perceptionism of the twentieth century, which Soviet ideologues branded as formalism, in Abalakova's art, a lively stream of perceptionism broke through the literature. It is possible that for this reason, the artist never succumbed to the temptation of photorealism, the appearance of which was connected to the crisis of formalism that brought on the return of academism and naturalism in the image of their own creation (photography), influencing the art of some artists close to Moscow conceptualism. Overall, Moscow conceptualism grew out of Moscow surrealism of the 1960s. From its historical example, surrealism, and its predecessor, dada, which had figuratively exhausted the avant-garde, Moscow surrealism inherited indifference towards perceptiveness of the avant-garde (resulting in a wide range of forms appearing in both tendencies) and relapses of academism and historicism occurred. However, in Abalakova's art, something remained, which amongst the neoclassicist artistic environment — and it dominated in official art from the beginning of the 1920s — was called "plastic," in other words — a perceptive affective wholeness. I think that this is where the suggestiveness so characteristic of Abalakova's paintings between 1976 and 1980 stems from, depicting dumps, garbage, barrels and canisters. Especially remarkable is their pearly palette. It belongs to the artist's most successful discoveries, if one is to consider that Abalakova was working in the context of a widely circulated cult of painting of late Falk and Veysberg.

Narrowing painting contrasts to nil, as described by Johannes Itten in his famous textbook on painting, "The Art of Paint", these two artists did not just give an example of poor taste, but even created its canon, when a lack of contrasts was understood as refined colourism. Gogol ironically wrote about that kind of colourism: "In catering to their taste, the following colours were to fade: muslins and satins were of such pale, fashionable colours, that they could not even be given names (that was the extent to which taste was refined)".⁴

In her monochromatic paintings, Abalakova, in contrast to Veysberg, does not avoid the contrast between light and dark, but plays with its effect. Unfortunately in landscapes, the artist is under Falk's spell, who transformed a technique of "harmonization" famous in Russian painting during its decline, at the expense of leveling contrasts ("more mud — more ties") almost into a canon. Her bouquets are admirable (1977), close to the classics of the genre — the bouquets of French painters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Stemming from this tradition, Van Gogh's bouquets may be most familiar to us. I consider these miniatures done by Abalakova — amongst the best bouquets in Russian painting, especially because of their adherence to the canon, which was not closely followed by nationalist painters, who were historically not participating in the creation of this genre, received by them from the West in finished form. But genres are strict, and often, an artist has the opportunity to fully impart their expression to the spectator, their view of the world, only when consistently follow-

ing the canon of a genre. Often, a genre specifies the main, whole, content of a painting (as indeed, it does with poetic and musical compositions); it is the main artistic method, a shell, if one is to use computer jargon. This content is initially written into each artwork of every genre. That is why Picasso, such an innovator and formalistic equilibrist, favoured to remain in the boundaries of known genres. What is intriguing in Abalakova's paintings is her play with genres. Sometimes, the artist invents a genre independently. (Such is the series, "Dump," [trans. (from Rus.) Svalka] although, of course, for these works, similar ones could be found in Van Gogh: Arles' "Irises" (1889) and Arles' "Bush" (1889) from the Hermitage collection. But Van Gogh rested on the genres of Japanese engraving, meaning, the entire tradition of the painting of the Far East). And sometimes, a genre is adhered to in the strictest sense, as in Abalakova's bouquets and still lifes. We are used to the fact that in painted compositions of contemporary artists, the genre is long ago rendered obsolete; for example, even with such an outwardly traditional painter as Lucian Freud, the majority of canvases are no more than studies of nudes. Moreover, it is rare that someone is brave enough to create their own genre, as Van Gogh, Degas or Altdorfer in "The Battle of Alexander at Issus" [trans. (from Ger.) Die Alexanderschlacht] had done, or as Abalakova does. Most of the time, the genre is simply ignored. The latter, from the point of view of visual rhetoric, is ruinous for the statement itself: for the simple reason that a statement remains without a background of statements preceding it, without a normative. And normativity is mostly found in painterliness. The genre of a painting provides the connection of a specific expression with the preceding ones. Simply said, to understand whether a still life is good, one must compare it with another, for example, with the still lifes of other painters in the course of the entire existence of that genre.

A painting in visual art is contending for the depiction of that, which is often called the picture of the world, i.e. a compilation of images, understandings of the world. For example, it is common to speak of the scientific picture of the world, i.e. of the compilation of understandings, created by science. A picture of the world imparted by historical art, could seldom be connected to a scientific picture of the world: at first glance, a picture in art shows not only the visible shell of reality, but also representations of an entirely non-scientific nature: a sky could be interpreted as an expanse, or a cupola; the material world could be correlated with perfect Platonic bodies.

A painting, with its reliance on universals, is borne out of a painted sketch. Outside of universals, the painted work only remains to a greater or lesser degree a successful sketch; loses the quality of Truth, is curtailed to an Opinion. However, the artist insists on a painting even where she leaves the boundaries of established genres, adopts genres of the twentieth century, or constructs her own. The canvases from the late 1980s — and early 1990s, are elevated to the genre of assemblage painting invented in the twentieth century, in which different events, objects, times and spaces are ex-

posed simultaneously. And these works are often more radical than many well-known examples from the history of art. In them, it is as if the visual plane, the surface, returns to the epoch before the invention of a smooth surface, when images were engraved on cliffs and on cave walls, as well as combining different times and spaces. Such are the “Beauty Will Save the World (Self-Portrait)” [trans. (from Rus.) Krasota spaset Mir (Avtoportret)], (1987), “A Large Landscape with a Red Bear” [trans. (from Rus.) Peyzazh s krasnim medvedem], (1987), “The Red Bear” [trans. (from Rus.) Krasniy Medved’], (1987), “Don’t Trust the Deer” [trans. (from Rus.) Ne ver’te oleniu], (1988), “And at Night, They Fly” [trans. (from Rus.) A po Nocham oni Letaut], (1988). Almost all these canvases are larger than the works of the preceding decades. This was the impact of the perestroika boom on the demand of Soviet contemporary art both inside the country and outside to create large format paintings. The triptychs from the series, “One of the Ways, Leading to the Sky” [trans. (from Rus.) Odin iz putey, veduschih na nebo] (1989), turn to several traditions simultaneously: from Neolithic painting, to painting of the Middle Ages (they are tripartite). The artist herself, or her partner and coauthor, are found in the central parts. In one composition, she stands as an observer, a researcher — “Himmelveg.” In another, she appears as a participant of one of her own actions, when the artists along with their neighbours, painted benches, trash cans and fences near an apartment high-rise in which they lived with bronze paint, — a “Demonstration of the method” (painting — is simply the application of paint on surfaces and objects). Painted-over and glued into paintings, photographs, poster fragments and magazine cut-outs appear in several works of the late 80s — “Acquaintances and Family Members” [trans. (from Rus.) Znakomie i Rodstvenniki], (1988), “An Exaltation of the National Idea” [trans. (from Rus.) Exaltatsiya natsional’noy idei] (1988), paintings of the cycle “Voyage to the Edge of Democracy,” [trans. (from Rus.) Puteshestviya na Kray Demokratii], (1989-1990). The last cycle is distinct from Abalakova’s other works by some painterly ecstasy, comparable to the one that existed in abstract expressionism. Here, the artist deviates from her usual strictness. In painting of the late 80s, near (or more accurately — parallel) to what, in the Germany that was then, was called neo-expressionism, and in Italy, trans-avant-garde — black, white, crimson surfaces, grey velour and white lines, — the artist reaches a level of mastery and calligraphic refinement. And Natalia Abalakova’s calligraphy is impeccable. Evidence for this exists in “An Imitation of an Arabic Inscription” [trans. (from Rus.) Imitatsiya arabskoy nadpisi], (1969) and a copy of an Eastern miniature, annotated with Arabic poems. The artist learned Eastern calligraphy under the guidance of an Uzbek calligraphy teacher. Colouristic decisions in the “Imitations” — medium cadmium yellow on green chrome and a whitened cadmium blue on sap green — should have been ascribed to the contrast of light, shade, or more accurately tone, if in the national artistic tradition, tone was not understood simply as the brightness of paint. It is a pity that painting is already a thing of the past in Natalia Abalakova’s art.

¹ [trans: “The stimuli, and not yet the reasons for things, attract [the child’s] attention. This is, therefore, the time when we should methodically direct the sense stimuli, in such a way that the sensations which he receives shall develop in a rational way. This sense training will prepare the ordered foundation upon which he may build up a clear and strong mentality.” (The Montessori Method, 216)]

² Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* Translated from French by S.I. Zenkina. Moscow: Institut Experimental’noy Psihologii [trans. (from Rus.) “Institute of Experimental Psychology”]; Saint Petersburg: Aleteya, 1998. Pp. 38

³ (Ibid. Pp. 211, 212)

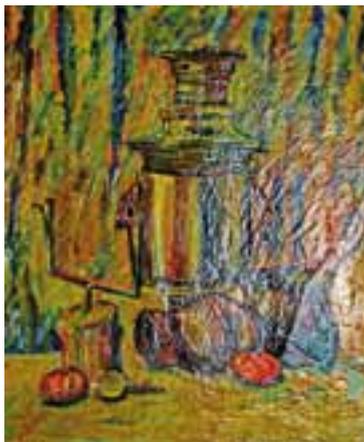
⁴ Itten, I. *The Art of Paint*. Moscow: D. Aronov, 2001. Pp 21–24

NATALIA
ABALAKOVA

PAINTING



Still life with Bird and Red Wineglass
1976. Oil on canvas. 17 x 14.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with a Samovar
1977. 44 x 36. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Bird
1976. Oil on Canvas. 17 x 24.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with a Bottle
1977. 47 x 40. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Orange Landscape
1976. 36 x 44. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Two Pots
1977. 50 x 33. Oil on cardboard. Artist's property, Moscow



Large Milk Churn
1976. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



Composition
1977. 34 x 34. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Landscape
1977. 42 x 57. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Landscape with a River
1977. Oil on cardboard.
Artist's property, Moscow



Landscape with barrels and containers (Blue landscape)
1978. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



Landscape with barrels and containers (Olive landscape)
1978. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Flowers in a Pot
1977. 53 x 35. Oil on cardboard. Artist's property, Moscow



Standing barrel
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Sunflowers
1977. 56 x 40. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Flowers in a Coffee-Pot
1977. 65 x 47. Oil on canvas.
Artist's property, Moscow



Barrel
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow



Still life with Two Fish and a Turtle
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg



Ravine with Piles
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Double Landscape
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Landscape with Piles and Containers
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Building Yard
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Scene with a White Milk churn
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Lying Milk Churn
1980. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



Dump
1979. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Artist's property, Moscow



Scene with twelve milk churns
1979. Oil on canvas. 100 x 120.
Artist's property, Moscow



**Beauty Will Save the World
(Self-Portrait)**
1987. Mixed media on canvas.
150 x 150. Artist's property,
Moscow



Landscape with a Red Bear
1987. Oil on canvas. 100 x 200.
Artist's property, Moscow



**Landscape with Red Bear
and Barrels**
1987. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



**Landscape with Mount Fuji
and Masks**
1987. Oil on canvas. 126 x 94.
Artist's property, Moscow



Don't Trust the Deer!
1988. Oil on canvas. 110 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow



And at night, They Fly
1988. Oil on canvas. 110 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow



Himmelweg.
**From "One of the Ways
Leading to Heaven" series**
1988. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
150 x 130, 150 x 200,
150 x 130. Artist's property,
Moscow



**Demonstration
of the Method.**
**From "One of the Ways
Leading to Heaven" series**
1988. Triptych.
Oil on canvas. 150 x 130,
150 x 200, 150 x 130. Artist's
property, Moscow



Stop Before It's Too Late!
**From "One of the Ways
Leading to Heaven" series**
1988. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
150 x 130, 150 x 200, 150
x 130. Artist's property,
Moscow



**Acquaintances
and Relatives**
1988. Mixed media on canvas.
200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x
150 each). Artist's property,
Moscow

Formula of Malevich

1988. 100 x 90. Oil on canvas.
Collection of Leticia Sestari,
Caracas, Venezuela



My Forefathers Used to Keep Hunting Falcons a Thousand Years before Christmas.

