

A N N
N A
O V A
G A L L E R Y

ANDREY KUZKIN



Andrey Kuzkin is known for his performances and actions. The sphere of his interests includes meditative work and relations between human and time. He also turns to drawing, painting, installation and sculpture.

Personal projects of the artist were presented at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and the Stella Art Foundation. The artist has taken part in the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2010), the Parallel programme of the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), Performa Biennale in New York (2011), the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2015, 2019), the Garage Triennial of Russian Contemporary Art (2020) and others.

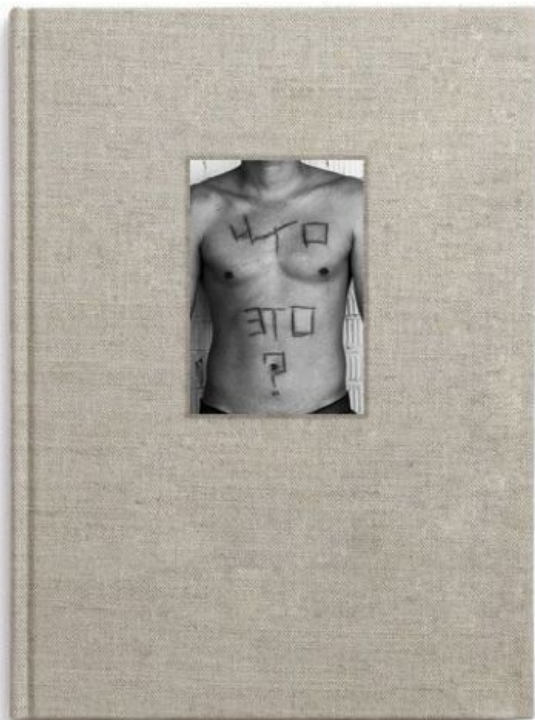
Andrey Kuzkin is a twice winner of the Kandinsky Prize (2016, 2021), twice winner of the Innovation Prize (2008, 2017), and three times winner of the Soratnik Prize (2009-2011). In 2017 and 2018 the artist was included in the Russian Art Investment Rating [49ART](#), representing outstanding contemporary artists under the age of 50.

His works are in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, the National Center for Contemporary Art in Moscow, the National Museum of Gdansk in Poland, the V-A-C Foundation, the Stella Art Foundation in Moscow, the Russian Art World Foundation and other.





SELECTED PUBLICATIONS



Andrey Kuzkin. Right to Life. 2006-2015

This edition is dedicated to Andrey Kuzkin's artistic practice
Publishing program of the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, 2016

Andrey Kuzkin è una figura "esistenzialista" nella scena artistica contemporanea russa. Attraverso le sue performance "rituali" l'artista si interessa a questioni come la responsabilità individuale e la libertà di scelta, mettendo alla prova l'assurdità dei limiti fisici e psicologici dell'essere umano e confrontandosi con le sue insicurezze e la paura della morte. Kuzkin attira l'attenzione di critici e curatori nel 2008 con la sua performance *Circle-wise*. Come atto di solidarietà verso coloro che soffrono a causa delle condizioni di vita precaria in Russia, il performer ha camminato per diverse ore all'interno di una piscina circolare riempita con del cemento liquido, tenendosi legato tramite una corda a un bastone fissato al centro della vasca. La performance è proseguita fino a che l'artista non è stato più in grado di muoversi nel cemento che si solidificava intorno alle sue gambe.