From "One of the Ways Leading to Heaven" series.

1988. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
150 x 150, 150 x 200,
150 x 150. Artist's property,
Moscow



Seeder

1989. Triptych. 150 x 440
(Landscape with a Structure, 150 x 120, Seeder, 150 x 200, Snakes, 150 x 120). Oil on canvas. Artist's property, Moscow



Exaltation of the National Idea

Triptych from One of the Ways Leading to Heaven series.
1989. 200 x 70, 200 x 15, 200 x 70.
Artist's property, Moscow



Tree

1990. Oil on canvas. 200 x 180.
Artist's property, Moscow





Ave, Eva. Triptych
 1987-1990. Oil on canvas.
 150 x 130, 150 x 200,
 150 x 130. To be installed with
 Totems by Eva Zhigalova:
 three cardboard pipes (h 70,
 ø 10; h 104, ø 10; h 70, ø 10),
 gouache, 1987–1990. Artist's
 property, Moscow



Trip to the End of Democracy (Russia)
 1990. Mixed media on canvas.
 200 x 300 (two parts,
 200 x 150 each).
 Artist's property,
 Moscow



Trip to the End of Democracy 2 (China)
 1990. Mixed media on canvas.
 200 x 300 (two parts,
 200 x 150 each).
 Artist's property,
 Moscow



Trip to the End of Democracy 3 (I Like You, Bobby) (America)
 1990. Mixed media on canvas.
 200 x 300 (two parts,
 200 x 150 each).
 Artist's property,
 Moscow



Van Gogh's Ear (Sunflowers)
 1991. Oil on canvas. 200 x 200.
 Artist's property, Moscow

Water in Which You Can't Step Twice

1991. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
200 x 150, 150 x 200, 200 x 150. Artist's property, Moscow



On the Other Side of Democracy

1991. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
200 x 200, 200 x 400, 200 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow



Don't Forget to Turn Off!

1995. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
200 x 150, 200 x 150, 200 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow



FROM EPOCH TO EPOCH: THE ARTISTIC REVOLU TIONARY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANG ING TIMES

Vladimir Salnikov

Anatoly Zhigalov and Natalia Abalakova are amongst those who created contemporary art in Russia. If one is to speak directly about Anatoly Zhigalov, then he stood at its foundation, in the fullest meaning of the word. The artist's creativity encompasses more than a few epochs of artistic life and history of the country. Upon careful examination, the fruitfulness and comprehensiveness of Zhigalov's creativity, and subsequently, of the TOTART creative union, is astounding. If one is to add to this the artists' fierce imagination with which the majority of their creations were created, their actions, beginnings and descriptions, then it seems that what this pair had invented, overlaps the creativity of the majority of those, who in the 1970s and later on, describe and described themselves as conceptualists, but who held on to a singular approach. And although the Totartists worked and work in various media, preferring either one, or another, or all combined — drawings, painting, wider still — the painting, in one form or another, always remains the most important medium of expression for them. Painting, for example, even in the form of covering walls in a uniform colour. And the drawing — a sketch of conceived objects and sights — remains if not the main medium of fixating thought and impression, then at least not the last, competing with the word. This was not solely their focus during the beginning of their artistic activities, as was natural for artists of that generation, and not solely until the appearance of Moscow conceptualism, but at the time of maturity, as well. Maturity could be considered the conceptualist period, as well as the creative union connected to it, TOTART. However, the origins of the drawing-painting creativity of the coauthors are different. I must warn, that in this essay, I will not touch hermeneutics on principle, remaining in the boundaries of traditional art studies and the boundaries outlined by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's initiative for a new epistemology.¹ The end of the 1950s, according to Anatoly, was an epoch of an existential reading of one's own fate. In search for one's calling, the young artist² begins from works on paper, making drawings and watercolours of the surrealist type, and turning to the automatic letter³. It is thought that in the process of writing an automatic letter, one's innermost secrets are revealed. And in post-Stalinist USSR, suddenly replacing concealment, silence and unsubjectivity, the times of self-discovery, frankness, confessions of the "Thaw" (in some respects analogous to psychoanalytic confessions), and "confessional prose" of the Unost' journal [trans. (from Rus.)

“Youth”] arrived.⁴ In this line-up — fairly accepted in the literary and visual art milieu of the Thaw — the automatic letter seems to be the most radical form of expression of subjectivity. It should be stated that Anatoly practiced this method in parallel with being a poet. And this method is characteristic of the so-called New York school approach, i.e. Abstract expressionism, basing itself primarily on the experience of a pre-war European modernism; on the experience of non-figurative surrealism, often resting — at least in theory — on psychoanalysis, and in part, on the automatic letter, and other closely related tendencies, including the experiences of Klee, Miró, Arp. All these features were introduced to the United States by artist-emigrants before and during the Second World War. “On A. Zhigalov’s canvases strange creatures appeared; a weave of threads and nails, flowing forms and spiky, thin, “fence-like” constructions. Cadmium, Strontium yellow and emerald green were the dominant colours of the palette during the early period. On hundreds of sheets, jumbling composition of rhymes, attempts at rhymes and lecture notes, the sketches would blacken, redden or become blue, compositions and drawings: impression and overlay, silhouettes — reflections of unbelievable worlds of reveries.”⁵

Abstract expressionism and its derivative in the 1950s and early 60s were the main direction in art reaching far beyond United States’ territory: from France and Germany to Poland and Yugoslavia. Contemporary art was created in the 1950s precisely on the foundation of abstract expressionism, with a brief glance at the avant-garde. On this backdrop, it is easy to see the time and place that occupy, at first glance, humble drawing and painting efforts of a young artist, happening parallel to what other Moscow and Leningrad artists with whom Zhigalov was socializing, were doing. The artist worked in the vein of an international tendency outlined in the US, obviously at the peak of the post-war cultural influence of the USSR, a victorious country. Tailored to the low taste of the masses, socialist realism swayed Europeans towards the idea that Lenin, and after him, other followers of Soviet Marxism called folk- and after Stalin, also, nationalist art. If the latter was created in counterpoint to the cosmopolitan, rootlessly cosmopolitan, as the Soviet ideologues of the first half of the 1950s expressed, then the Western cultural engineers of the epoch of the Cold War oriented themselves towards a common instinct and a common feeling of solidarity between Westerly and European intelligentsia, as well as towards the certainty that their Western values were far superior above any other. These values were precisely what Soviet anti-Western propaganda called obsequiousness towards the West, against

¹ Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. *The Production of Presence. What Meaning Cannot Convey / Translation from English, S. Zenkina.* Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006.

² The artist explains his career choice in favour of poetry and visual art as his unwillingness to live in the average everydayness of Soviet life, the alternative for which could have been a life of a revolutionary, which the young man has chosen in the end — the life of a poetical and artistic revolutionary.

³ The technique of an automatic letter derives from a famous procedure in Freud’s psychoanalysis, when a ritual of automatic speech (psychically automatic) controlled as little as possible by consciousness, is imposed on the patient, during which the patient shakes up unconscious desires and traumas, which are not weighed down by social morals and are liberated from the side of the repressed.

⁴ This is how the artist himself speaks of this time: “... The main idea of the 60s—is self expression... as long as it is not the official one, cultivated by the System...”

⁵ Alexander Babulevich. *APOKRIF. O tvorchestve Anatoliya Zhigalova.* [trans. (from Rus.) “APOCRYPHA. Of Anatoly Zhigalov’s Art.”] <http://conceptualism.letov.ru/Babulevich-TOTART.html>

which the mighty and infamous Russian and Soviet chauvinism stood guard. In the subordinate countries of Eastern Europe, for example in East Germany, Soviet consultants recommended leaning towards the German national tradition, shocking the local, antifascist intelligentsia, as well as Johannes R. Becher, GDR's cultural minister, and the author of the GDR hymn. In an essay dedicated to the exhibition by Abalakova and Zhigalov in Edinburgh, art theorist Hilary Robinson⁶ quotes an essay of an English poet and critic, a renegade of the communist movement, the ideologue of the cultural war against the USSR, Stephen Spender⁷ in "New York Times Magazine" (April 25, 1948) written under the heading, "We can win the battle for Europe's sanity." It states,⁸ "The American freedom of expression and its main achievements carry an authenticity which will allow to attract the most lively European minds today. That, which cannot be achieved today through propaganda and the political baton, could be achieved by demonstrating to Europeans accomplishments made by the American civilization in education and culture."⁹

This concerns the global context. But in official Soviet art, entirely different processes were unfolding. In the post-War period in the West, prevailing after the decline of the avant-garde, i.e. with the conclusion of the First World War, neoclassicism in various forms, including socialist realism and the official art of Nazi German and fascist Italy,¹⁰ were evaluated as totalitarian, hostile to democracy.¹¹ However, in the USSR, in the last years of Stalin's life, the art of national "realism" was stubbornly implemented in the most wretched and provincial forms of the nineteenth century, and with his death, a rebirth of pre-war Soviet neoclassicism, the main form of national modernism between the end of the Civil war and the introduction of socialist-realism was taking place. The majority of members in the Union of Artists, driven away by several monopolizing state orders by the bosses, were apolitical and never understood either what socialist realism was, nor why it was required, and thus, because of the democratization of the Union of Artists after 1953, leaders of pre-war modernism along with their supporters happened to be in positions of authority. At some point, they even prevailed over the old guard of officialdom, having accumulated largely national, Russian, rather than socialist, features during the war.¹² However, in official art, the process of rehabilitation of pre-socialist-realist modernism did not go any further. At some moment, even these imitators of pre-war modernism succumbed to an attack of the reactionary part of officialdom, the heirs of late *Peredvizhnichestvo* [trans. a central, progressive movement in Russian fine arts in the latter half of the nineteenth century].¹³

Returning to the socio-political context of Anatoly Zhigalov's art, it should be noted that the automatic letter does not remain the principal or unchanging approach in the artist's applied creativity, but becomes at some level, the base, and in one way or another, undergoes variations and enrichments. Moscow conceptualism, for which Anatoly Zhigalov is one of the founders and pillars, although not its central support, is rooted in Moscow surrealism of the 60s, accompanied by dada tendencies. The artist represents a branch, which did not grow out of the contemplative paintings by Magritte, akin to Kabakov and his followers, but from a deeper calculation, even when he builds computer-like word and visual sequences. And all this, with the ever-present tendency of the artist towards rationalization, in the psychoanalytical meaning of the word and towards analysis and epistemology, determined, possibly by his education in philology [trans.: comparative/historical linguistics]. It could be said that the true origins of inspiration, that godly madness about which writes Plato, were not shut to him.

Drawing and painting in Zhigalov's art are as indivisible as in the art of other big masters, for example, Picasso. Moreover, the majority of his works are on paper. In that sense, Zhigalov breaks out of the official Soviet tendency to divide art into mediums, and to put impassable walls between them, purely based on demands of the workshop, the manufacturing sector, or the market.¹⁴ Here appears not only his classicism, but also his conceptualism, for which the form of expression is often only a headnote, without any fundamental meaning.

The artist is extremely sensitive to the material, and easily manipulates various techniques like ink — pen and brush, coloured pencils, markers, not to mention watercolours and oils. Using various colours of copy paper used in typewriters, is one of his favourite techniques, with which he makes paintings on paper, impressive in their suggestiveness. Out of this lightness of handling material, his 1960 paintings made of nitrocellulose paint on canvas board and cardboard were born. In the search for complex and chance artistic and meaningful effects, the artist set the painted surface on fire, moreover, he did this almost simultaneously with similar experiments in Western art, amongst which there were trials with fire by Yves Klein, and the famous cuts on canvases by Lucio Fontana¹⁵. In the performances for the "Gold Series," [trans. (from Rus.) *Zolotaya Seriya*] the TOTART companionship also touches, among other things, the problematic of painting in the avant-garde, developed during suprematism, and even more evident with the constructivist Rodchenko, which was subsequently lost. This is the assertion of colour as the basis of painting

as a medium, in contrast to “colour,” which cultivates the imitators of Russian realism and impressionism under the flag of the myth of colourism¹⁶. The material with which the painter operates is paint; precisely paint. That is why, in their essays, such theorists of painting as Malevich and Lubov Popova do not speak about colour; red or green, but about pigments — Strontium yellow, krapplack... The theory and pedagogy of Soviet imitation realism and academism operates on uncertain definitions of colour. And colour, as it is known — is light of a particular wavelength or the projection of that wavelength on the retina of the eye, transformed by the brain into sensation.¹⁷ In the first action of the “Gold Series,” one of the objects of the action, a metal letter, is painted with “gold” (bronze) paint. In the action “16 positions of self-identification” [trans. (from Rus.) 16 pozitsiy samootozhdestvleniya], the artists apply their experience of liberating paint — they paint in “gold” and red. During the “Gold Sunday Volunteer-Work” [trans. (from Rus.) Zolotoy voskresnik] the artists apply bronze paint to benches, garbage cans, fences around their own apartment building, moreover, they do so with the help of volunteers, other apartment dwellers. In Zhigalov’s drawings and paintings of the last few decades, certain primordial signs of various origins are becoming increasingly more meaningful. Among these, there is a very important sign for the artist — the trace of the hand, the palm. This sign is known in archaic art and in the art of traditional peoples. His modification — the print of a footstep. This is the sign of the presence of holy or religious authority in Jainism and Buddhism, but even in Christianity (Christ’s footprints on the Mount of Olives and on the Appian Way). Another compilation of signs are geometric figures, which are just as originary and fundamental for civilization as a smooth surface. Thus, if one is to apply psychoanalytic analogies, then the artist begins with the individual and arrives at the collective, the communal. A youthful egocentrism is forged into maturity and wisdom of a husband. And as José Clemente Orozco had said, painting — is an activity for mature adults.

Possibly, with this, I should conclude my essay.

- ⁶ ["http://www.cmu.edu/cas/people/robinson_hilary.html,"](http://www.cmu.edu/cas/people/robinson_hilary.html)
["http://www.linkedin.com/pub/dir/Hilary/Robinson"](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/dir/Hilary/Robinson)
["http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=16674515&authType=name&authToken=UZPS&locale=en_US&pvs=pp&pohelp=&trk=ndir_viewmore"](http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=16674515&authType=name&authToken=UZPS&locale=en_US&pvs=pp&pohelp=&trk=ndir_viewmore)
- ⁷ Between 1953 and 1966 Stephen Spender was the chief editor of Encounter, a rationalist journal financed by the CIA (shut down in 1991, after the end of the Cold War and the U.S.'s reduction in spending on propaganda and subversive activities against the USSR and its allies).
- ⁸ Natalia Abalakova, Anatoly Zhigalov. "TotArt," Hilary Robinson "Towards Unravelling the Layers". Moscow: Ad Marginem, 1998. Pp. 15; <http://conceptualism.letov.ru/Hilary-Robinson-vskryvat-plasty.html>
- ⁹ <http://www.warholstars.org/abstractexpressionism/timeline/abstractexpressionism48.html>
- ¹⁰ Soviet neoclassicism had clear ties with the art of Mussolini's Italy; Italian art even influenced Soviet art of the 1930s, on the so-called muralist art, and particularly, on sculpture and architecture. Italy's influence on sculpture remains to this day.
- ¹¹ The first peace dove in the rehabilitation of inter-war neoclassicism was a big exhibition, "Chaos and Classicism," in New York's Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, held at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011 (01.10.2010 — 09.01.2011).
- ¹² It is comical, but even in the Soviet-dependent Eastern Germany, only recently nazi, i.e. extremely nationalistic, there were events held against cosmopolitanism, or in other words, against the Western, anglo-American cultural dissipation, against American pop music, fashion, system of education, way of life and parliamentarianism. As a result, Eastern Germans preserved traditionally Germanic characteristics to a larger extent than their Western counterparts.
- ¹³ The defeat of the socialist modernists and the sprouts of contemporary art at the "30 Years of the Moscow Union of Artists" [trans. (from Rus.) "30-letiu MOSHa"] gallery. Although it is true that subsequently, these heirs to modernists of the 1920s and 30s came out as stranglers of any dissidence, including those of naturalistic traditions and tendencies. The regeneration of a liberal and free thinker after their conquest of influence and power into a guardian preserving their own positions and dogmas, and a strangler of any dissidence is a constant Russian tradition not solely in politics.
- ¹⁴ It seems that those artists who considered themselves to be painters in the tradition of official Soviet art did not even suspect of the importance of sketching and composition, these foundational means of visual rhetoric, and lived by the legends of the hegemony of colour, ascending not only towards impressionism, but to Peredvizhnichestvo [Late 19th century progressive style of Russian art]. As a result, in contrast to global practices, among painters as well as art scholars and museum employees, we have a single painting technique, of oil on canvas, and all the other works are considered graphic—any work on paper, but not only drawing; painting as well: watercolors, gouache, pastels, colouring pencils, and even tempera (acrylic, in our times).
- ¹⁵ This is how Alexander Babulevich, the artist's companion, describes these experiences: "We read the "One and a Half-Eyed Archer" and would often leave to the Pokrovsko-Streshnevo forest-park that bordered our homes, where we would "smear" lacquer on the cardboard, combining lacquers with the "structure" of the park, consisting of old needles, sand, branches and pine cones. All this ended after the burning of the paintings: the flammable surface on the lacquer finish would enflame, the paint would undulate, it would charr, bubble, pop and bake, creating unpredictable combinations, as well as the originals, if the original composition was preserved. Alexander Babulevich. "APOCRYPHA. Of Anatoly Zhigalov's Art" [trans. (from Rus.) APOKRIF. O tvorchestve Anatoliya Zhigalova.] <http://conceptualism.letov.ru/Babulevich-TOTART.html>
- ¹⁶ The misunderstanding of the key problem of painting, characteristic of the Russian tradition at the end of the avant-garde, resulted in the title of a famous book by Johannes Itten, *Kunst der Farbe*—the Art of Paint—to be translated into Russian as the "Art of Colour." It is not even worth mentioning the mistaken translation of the word "paint" with the word "colour" in the text itself. Johannes Itten: *The Art of Colour* / Translation from German: Moscow: D. Aronov, 2000.
- ¹⁷ The impressionists' achievement was that they tried to remove the mechanism of transforming immediate feelings received by the retina into a colour of objects, thus, lowering the practical aspect of seeing, and strengthening their disinterested contemplativeness, the same object, the same thing, about the production of which Gumbrecht writes.

ANATOLY
ZHIGALOV

PAINTING



Composition with a Tree and a Shadow
1957. Oil on primed cardboard. 33 x 23.5.
Artist's property, Moscow



Blue and Red Angels
1959-60. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 50 x 35. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with Calligraphy
1959. Oil on primed cardboard.
26.5 x 30.5. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a White Figure
1960. Nitrocellulose enamel on fiberboard.
100 x 53.5. Artist's property, Moscow



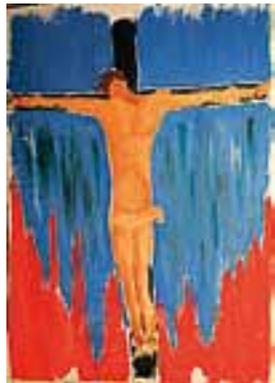
Figures
1959. Oil on cardboard. 60 x 50.
Artist's property, Moscow



Red Desert.
Three Blue Figures against Red Dunes
1960. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 50 x 70. Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with a Bottle and a Jar of Flowers
1959. Oil on primed cardboard. 34.5 x 24.
Artist's property, Moscow



Crucifixion
1960(?). Oil on primed cardboard. 50 x 35.
Artist's property, Moscow



Red Snail
1959. Oil on primed cardboard. 33 x 48.
Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with Fire
1960. (From Fiery Works cycle.) Nitrocellulose enamel and ground on primed cardboard, fire. 40 x 33. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition on a Board with Nails.
1961. Nitrocellulose enamel and nails on wood. 12 x 20. Collection of Alexander Babulevich



Red Village with a Female Figure
1961. Oil on primed cardboard. 40 x 33. Artist's property, Moscow