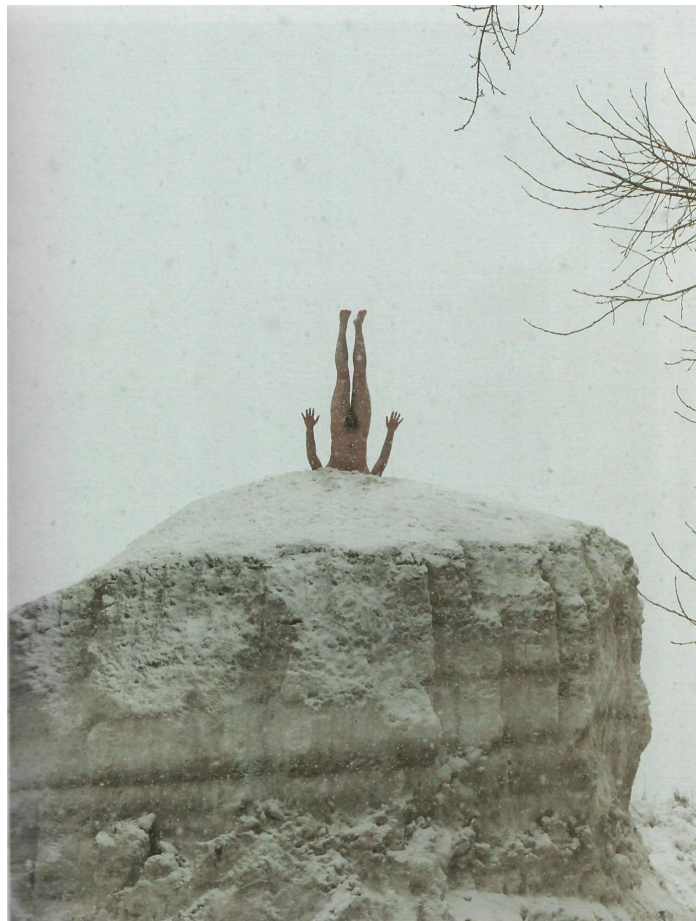
L'atto della purificazione gioca un ruolo importante nella pratica artistica di Kuzkin. Per esempio, nel 2010, durante la performance *What-ever is Over There*, l'artista è rimasto disteso immobile per quattro ore all'interno di un sarcofago di vetro, col corpo nudo ricoperto di scritte in latino che illustravano diverse malattie letali, in un simbolico tentativo di esorcizzare la paura della morte. Sempre nella convinzione di riuscire a superare le proprie paure attraverso un'azione, nel 2011 Kuzkin comincia il suo progetto, che durerà per ventinove anni, *All Ahead of You!*, in cui archivia tutti gli oggetti del suo studio in scatole d'acciaio, per liberare se stesso dal peso del possesso e dell'attaccamento.

Nell'atto di purificazione del proprio io, Kuzkin rivela se stesso con maggiore energia nella performance *Natural Phenomena*, che ripete dal 2011 in diverse occasioni internazionali, da solo o in gruppo. Qui l'artista è nudo a testa in giù, col capo seppellito nella terra, tra l'erba e gli alberi, sia in ambienti urbanizzati che naturali. È evidente come egli ripeta l'esperimento prima di tutto per se stesso, nel tentativo di collaudare una massima forma di catarsi. "L'idea alla base del progetto è molto chiara. Ricorda che l'essere umano è una creatura della natura, naturale tanto quanto un albero. Gli uomini sono esseri biologici, cosa che cominciamo a dimenticare, vivendo in metropoli, circondati da svariati gadgets... Mi piacerebbe continuare a ripetere questa performance e riuscire a coinvolgermi ancora più persone, in posti diversi e con ogni tipo di condizione meteorologica. In un certo senso è il mio motto: dalla cultura alla natura...", dice Kuzkin. Con la sua azione di estrema consapevolezza Kuzkin mette alla prova il naturale legame dell'uomo con l'esistenza e con tutti gli esseri viventi, seguendo le orme dei suoi predecessori dell'arte concettuale russa. (KK)

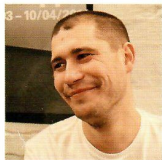
Andrey Kuzkin is the "existentialist" of the Russian contemporary art scene. Bringing forward issues of individual responsibility, freedom and choice, in his 'ritualistic' performances Kuzkin challenges the absurdness of physical and psychological limitations, insecurities and fear of death, common to the entire humankind. Kuzkin draw attention of critics and curators in 2008 for his performance *Circle-wise*. As an act of solidarity with those who suffer from the heavy living conditions in Russia, for several hours the performer walked in a circle of a pool filled with liquid concrete being roped to a stick in the centre. The sensational performance lasted till the artist could no longer knead the concrete which started to solidify.