Portrait of Granny Nyunya.
1961. Oil on plywood. 47 x 47. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition.
1961. Hardboard, nitroenamels. 123 x 41.5. (On the inverse side a caption written in nitroenamel: 1975 — the year of A. Zhigalov's move to a new apartment, when the painting was gifted to Alexander Babulevich). Collection of Alexander Babulevich



Hands and Wall
1961 (?). Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 35 x 25. Artist's property, Moscow

Portrait of Mother at the Kitchen Sink
1961. Oil on fiberboard. C. 100 x 100. Location unknown

Composition
1961. Nitrocellulose enamel on fiberboard. 123,5 x 59,5. Artist's property, Moscow



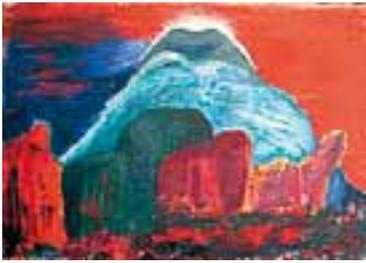
Angel of Death
1962. Triptych. Left part. Oil on fiberboard. 60.5 x 32.5. Central part. Oil on fiberboard. 60.5 x 42. Right part (lost). Oil on fiberboard. 60.5 x 32.5. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with Oval Upper Left Part
1963. Left part of a triptych (two other parts are lost). Oil on plywood. 68 x 22. Artist's property, Moscow

Composition with the Frame of a Barge. Oval
1963. Oil on fiberboard. 67.5 x 33. Artist's property, Moscow





Landscape with Red Mountain
1963. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 25 x 35. Artist's property, Moscow



Clock
1964. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 49 x 69. Artist's property, Moscow



Head of a Girl
1963 (?). Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard. 35 x 25. On the back there is a man's head. Artist's property, Moscow



Girl's Head and a Fish
1965 (?). Oil on fiberboard. 36 x 28. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition
1963. Oil on hardboard. 128 x 41. Artist's property, Moscow



Dancing
1965. Oil on fiberboard. 45 x 65. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition
1963. Oil on hardboard. 128 x 41. Artist's property, Moscow



Still Life with Books and Bottles
1965. Oil on primed cardboard. 50 x 70. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with red and two lines
1963. Oil on cardboard. 72 x 48. Artist's property, Moscow



A Book, a Man's Figure, and a Female Nude
1965. Oil on primed cardboard. 50 x 870. Artist's property, Moscow



Forest
1965. Oil on primed cardboard. 50 x 70. Artist's property, Moscow



Female Nude (Girl and Pan)
1966. Oil on primed cardboard. 70 x 50. Artist's property, Moscow



Female Nude with a Drapery
1966 (?). Oil on primed cardboard. 50 x 70. Artist's property, Moscow



Untitled Composition
1969. Mixed media on canvas. 59 x 44. Artist's property, Moscow



Brown Composition
1969. Oil on canvas. 71 x 49. Artist's property, Moscow



Green Egg
1969. Oil on fiberboard. 50 x 63. Artist's property, Moscow



Crucifixion
1969. Oil on fiberboard. 64 x 54. Artist's property, Moscow



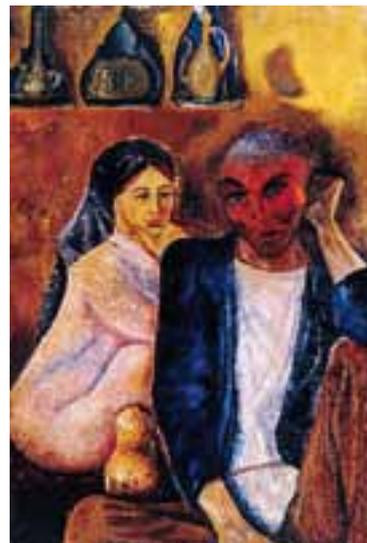
Composition with a spring
1969. Oil on canvas. Collection of Alexander Glezer, Moscow



Composition with yellow
1969. Oil on canvas. Collection of Alexander Glezer, Moscow



Composition
1969. Oil on hardboard. Collection of Alexander Glezer, Moscow



Asian Composition (Natalia)
1969. Oil on canvas. 99 x 66. Artist's property, Moscow



Dance
1969. Oil on fiberboard.
54 x 63,5. Artist's property,
Moscow



Dedication to E. Zelenin
1975. Tempera on canvas.
50 x 70. Artist's property,
Moscow



Image 1
1975. Canvas, sand, tempera.
75 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



Image 2
1975. Oil & sand on canvas.
70 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



**Dawn,
a Village and Painting**
1975. Oil & sand on canvas.
100 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



**Composition
with a Triangle and Arrow**
1975. Oil & sand on canvas.
75 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



**Composition with Geomet-
ric Forms and Large Sand**
1975. Oil & sand on canvas.
100 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



Pink Structure
1975. Oil on paper. 80 x 62.
Artist's property, Moscow



AIM
1975. Oil & sand on canvas.
100 x 80. Artist's property,
Moscow



Moving Forms
1976. Oil and sand on can-
vas. 80 x 100. Artist's property,
Moscow



Composition with a Triangle and Two Lines

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 100 x 80. Artist's property, Moscow



Formula of a Russian Landscape

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 90 x 125. Artist's property, Moscow



Forms Floating in Space

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 80 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Grey Rhombus and Frame

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 100 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Two Lines

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 80 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Grey Square

1977. Oil on canvas. 50 x 66. National Centre of Contemporary Arts, Moscow



Composition with Rotating Geometric Forms

1976. Oil and sand on canvas. 80 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Circle in a Square

1977. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60. Artist's property, Moscow



White Composition

1976. Oil and sand on canvas. Collection of Mikhail and Galina Krasilin, Moscow



Rotation (Composition with an Egg)

1977. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a White Square and Cross

1976. Oil & sand on canvas. 100 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow

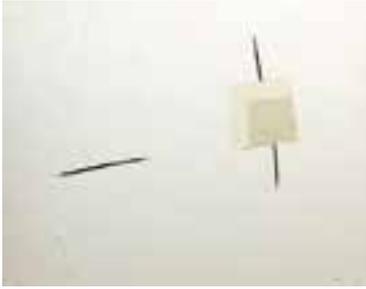


Composition with an Egg and a Target

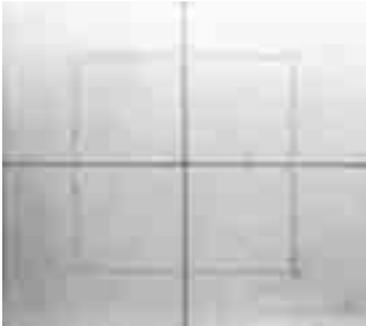
1977. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Ball
1977. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80.
Artist's property, Moscow



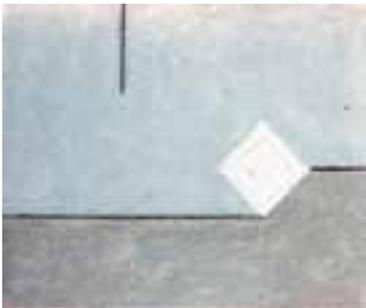
The balance
1978. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



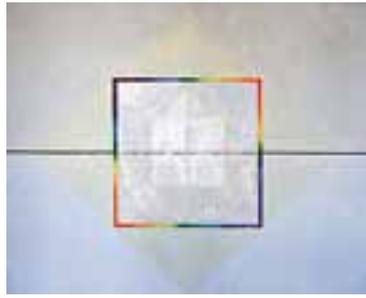
Analytical Construction. Composition with a Cross and a Square Frame, Where Spectral Colours Are Described Verbally
1978. Oil and ink on canvas. 90 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a boat
1978. Oil & sand on canvas. 50 x 60. Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Square and a Rhombus
1978. Oil on canvas. 50 x 60.
Unknown owner, Prague



Composition with a Cross and a Frame
1978. Oil on canvas. 80 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



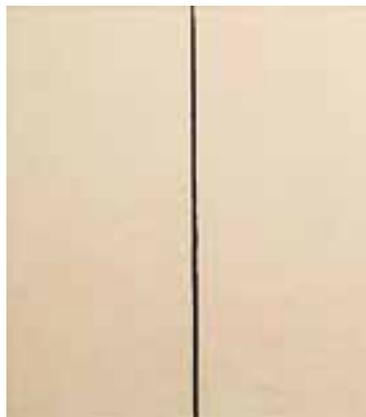
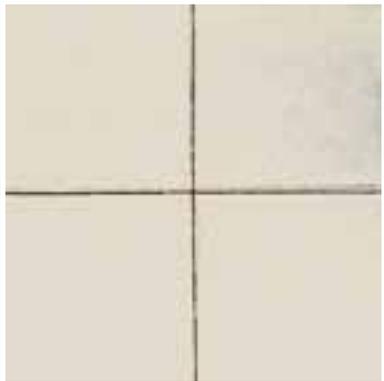
Composition with Spectral and Tonal Frames
1978. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



Composition with a Grey Square
1978. Oil & sand on canvas. 60 x 50. Artist's property, Moscow

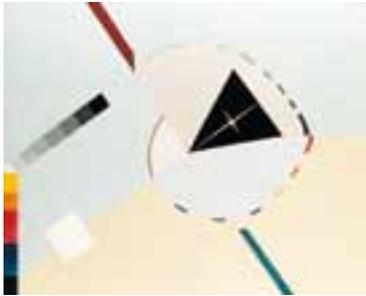
White Cross. Black Cross
1978. Diptych-opposition. Oil & sand on canvas. 100 x 200 (each part 100 x 100).
Collection of Petr Novitskoy, Poland

Black Vertical Line. White Vertical Line Diptych-opposition
1978. Oil on canvas. 100 x 180 (each part 100 x 90). State Tretyakov Gallery

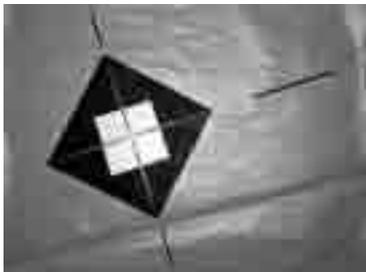




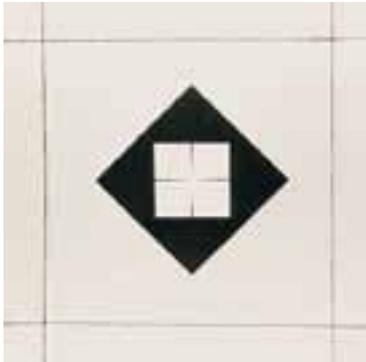
Composition with a Cut-out Square (Anti-square 1, Zero square)
1978. Oil on canvas. 60 x 50.
Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg



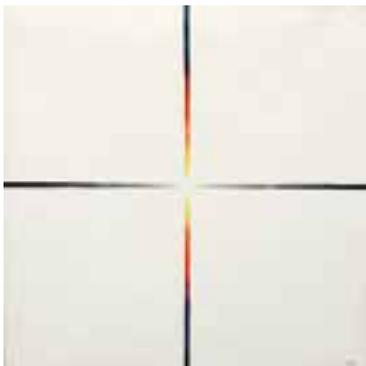
Composition with a Spectral Scale and a Triangle
1979. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80.
Artist's property, Moscow



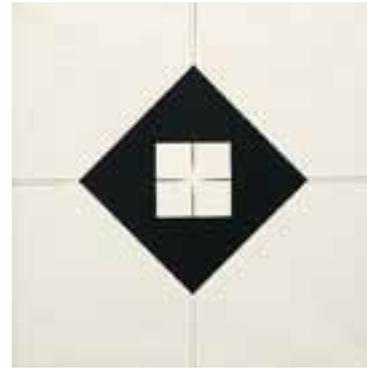
Composition with a Square and False Slashes
1979. Oil on canvas. 70 x 80.
Artist's property, Moscow



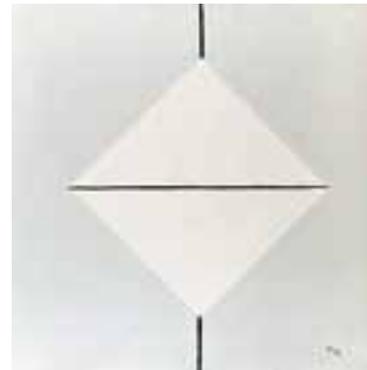
Spectral Cross and Square
1979. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



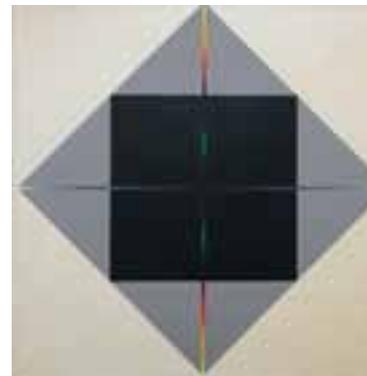
Spectral Cross
1979. Canvas, sand, water-based whitewash, oil.
100 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



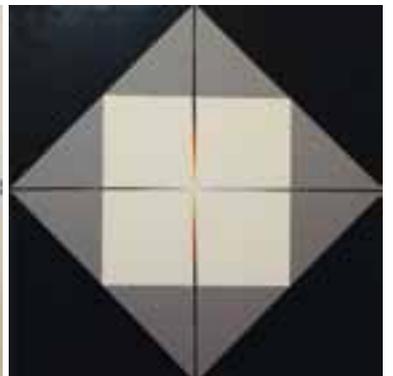
Spectral Cross in a Black Rhombus
1979. Oil on canvas. 100 x 100.
Artist's property, Moscow



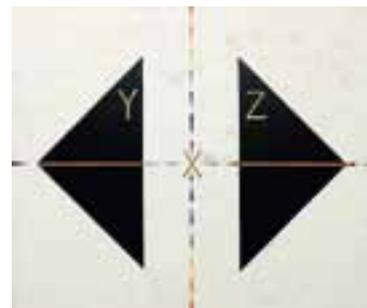
Composition with a Rotating rhombus
1979. Oil & sand on canvas.
100 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



White light - Black light
1979. Diptych-opposition.
Oil on canvas. Each part
150 x 150. Artist's property, Moscow



XYZ
1980. Oil on canvas, printer's ink.
100 x 120. Artist's property, Moscow



Explorations of the Square. Triptych Anti-square
1977. Oil & sand on canvas. 100 x 100.

The Golden Middle, or the Contemplation of the Square Five Years Later
1981. Oil on canvas, printer's ink, bronze paint. 100 x 120.

Black Square
1981. Canvas, water-based whitewash, tempera, stencil. 100 x 120.
Artist's property, Moscow





Art Belongs. Installation
 1982. Oil on canvas. 150 x 150.
 2. Slogan. Gouache on fabric. 70 x 300.
 The canvas was cut into pieces like a puzzle and sent to New York through Tadd Bludo, together with the slogan. It was sent to Norton and Nance Dodge's Center of Russian Contemporary Art (CRAC) by M. and V. Tupitsyn.
 Reconstruction of 2009.
 Artist's property, Moscow



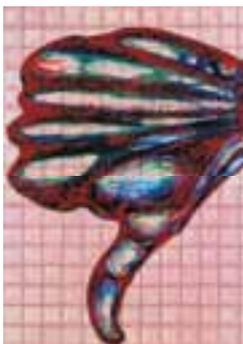
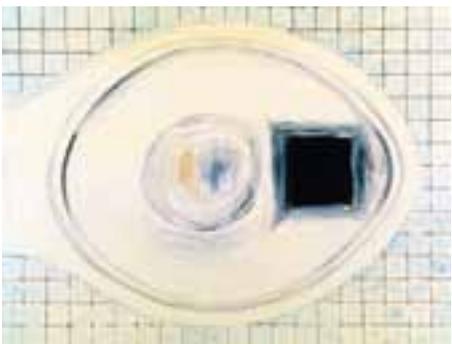
Anaconda (Mona Lisa)
 1986. Mixed media on canvas.
 100 x 120. Artist's property, Moscow



Venus, Oh!
 1986. Mixed media on canvas.
 120 x 100. Artist's property, Moscow



Axes, nexus, plexus
 1987. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each), 125 x 255 (three parts, 125 x 85 each), 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Panem et circenses!
 1987. Triptych. Oil on canvas.
 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each), 150 x 200, 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each).
 Collection of Alika Kostaki, Greece



What Do You See?
 1987. Triptych. Mixed media on canvas.
 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each), 150 x 200, 170 x 125 (two parts, 85 x 125 each).
 Collection of Alika Kostaki, Greece



Danger!
1988. Oil on canvas, mixed media. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Red Square: The Last Glance of the Retreating Geometrician
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Red Triangle
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each)



Arm-wrestling (XYZ)
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Handle with Care!
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Grid 25
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300. (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Collection of Anatoly Breiter, Israel



Golden Grid with a Little Red Square (Golden Structure 1)
1988. Mixed media on canvas. 150 x 150 (lozenge). Artist's property, Moscow



Golden Structure 1
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 75 x 55. Artist's property, Moscow



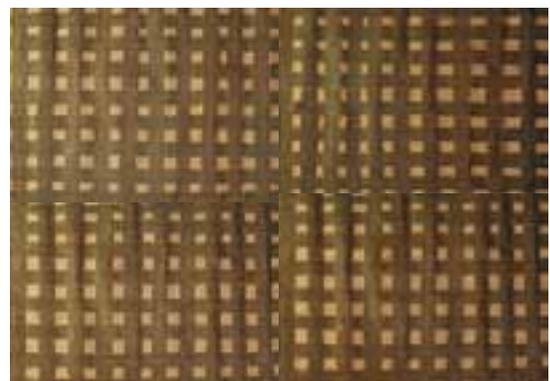
Golden Structure 2
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 75 x 55. Artist's property, Moscow



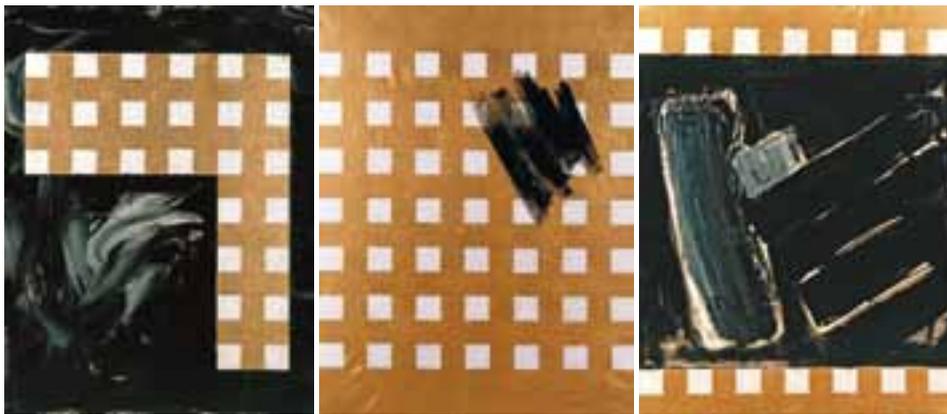
Golden Structure 3
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 75 x 55. Artist's property, Moscow



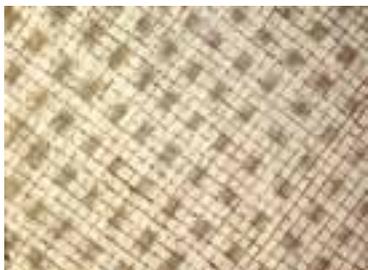
Golden Structure 4 (Vertical)
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 75 x 55. Artist's property, Moscow



Golden Grid
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 130 x 170. (65 x 85/65 x 85/65 x 85/65 x 85/65 x 85). Artist's property, Moscow



Golden and Black Grid
1988. Triptych. Mixed media on canvas. 85 x 65 each part. Artist's property, Moscow



Golden Structure
1988. Water-emulsion whitewash and bronze paint on canvas. 65 x 85. Artist's property, Moscow



Hands and Grid
1988. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300 (two parts, 200 x 150 each). Artist's property, Moscow



Hands and Grid
1988. Oil on canvas. 150 x 150. Collection of Anatoly Breiter, Israel



First Category Dietetic Eggs.
1988. Triptych. Oil and sand on canvas. 120 x 120, 120 x 150, 120 x 120. State Tretyakov Gallery



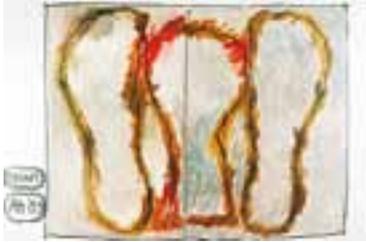
Hercules (Earth).
1989. Diptych. Oil on canvas. Upper part consists of two parts, 75 x 150 each, lower part is 150 x 200. Installation: stripe of earth under the painting c. 50 x 300; bulbs planted into the earth; multicolour ropes hang down from the left and right of the triptych's upper part, forming two heaps of "pasta" on the "garden-bed" (or eggshell instead of bulbs). Artist's property, Moscow



Axes (Red and Black)
1989. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each)



Hands of the Four Cardinal Directions
1989. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow



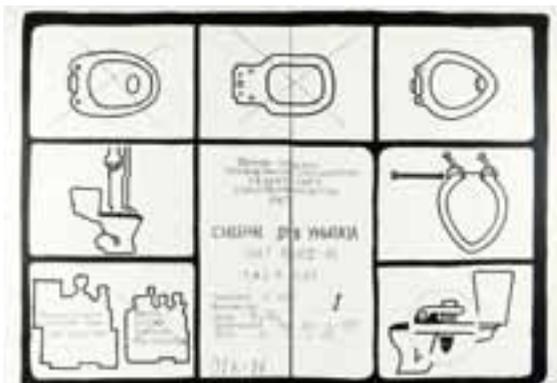
Feet and Red Fist
1989. Oil and permanent marker on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow



You Can Live in a Cotton Jacket, But You Cannot Live without Freedom
1989. Triptych. Sand, oil and permanent marker on canvas.
150 x 150, 150 x 200, 150 x 150



Up! — Fragile!
1989. Oil and sand on canvas.
200 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow



Toilet Seat
1989. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Artist's property, Moscow



Hercules (Oat Flakes)
 1990. Триптих. Oil on canvas.
 200 x 75, 200 x 150, 200 x 75.
 Artist's property, Moscow



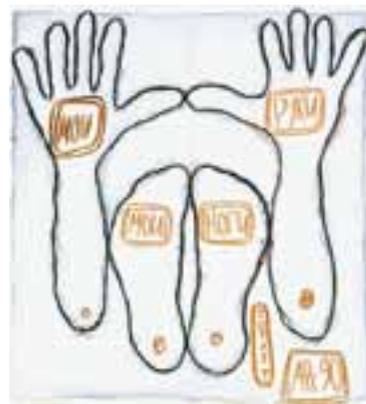
A Common Meat-Mincing Machine
 1990. Diptych. Mixed media on canvas. Upper part is 200 x 200, lower part with inscription is 75 x 200. Artist's property, Moscow



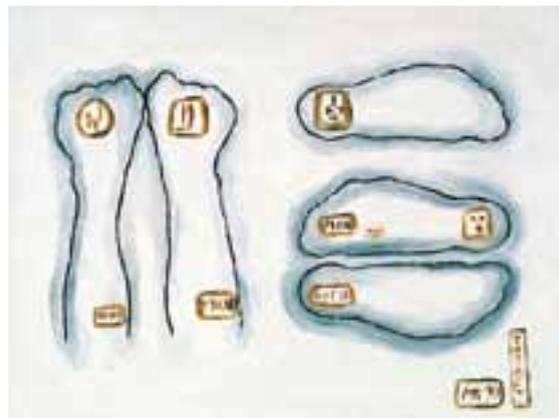
Egg Slicer
 1990. Триптих. Oil on canvas.
 150 x 45, 150 x 20, 150 x 45.
 Artist's property, Moscow



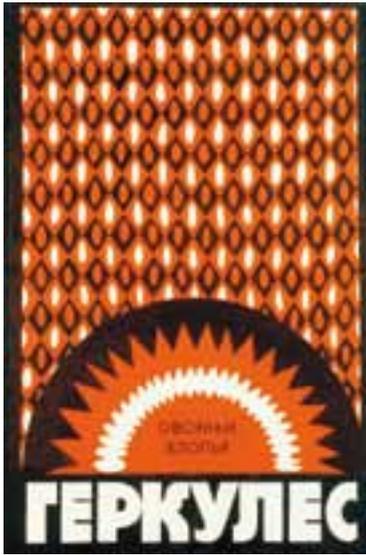
Footprint of the Last Geometrician Left Right Before Ascension
 1990. Oil and permanent marker on canvas. 180 x 200.
 Artist's property, Moscow



My Hands, My Feet — 1
 1990. Mixed media on canvas. 200 x 180. Artist's property, Moscow



My Hands, My Feet — 2
 1990. Oil on canvas. 150 x 200.
 Artist's property, Moscow



Hercules (Golden)
1991. Mixed media on canvas.
180 x 150. Artist's property,
Moscow



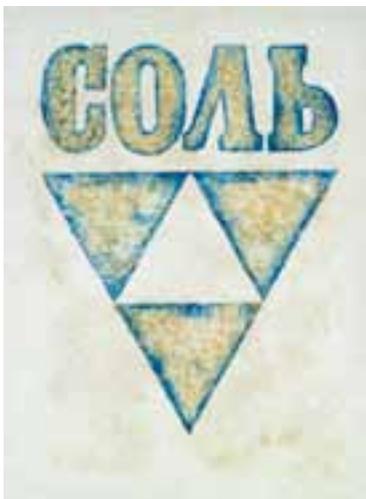
**Fast-Dissolving Sugar
Cubes**
1992. Oil on canvas. 200 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow



**Four square. Kings (Ciga-
rettes)**
1991. Oil on canvas. 200 x 180.
Artist's property, Moscow



Hercules Oatmeal
1992. Oil on canvas. 200 x 150.
Artist's property, Moscow



Salt
1991. Oil, sea salt and varnish
on canvas. 200 x 150. Artist's
property, Moscow



**The Guards of Stone Gate
Don't Sleep**
1992. Acrylic on canvas.
400 x 500. Portsmouth
Museum, UK



**The Secret of Pyramid
Builders**
1993. Oil on canvas. 200 x 300.
(two parts, 200 x 150 each).
Location unknown



**Canned Green Peas of
Marrowy Variety**
1991. Diptych. Oil on canvas.
150 x 200, 150 x 200. Artist's
property, Moscow

PERSONAL
EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 **Руки и решетки.**
Multimedia project.
ПРОЕКТ_ФАБРИКА, Moscow
- 2009 **Следы, голоса, места.**
Multimedia project.
III Moscow biennale of contemporary art.
L-Gallery, Moscow
- 2002 **«ДОМ 2».**
Multimedia project.
«Четыре колонны бдительности».
Museum of Nonconformist Art,
St. Petersburg, Russia
- 2001 **Операция «ДОМ 2».**
Multimedia project.
Zverev Centre of Contemporary Art,
Moscow
- 1999 **21 палец из жизни художников.**
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow;
“Moscow School”, Moscow
- TOTART-project.**
Graphics.
Soros Contemporary Art Centre, Moscow
- Presentation of the book
“TOTART: Russian Roulette”**
*and 5-channel video “Foucault’s Pendulum”
demonstration. Venue as above*
Graphics.
Soros Contemporary Art Centre, Moscow
- Маятник Фуко.**
5-channel video.
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow
- 1998 **Северный ветер.**
Video installations.
Art Media Centre “TV Gallery”, Moscow
- Искусство на таком холоде невысказано,
но если потерпеть немного...**
Performance/video installation.
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow

- 1997–
1998 **Потерпеть немного —
и все будет хорошо.**
Video installation.
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow
- 1997 **Потерпеть немного —
и все будет хорошо.**
Video installation.
21 Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia
- 1996 **Место художника.**
Performance/video installation.
21 Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia
- Сад улыбок.**
Video installation.
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow
- 1995 **Северный ветер.**
Performance/video installation.
21 Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia
- Nordwind.**
Performance/video installation.
Kunstraum, Wuppertal, Germany
- Natalia Abalakova
& Anatoly Zhigalov.**
Graphics.
Wuppertal, Germany
- 1994 **21 палец из жизни художников**
Installation.
21 Gallery, St. Petersburg, Russia
- 1993 **Ave, Eva (Eva Zhigalova).**
Installation.
“Laboratory,” Contemporary Art Centre,
Moscow
- Неисследимое оставляет свой след
в непредсказуемых последствиях**
Installation.
L-Gallery, Moscow
- Анатомия культуры.**
Graphic Art and Projects 1989–1993.
Velta Gallery, Moscow
- 1991 **Путешествие на край Д.**
(New Works 1990–1991).
The State Art Gallery “Na Kashirke,”
Moscow
- One-evening show.**
“Graphics Lover Club”,
Moscow
- Natalia Abalakova
and Anatoly Zhigalov 1960–1991.**
The Central Exhibition Hall «Manege»,
St. Petersburg, Russia
- 1990 **Anatoly Zhigalov.**
Personal exhibition.
NPO “Region”, Moscow
- TOTART. Natalia Abalakova
and Anatoly Zhigalov 1960–1990
(Glasgow-Moscow).**
The State Art Gallery “Na Kashirke,” Moscow
- 1989 **TOTART. Natalia Abalakova
and Anatoly Zhigalov.
Works of 1961–1989.**
“New Beginnings” Art Festival of Soviet Art.
Third Eye Gallery, Glasgow, England
- 1986 **Миф о смерти искусства
(Красная комната).**
Action/installation
Moscow United City Committee
of Graphic Artists (MUCCGA), Moscow
- 1985 **ПОЧТАРТ.**
1st exhibition of Soviet Mail-art).
Artists’ apartment, Moscow
- 1982 **Ретро 1 («Эти славные 60–70-е»).**
Performance/installation.
APTART Gallery, Moscow
- since
1978 **TOTART Projects
and performances.**

GROUP
EXHIBITIONS

2011

Dialogues.

X International Biennale of Contemporary Art.
Manege Central Exhibition Hall, St. Petersburg, Russia

**Внутренняя эмиграция
(Чемоданная выставка).**

WINZAVOD. Moscow Centre for Contemporary Art

Расширенное кино.

*XII Media Forum of the XXXIII International
Moscow Film Festival.*
Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow

Cat's Party.

Artplay, Moscow

2010

Концептуализм: здесь и там.

I South-Russia Biennale of Contemporary Art.
Rostov-on-Don, Russia (Catalogue)

Золото для народа.

Arsenal, Saratov, Russia (Catalogue)

**VIII International festival
of experimental Art.**

Manege Central Exhibition Hall,
St. Petersburg (Catalogue), Russia

Инфраструктура.

*Alternative festival of young artists "Пошел!
Куда пошел? (Go! Where do you go?)"*
Moscow

100 years of Performance.

Garage Center for Contemporary, Moscow

Žen d'Art.

*The Gender History of Art
in the Post-soviet space 1989–2009.*
Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
Moscow (Catalogue)

35 лет выставки на ВДНХ.

All-Russian Exhibition Centre;
The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

The Field of Action.

*The Moscow Conceptual School
in Context 1970s-1980s.*
The Cultural Foundation "Ekaterina", Moscow

2010–
2011

**History of Russian Video Art.
Volume III.**

Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
Moscow

2009

History of Russian Video Art.

Volume II.

Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
Moscow (Catalogue)

Russian Lettrism.

Central House of Artists, Moscow

Gold for People. Dialogues.

*IX International Biennale
of Contemporary Art.*
St. Petersburg, Russia

Единение.

International Art Project.
Narva, Estonia

America-America.

VI biennale in Shiriayevo.
Samara, Russia

Moscow. TsUM. Spatial liturgy №3.

*III Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art.
Special project.*
Moscow. (Catalogue)

Vulnerability.

*III Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art.
Special project (Natalia Abalokova)*
Museum Centre of Russian State
University for Humanities. Moscow. (Catalogue)

Kvartirnik. Apartment exhibition.

*III Moscow biennale
Of Contemporary Art. Moscow*

Sea level.

*II International Festival of Independent
Art devoted to 20-th anniversary
of Art-center "Pushkinskaia 10".*
Manege Central Exhibition Hall,
St. Petersburg, Russia (Catalogue)

Out of the City. Art in Nature.