The act of purification plays an important role in Kuzkin's practice. For instance, in 2010 during performance *What-ever is Over There* the artist laid motionless for four hours on a white podium in a glass sarcophagus covered with Latin names of lethal illnesses, attempting to overcome a superstitious fear of death. Following the same line of overcoming fears through an act, in 2011 Kuzkin started his 29 year long project *All Ahead of You!*, for which he walt all the property from his studio into steel boxes to free himself from the weight of possessions and attachments.

The act of purification of the self manifests itself most powerfully in performance *Natural Phenomena*, that Kuzkin repeats since 2011 at various occasions internationally alone or together with a group of other people. For *Natural Phenomena* Kuzkin stands naked upside down among the grass and the trees, burying his head in the ground. It is evident that the artist repeats the experiment first of all for himself, as a way to experience an ultimate form of catharsis. "The idea of the project is extremely clear – to remind that a human being is a creature of nature, as natural as a tree. Humans are biological beings which we start to forget living in metropolises and surrounded by various gadgets... I would like to keep repeating this performance, to involve more participants, in different weather conditions and in different places as I feel I enjoy it a lot. It is my motto in a way – from culture to nature..." – commented Kuzkin. With his acts of extreme awareness, testing his natural bonds to life and to other organic forms of being, Kuzkin follows the agendas behind the actions of his Conceptualist predecessors. (KK)



Andrey Kuzkin, *The Phenomenon of Nature*
 of 99 landscapes with trees, 436
 Voronež, Russia, 1 febbraio 2015
 Voronezh, Russia, 1 February 2015



Андрей Кузькин Andrei Kuzkin

Родился в 1979 году в Москве. Окончил Московский государственный университет печати (2001). Участник Берлинской биеннале (2010), более 30 групповых выставок в России. Специальный диплом Красноярской биеннале (2009). Лауреат Государственной премии «Иновация» в номинации «Новая генерация» (2009), премии «Соратник» (2009). Лонг-лист Премии Кандинского в номинации «Молодой художник» (2010).

Born in 1979 in Moscow. Graduated from Moscow State University of Printing Arts (2001). Participant in the Berlin Biennale (2010) and over 30 group exhibitions in Russia. Special diploma recipient at the Krasnoyarsk Biennale (2009). Winner of the State Innovation Prize in the "New Generation" nomination (2009) and the Soratnik award (2009). Long-listed for the Kandinsky Prize 2010 in the "Young Artist" nomination.

Сюжет проекта таков: все имущество Кузькина, находившееся в мастерской, — от картин и объектов до мельчайших бытовых предметов, — было сложено в коробки и перевезено в Open Gallery. Крупногабаритная мебель была отнесена на помойку. От «мастерской художника» остались одни голые стены. В галерее коробки были заварены в стальные кораба.

15 марта 2011 года при стечении зрителей Кузькин сложил в последний, 59-й короб все личные вещи, включая одежду, которая на нем была, паспорт, телефон... Пока специальный парикмахер стриг художника под ноль, тот зачитывал длинный список замурованных предметов. Затем и волосы, и список отправились в короб вслед за остальными вещами, после чего короб был заварен на глазах у присутствующих. Облегченный Кузькин совершил омовение в тазу и переделал в свежкупленные майку, джинсы и кеды.

Проект растянут во времени: его финал отнесен в 2040 год, когда, по условиям художника, стальные кораба могут быть вскрыты. Он стирает демаркационную линию между территорией искусства и территорией жизни. Именно так: не выдает жизнь за искусство, как это часто бывает, а включает и то, и другое на равных, смешивая их намертво. В него вовлечено нецелое число участников. Сюда следует отнести и всех, кто присутствовал на перформансе (поскольку данный проект имел отношение к судьбе в не меньшей степени, чем к искусству, и значит, превращал обычных зрителей в свидетелей судьбоносного события), а также всех потенциальных приобретателей или иных лиц, которые когда-либо произведут какие-либо действия с замурованным «наследием» художника.

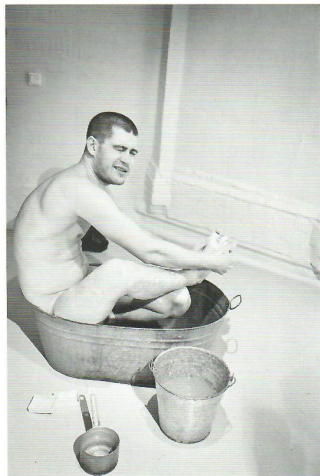
Over the course of four days, all of Andrei Kuzkin's possessions in his studio—from paintings and objects to the tiniest everyday knickknacks—were packed into boxes and transported to the Open Gallery. Any large furniture was thrown away. Nothing remained of the studio but bare walls. At the Open Gallery the boxes were sealed inside steel cases.

On March 15th, 2011, in the presence of numerous spectators, Kuzkin placed all of his personal belongings, including his mobile phone, passport and the clothes he was wearing, into the last, 59th case. While the barber was shaving off his hair, the artist read the long list of items entombed in the boxes. The shaved-off hair and the list went after the rest of the items. Then, in the presence of on-lookers, the last, 59th case was welded shut. An unburdened Kuzkin washed himself in a basin and put on some newly bought clothes—a T-shirt, jeans and sneakers.

The project will extend into time: It ends in 2040, which is when the artist says that the steel cases can be opened. He is erasing the boundary between art and life. His project does not turn life into art, as often happens, but includes both, equally, blending them so they become inseparable. It involves an unpredictable number of participants, including all those present at the performance (in much as the project has to do with destiny as much as with art and therefore turns regular observers into witnesses of the fateful event) and all potential buyers or any other unknown persons who might ever become involved with the artist's boxed-up legacy.



Андрей Кузькин. *Все вперед*. 2011. Проект включает реальные события, перформанс и 59 заваренных стальных коробов с имуществом и произведениями художника. © Открытая галерея, Москва
Andrei Kuzkin. *All Ahead of You*. 2011. The project includes the actual events, performance and 59 welded steel boxes containing the artist's property and works. © Open Gallery, Moscow



Андрей Кузькин. *Все вперед!*. 2011. Проект включает реальные события, перформанс и 59 сваренных стальных коробов с имуществом и произведениями художника. © Открытая галерея, Москва
Andrei Kuzkin. *All Ahead of You*. 2011. The project includes the actual events, performance and 59 welded steel boxes containing the artist's property and works. © Open Gallery, Moscow



SELECTED PROJECTS

WHAT IS IT - VREMYANKA?

CCI Fabrika
Moscow, Russia

2021

Я еще жив. Я еще жива.

Дамы и господа!

Экспозиция этой выставки создается вашими руками!
Воспользовавшись ручкой и бумагой, я предлагаю
вам составить документ с таким текстом:

«Я еще жив(а).
Имя Фамилия.
Сегодняшнее число.
Подпись.»

Текст желательно располагать ближе к центру листа.
Язык написания - тот которым вы владеете.
Слово «расписка» писать НЕ нужно.

С помощью ассистентов ваш документ тут же будет
помещен в рамку и включен в общую экспозицию.



The first part of the exhibition is interactive, created by the audience. As a part of the exhibition, the artist invites everyone to join the performative action and use a blue ballpoint pen to write on A4 sheets "I am still alive. [Full name, date, signed]". The statements will be instantly framed and put on the wall, thus making a part of the exhibition.

Using the wording "I am still alive" is not new in art. In the 1970s, Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara sent "I'm still alive" telegrams to his friends, and Chinese artist Tehching Hsieh from 1986 to 2000 implemented his "13-year plan", which resulted in an image saying, "I kept myself alive. I passed the December 31st, 1999." In 2010, Russian artist Leonid Tishkov projected the phrase "I am still alive" on a glacier in the Arctic, and now this photo is his opener on the Facebook page.