Art of Slovakia, Czechia and Russia.
National Centre for Contemporary Arts (NCCA),
Moscow

The Artist's Self Portrait.

Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow

2008

VII International Festival of Experimental Art.

Manege Central Exhibition Hall,
St. Petersburg, Russia (Catalogue)

Выставка общества “Аспай.”

Anna Akhmatova Museum, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

Media Museum.

PROEKT_FABRIKA, Moscow. (Catalogue)

Performing the City/1960–1980s.

Städtische Kunsthalle München, Munich, Germany; Palais des Arts de Naples, Naples, Italy; Centro Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil; Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia (Catalogue)

2007

History of Russian Video Art. Volume I.

II Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special project.

Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (Catalogue)

Katatpron (Mirror view).

II Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special project.

Museum Centre of Russian State University for Humanities,
Moscow (Natalia Abalakova) (Catalogue)

Adventure of the Black Square.

The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

Варшава-Москва.

The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (Catalogue)

Word and Image.

NCCA, Moscow (Catalogue)

New gifts.

NCCA, Moscow (Catalogue)

Moscow-New York.

From the Kolodzei Art Foundation (USA) Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art. NCCA, Moscow

2006

Художник, фотограф, искусствовед.

Art Salone, Central House of Artists, Moscow

The XX Century Art.

150 Years of The State Tretyakov Gallery.
The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

Choice.

X Moscow International Forum of Art Initiatives.
“Novy Manege”, Moscow (Catalogue)

Gyumri International Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Armenia (Catalogue)

Armenia from Sea to Sea. Games of Water, Dreams and Fire.

Three-channel videoinstallation.
Yerevan, Armenia

2005

Gender Troubles.

I Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special Project.

Moscow Museum of Modern Art,
Moscow (Catalogue)

Informbureau.

I Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special Project

Apartment Exhibitions.**Yesterday and Today.**

I Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special Project

Accomplices.

Collective and interactive works in Russian Art of the 1960–2000s. I Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special Project.

The State Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow (Catalogue)

Egalitarianism.

I Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Special Project (Catalogue)

Museum Centre of Russian State University for Humanities.

Dialogues.

VII International Biennale of Contemporary Art.

Manege Central Exhibition Hall,
St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

We.

IX Moscow International Forum of Art Initiatives.

“Novy Manege,” Moscow (Catalogue)

Russian Pop-Art.

The State Tretyakov Gallery (Booklet)

III Graphics Biennale.

Kaliningrad, Russia (Catalogue)

2004

Мир войны.

Музей декоративно-прикладного искусства, Moscow

Contemporary art of the artists of Art-center "Pushkinskaia 10".

Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg, Russia (Catalogue)

Graphics Biennale.

Manege Central Exhibition Hall, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

VI International Festival of Experimental Art.

Manege Central Exhibition Hall, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

ParadiZoo.

IX Moscow International Forum of Art Initiatives.

"Novy Manege", Moscow (Catalogue)

Визуальная поэзия. Летризм.

Literary Museum, Moscow

Women's City.

Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art, Yerevan, Armenia (Catalogue)

Art Klyazma.

International Festival of Contemporary Art. New Russian Reality (Catalogue)

Urban Sculpture Festival.

Izhevsk, Russia

Авторская книга поэта и художника. Между текстом и образом.

NCCA, Moscow

Seven Sins.

Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia (Catalogue)

2003

Abstract Art.

The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (Anatoly Zhigalov)

300 years of St. Petersburg.

Museum of Nonconformist Art, St. Petersburg, Russia (Catalogue)

Reconnaissance art.

VIII Moscow International Forum of Art Initiatives.

"Novy Manege", Moscow (Catalogue)

Self Portrait.

Museum Centre of Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow (Natalia Abalakova)

2002

Female Portrait.

Museum Centre of Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow (Natalia Abalakova)

Femme Art. Women Painting in Russia XV–XX centuries.

The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (Natalia Abalakova) (Catalogue)

Child's Fears.

Zverev Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow

III Media Forum of the XXIV International Moscow Film Festival.

Moscow

Fatherland/Motherland.

VII Moscow International Forum of Art Initiatives. "Novy Manege", Moscow (Catalogue)

Traces, Voices, Places.

Videoinstallation (Roads, palaces, cities). Kiev, Ukraine; Jerusalem, Israel

2001

Amateur Photography.

Escape Gallery, Moscow
Art Media Forum. St. Petersburg

Kukart 5. Art Festival.

Tsarskoye Selo, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

Бивис и Батхед уже здесь.

Video program.
St. Petersburg

2000–
2001

Real people.

Zverev Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow

2000

Dynamic pairs.

Moscow Manege; Nizny Novgorod; The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg (Catalogue)

Art Festival.

Izhevsk, Russia

Автораритет Библио.

Zverev Centre of Contemporary Art, Moscow

Transition.

Gyumri International Biennial of Contemporary Art. Armenia; Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow (Catalogue)

Exhibition.

Tochka Gallery, Moscow

1999

Visual poetry.

Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow

Русское искусство**конца 1950 — начала 1980-х годов.***State collection of Contemporary Art.*

Central House of Artists, Moscow

Bloom's day.

Club Project OGI, Moscow

To have a little patience — and all'll be OK.

Hors-Circuit Paris-Berlin Film Festival, Paris

Афазия.

Yerevan, Armenia (Catalogue)

Closed city.*Art festival.*

Yerevan, Armenia (Catalogue)

Kukart 4.*Art Festival.*

Tsarskoye Selo (Catalogue), St. Petersburg

Live & Dead.

Escape Gallery, Moscow

1998

Русские феминистки.

Museum of Literature, Moscow (Catalogue)

The artist's and poet's book.

Nizny Novgorod, Russia (Catalogue)

Praprintium. Русский Самиздат.

Bochum, Germany (Catalogue)

Art Manege.

Moscow

1997

Кредо.

Russian Cultural Foundation.

Moscow (Catalogue)

Метаморфозы “тихой жизни”**и “мертвой природы”****(Предметная Среда. Конец XX века).**

Russian Cultural Foundation, Moscow (Catalogue)

Verbality in Russian Postmodern Art.

Budapest, Hungary (Catalogue)

About Contemporary Art.

Moscow (Catalogue)

Reconstruction of the artist**A. Blagov's last project.**

Spider & Mouse Gallery,

Moscow (Catalogue)

Kukart 3.*Art Festival.*

Tsarskoye Selo, St. Petersburg (Booklet)

Artist and his biography.

Budapest, Hungary (Catalogue)

The Best World. Secession.

Vienna, Austria (Catalogue)

World of These Eyes 2.

Chuvash State Art Museum, Cheboksary, Russia (Catalogue)

1996

Spring Exhibition.

Cité International des Arts, Paris (Anatoly Zhigalov)

Month of Photography in Moscow.

Contemporary Art Institute, Moscow

Десять лет “Клубу авангардистов” (КЛАВА).

Exhibition hall in Peresvetov pereulok, Moscow

FLUXUS: Heute, Gestern und Morgen. Geschichte ohne Grenzen.

Central House of Artists, Moscow

1995

Дух и почва 2.

Sadovniki Gallery, Moscow

The Artist and New Technologies (seminar).

Pereslavl-Zalessky, Russia

Triennale of Graphic Art.

Tokyo, Japan (Catalogue)

Inter-Kontakt-Grafika.

Prague, Czechia; Krakow, Poland (Catalogue)

Kunst im verborgenen.**Nonkonformisten Russland 1957–1995.**

Collection of contemporary art, Tsaritsyno Museum, Russia; Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen am Rhein; Documenta-Halle, Kassel; Staatliches Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, Germany (Catalogue)

1994

Бредущие сквозь тьму в полночи.*Video Art Festival.*

Moscow (Catalogue)

Майская выставка.

The Moscow Union of Artists Hall.

20, Kuznetsky Most, Moscow

Прыжок в пустоту: художник вместо произведения. Европейский и американский авангард 1910–1990.*European and American avant-garde art 1910–1990.*

Central House of Artists, Moscow

Inter-Graphic.*Triennale of Graphic Art.*

Krakow, Poland; Prague, Czechia (Catalogue)

- No! And the Conformists. Faces of Soviet Art of 1950–1980s.**
X. Dunikovsky, Królikarnia, Warsaw Branch of the National Museum, Poland; The State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (Anatoly Zhigalov)
- Бассейн Москва (Moscow pool.)**
Curator's project.
Contemporary Art Institute, Moscow (Catalogue)
- Cetinjski Biennale III.**
Cetine, Montenegro (Catalogue)
- Canal+. TOTART Video art and Mailart.**
Paris, France
- Performances festival.**
Sadovniki Gallery, Moscow
- 1993 **777 Distance Communication.**
Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, Great Britain
Kunstneres Hus, Århus, Denmark; Storm Gallery, Amsterdam;
- Galeria Nova, Bratislava, Slovakia; Reykjavik Art Museum, Iceland;**
Guelman Gallery, Moscow (Catalogue)
- Time and Place.**
Dubrovnik, Croatia (Booklet)
- 1992 **Выставка группы «Молот».**
Moscow Manege
- Diaspora.**
Central House of Artists, Moscow
- Diaspora 2.**
Central House of Artists, Moscow (Natalia Abalakova)
- Artist and Book.**
Peresvetov Lane, Moscow
- Gateway.**
European Art Festival. European Project.
Art Space Gallery. Portsmouth, Great Britain (Booklet)
- Gateway.**
Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth, Great Britain
- Артбдения (“Mens sana in corpore sano.”)**
Festival of Contemporary Art.
Smolensk, Russia
- 1991 **The 3d Meetings of Vision and Image Theatre.**
Katovize, Poland (Catalogue)
- Konfrontacje Artystyczne, Torun 91.**
Poland (Anatoly Zhigalov) (Catalogue)
- Mail-Art**
(Catalogues and booklets)
- 1990 **The 3d Art of Today.**
International Exhibition.
Budapest, Hungary (Catalogue)
- Der Weg.**
Workshop.
Bergen, Germany
- Totalitny Zona.**
Art festival.
Prague, Czechoslovakia (Catalogue)
- 1989 **Новые поступления.**
Lika Kostakis Gallery.
Athens, Greece
- 100 Artists.**
Tatiana & Natalia Kolodzei Collection.
Uzbekistan State museum, Tashkent
- Mail-Art**
(Catalogues and booklets)
- 1988 **Moscow-Paris-Moscow.**
Abalakova-Zhigalov-Secal video performance.
Paris
- Геометрия в искусстве.**
Sadovniki Gallery, Moscow (Booklet)
- Show in Hell (Part II, exhumation).**
Club of the avant-garde (KLAVA), Moscow
- Show in Bath.**
Club of the avant-garde (KLAVA), Moscow
- Labyrinth.**
Moscow Youth Club, Moscow; Warsaw, Poland; Hamburg, Germany (Catalogue)
- Festival of performances.**
Poznan, Poland

1987

The 9th common exhibition of the “Association of Experimental Fine Art” in harbour.