In his project Andrey Kuzkin sees a way out in delegating the statement and in asserting that there is no difference whether you are an artist or not. The phenomenon of everyone's living is equally important. The value of the artist and his art pales into insignificance beside things like life and death. A handwritten document written presents a part of a person's life. Written by hand, dated and signed statement "I am still alive" brings life into this piece of paper - to a certain extent. Moreover, it adds another meaning: as long as the document itself is kind of alive, the testimony is alive, too, and thanks to it the life of the person who wrote it goes on. To date, there are more than a hundred documents in the artist's archive, which he has collected this year.

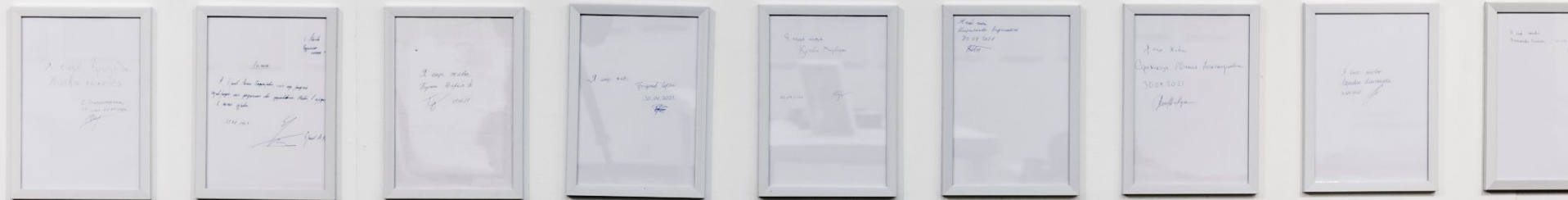
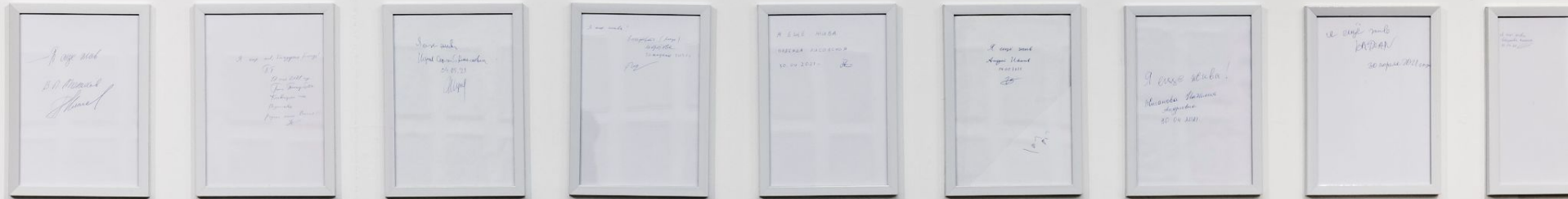
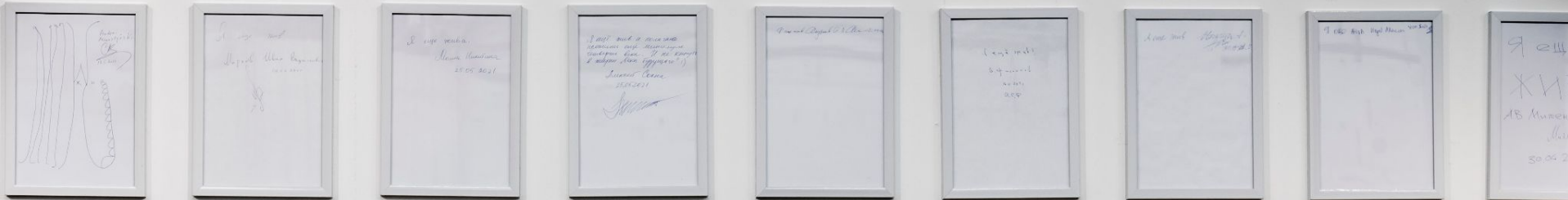
The second part of the exhibition will feature photo and video records of Andrey Kuzkin's 2021 art actions performed outside and covering the same subject. These are the artist's personal poetic statements related to the intellectual and emotional opening of "Vremyanka" (Temporary shelter)..

The exhibition project "- What is it? - Vremyanka" at the CTI "Fabrika" refers to the artist's performance from 2013 - October 10, 2013 at the Triumph Gallery, the public was demonstrated "The Main Question" performance, during which the artist carved "WHAT IS THIS?" into his chest with a surgical knife. 8 years later, Andrey Kuzkin found the answer to his question, and it is "TIME". Both the question and the answer are absolutely universal and can be applied to literally anything in the world.

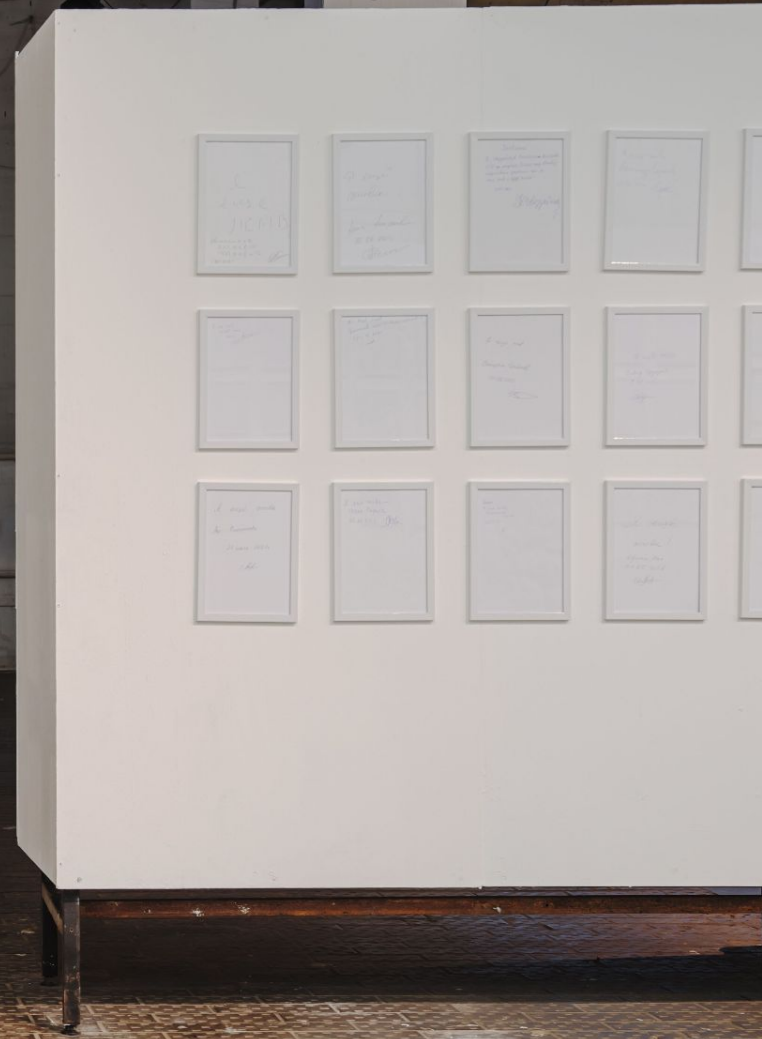




Я ЕЩЕ ЖИВА
Я ЕЩЕ ЖИВ





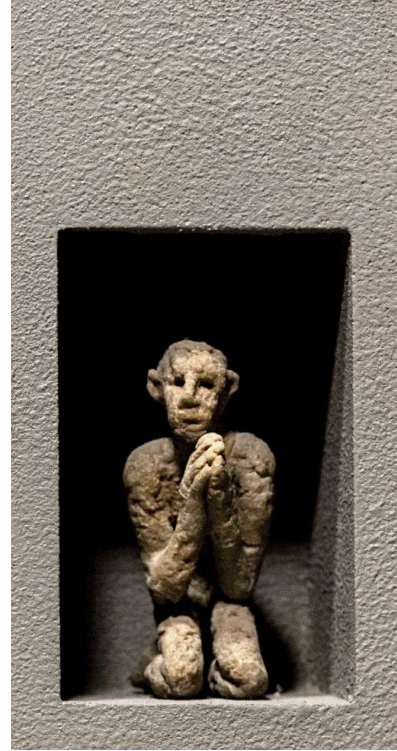
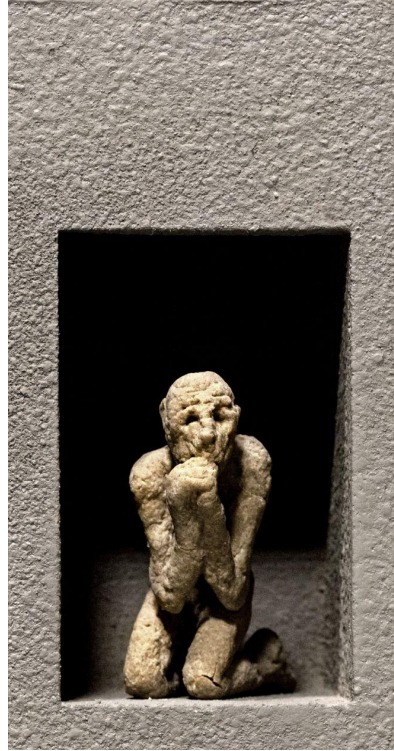