Leningrad, USSR

Retrospective of Moscow Artists 1957–1987.

Hermitage amateur society, Moscow

Homage á Kashak.

Chechia (Catalogue)

InterArt.

Poznan, Poland (Catalogue)

Art of Today II.*2nd International Exhibition.*

Budapest Galeria, Hungary (Catalogue)

Show In Hell (Part I. Funeral of the paintings).

Club of the avant-garde (KLAVA), Moscow (curator Anatoly Zhigalov)

1-й паролод.

Club of the avant-garde (KLAVA), Moscow

Art Festival in “Meridian” club.

Moscow

Mail-Art exhibitions.

Poland, Netherlands, USA, Germany, Switzerland etc. (Catalogues and booklets)

The 11th Common exhibition of the “Association of Experimental Fine Art.”

The Union of the Artists Hall of Russia, Leningrad, USSR

1986

“Unopened” exhibition of unofficial artists.*(The 8th common show of the “Association of Experimental Fine Art”).*

The Youth Palace, Leningrad, USSR

APTART.

New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, USA (Catalogue)

Art of Today.

Hotel Hilton, Budapest, Hungary (Catalogue)

The Nude in Contemporary Art.*One-evening exhibition and symposium.*

The Artists' Hall, Kuznetsky Most, Moscow

Primitive Art.*One-evening exhibition-symposium.*

The Artists' Hall, Kuznetsky Most, Moscow

Laboratory.*(One-day show in the frame of the XVII exhibition of young artists).*

Kuznetsky Most, Moscow

1985

Festival of Contemporary Art.

Moscow Automobile Plant's Club

1st Festival of Underground Cinematography.*(TOTART “Golden Ladder” action).*

Simona Sokhranskaya's studio, Moscow

APTART.*Washington Project for the Arts.*

Washington, USA (Catalogue)

International Experimental Art.

Young Artists' Club, Budapest, Hungary (Catalogue)

Russian Art Show.

Danceteria, New York, USA (Catalogue)

Exhibition of Soviet Artists.

City Without Walls Gallery. New York, USA (Catalogue)

One-day exhibition of graphic art.

Central House of Artists, Moscow

Mail-Art exhibitions and projects

Europe and America (Catalogues)

1984

APTART in Tribeca.

Contemporary Russian Art Center of America, New York, USA (Catalogue)

34 Salon des Jeuns Peintres.

Gran-Palais, Paris (Salon was banned by the authorities)

Le Vivant et l'Artificiel.

Avignon, France (Catalogue)

1983

Russian women artists: 1930–1982.

CRAC, Jersey City, USA (Natalia Abalakova) (Catalogue)

Come Yesterday and You'll Be First.

City without Walls: an urban artists collective Inc. Contemporary Russian Art Center of America. Newark, New Jersey, New York, USA (Catalogue)

1982–
1984**Russian Samizdat Art.**

New York, Rochester, Westchester, Washington, Richmond, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, USA; Vancouver, Canada (Catalogue)

1982

Russian New Wave.

Contemporary Russian Art Centre of America (CRAC). Soho, International Art Centre. New York, USA (Catalogue).

1st APTART exhibition.

Nikita Alexeev apartment, Moscow (Catalogue in Moscow Archive of Contemporary Art — MANI — №5)

Russian Abstract and Pop Art.

CRAC, Jersey City, USA

1981

Exhibition of painting.

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklet)

1st Festival of Performances.

Pogorelovo, Kostroma region, USSR

25 ans de l'art non-officiel. 1956–1981.

Musee Russe en exile Montgeron, France

1980

Весенняя выставка (The Spring Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Cosmos.

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Graphics.

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Paintings.

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

La Lumière.

Arts festival. Avignon, France (Booklet)

Unofficial Performance festival.

Prague, Czechoslovakia

1979

Весенняя выставка (The Spring Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Premiere Biennale des peintres russes.

Vesinet, centre des arts et loisirs, Montgeron, France

1978

Весенняя выставка (The Spring Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Осенняя выставка (The Autumn Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

La nuova arte Sovietica.

Turin, Italy (Anatoly Zhigalov) (Catalogue)

Rassegna sul dissenso culturale nell'Est europeo.

Scuola Art e Mestiert, Aula Magna
Scuola cantonale di Commercio, Aula Magna Municipio,
Sala Patriziale, Bellinzona, Switzerland (Anatoly Zhigalov)
(Catalogue)

1977

La nuova arte Sovietica.

(Anatoly Zhigalov) *La Biennale di Venezia.*

Venice, Italy (Catalogue)

1976

Exposition au Musée en Exil.

(Anatoly Zhigalov's paintings from Alexander Glezer's collection).

Mongeron, France

1st Exhibition held by Moscow United City Committee of Graphic Artists.

(Anatoly Zhigalov).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow

Apartment exhibition.

Victor Nikolayev apartment (A. Danilov, A. Zhigalov, V. Nikolayev), Moscow

Весенняя выставка (The Spring Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

Осенняя выставка (The Autumn Exhibition).

Malaya Gruzinskaya St., Moscow (Booklets)

1975

Apartment exhibition.

Joseph Kiblitky apartment, Moscow

Apartment exhibition.

Karen Nagopetian apartment, Moscow

Apartment exhibition.

Joseph Ginsburg apartment, Moscow

1974

Graphic Art Exhibition.

Korolenko Library, Moscow

Alexander Glezer Collection.

Exhibition at Alexander Glezer apartment, Moscow

WORKSHOPS AND LECTURES

2010 **Video vs Cinema.**
Art-group TOTART and Stenly Kubrick.
NCCA. Master-class.
“100 years of performance”.
Garage Centre for Contemporary Art,
Moscow

2009 **Institute of Synergic Anthropology,**
Moscow
Institute of the Contemporary
Art Problems,
Moscow
TOTART Films&Video
Ciné Fantom, Москва
TOTART master-class.
“Out of the City”.
NNCA, Moscow

2007 **Master-class.**
All-Russian State Institute
of Cinematography, Moscow
Master-class.
Moscow Museum of Modern Art
(Contemporary Art 1-year course)

2006 **Anatily Zhigalov’s book**
“Poems” presentation.
A. Sakharov Museum
and Social centre, Moscow
Anatoly Zhigalov’s reading.
Burbur Gallery, Jerusalem
Master-class.
Burbur Gallery, Jerusalem

2004 **Master-class.**
“Contemporary City Sculpture”
program.
Izevsk, Russia

- 2001 **Lecture and show.**
“Solnetchnoie Spletenie”.
Jerusalem
- TOTART reading.**
Zverev Centre for Contemporary Art,
Moscow
- 2000 **“Monument in Literature”.**
TOTART reading
Literary Saloon, Moscow
- Natalia Abalakova’s reading.**
Literary Saloon, Moscow
- 1999 **Master-class.**
Contemporary art seminar
The Russian State University
for Humanities, Moscow
- Master-class.**
Club Project OGI, Moscow
- Master-class.**
Soros Centre for Contemporary
Art, Moscow)
- Master-class.**
Клуб ОГИ, Москва
- Master-class.**
Art college, Izevsk University,
Izevsk (Natalia Abalakova)
- Master-class.**
Russian unofficial art of 1970s.
The conference in the Institute of Fine Art
(Anatoly Zhigalov’s report)
- 1996–
1997 **Workshop with the students of**
“Interstudio”
(“Escape Way” group)
(5-channel video “Foucault’s Pendulum”).
Spider & Mouse Gallery, Moscow
- 1996 **Master-class.**
Termen-centre. Moscow
- 1994 **Master-class.**
“Groping in the Dark at Midnight”
Videoart festival.
Petrovsky Bvrd, Moscow
- 1987 **Master-class. Art festival.**
“Meridian” club, Moscow
- 1986 **Lecture and show of TOTART performances
and films by Natalia Abalakova and Anatoly
Zhigalov.**
Poets’ Club-81, Leningrad
- 1984 **A lecture and an action
in Tartu University, Estonia**
TOTART program in MIFI Club
- 1981 **APTART artists group tour
in Tallinn and Tartu, Estonia**
- 1980 **Lectures and shows in Prague,
Brno and Bratislava**

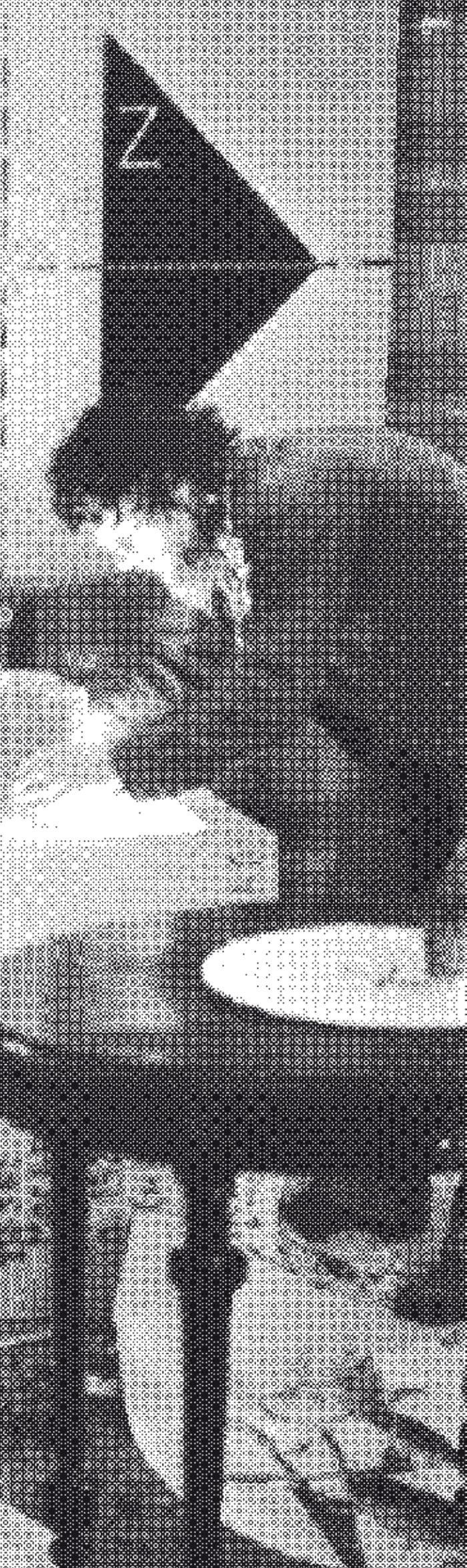
Flower Wake

1980. Performance/Installation

Russian Roulette

1985. Performance







Handwritten text on the chalkboard, appearing to be a list or set of instructions, though the characters are difficult to decipher due to the image quality.