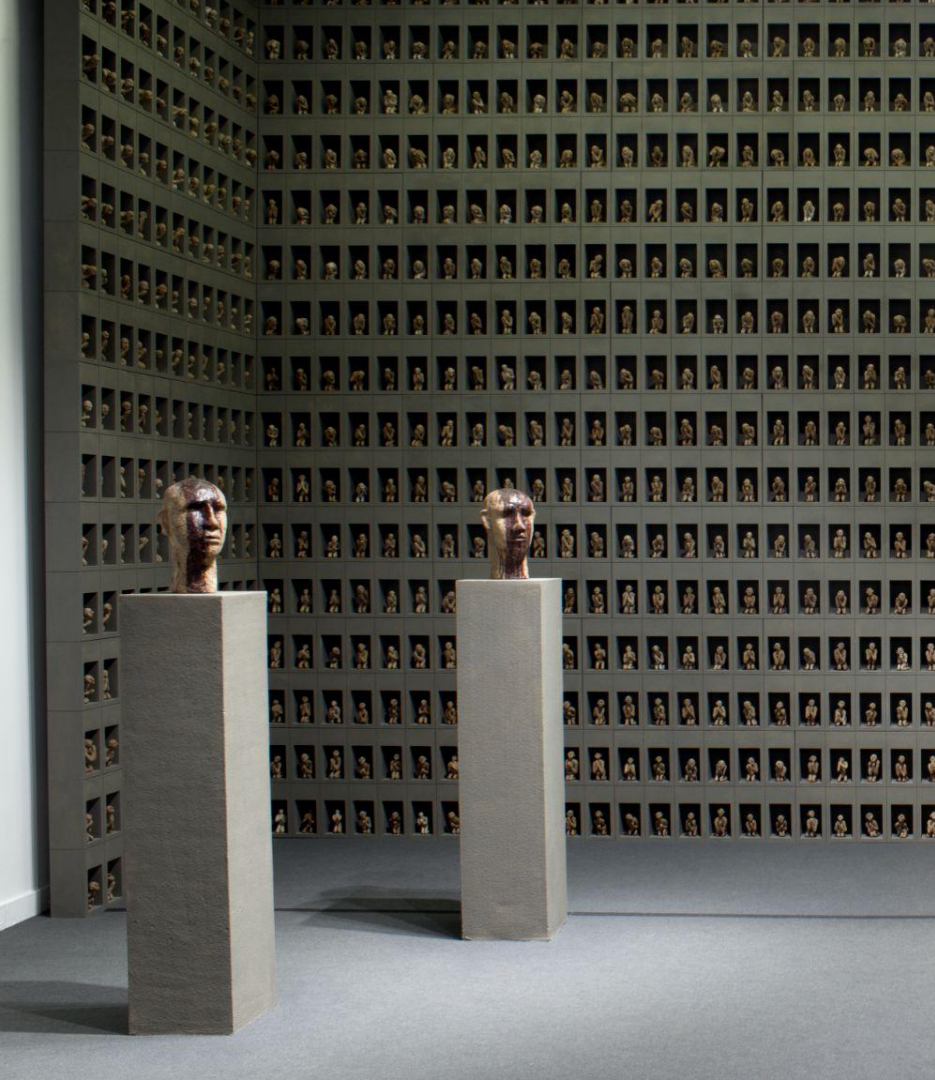
PRAYERS AND HEROES

CCI Fabrika & Garage Museum of Contemporary Art
Moscow, Russia

2021







The artist has been working on this performative practice for three years.

It is a tribute paid to Russia's tragic history, its innocent victims, its weakness and cruelty. All the figures in the installation are made from breadcrumbs by hand, their heads painted with the artist's blood. The choice of material is not accidental: organic and associated with life, bread is the best material for depicting the human body — changing, perishable, suffering. And, sooner or later, vanishing.

The work combines Christian symbolism (bread as a symbol of Christ's body) and the Russian prison tradition of moulding figures from bread. It suggests a notion of the body as a prison of the soul, of the world as a temporary abode. The division of society into those who pray (prayers) and those who fight (heroes) explores the social essence of sacrifice and heroism: Most people are willing to endure injustice, to suffer and beg god or a king for salvation. Those who are not, those who are destroyed by the state machinery throughout history, can later be put on a pedestal and presented as heroes.

The contempt toward the individual, the incredible cruelty and injustice with which history is filled to the brim, in Russia and elsewhere — all this becomes material for artist's reflections.









PRAYERS
Video documentation

EVERYTHING IS FORWARD!

Open Gallery, Moscow, Russia

2011

All the things I had in my studio apartment – works of art like paintings, drawings, sculptures, manuscripts, a PC with all my data, everyday items, clothes, and tools, all of them – were welded in metal boxes.

Finally, there were 58 differently sized boxes.





Performance documentation



Performance documentation



At the opening ceremony, I presented a performance. I put into the 59th box things I had left – my clothes, documents, my camera and so on. The list of all the things put into the boxes was announced, and then I had my hair cut off, and it was put into the box, too. After that, the box was welded. I washed myself in a basin and put some new clothes on. The boxes can be sold as independent works of art, but they may not be opened earlier than 29 years after the last of them was welded.







1. The term of 29 years has a generational context for me – in the first place. I mean, in 29 years my son will be as old as my father was when he died. And I will be almost as old as my mother and my father-in-law are today.

2. Everything and nothing. Conditional value of art contraposed to the phenomenon of time, life, and death.

3. Russian psychological type and Russian history. “Before establishment, and then –“ – here “before establishment” is more essential than “then”. We usually have it “then” just like it has been “before”, but this “before establishment” practice is really important for our culture and history. And I wanted to experience it first-hand.

P. S.

29 years after welding of the last box all of them can be opened. I would appreciate if all of them could be brought to one place for an exhibition.

The exhibition should be arranged in a 3-level building with a basement that will also be used for exposition purposes. The building should be extended horizontally and resemble barracks. Every level should comprise a really long exhibition space, although not too wide. Visitors enter it on the side of the gable façade and after leaving their outdoor clothes in the cloakroom, they can go downstairs to the basement to see the opened metal boxes.

Then, they can proceed to the 1st floor, where things are exhibited that can't be considered as pieces of art. In the 2nd floor, my belongings should be showcased that the exhibition organizers believe to be works of art.

The 3rd floor should be left empty.

The basement level, the 1st and the 2nd floors should be artificially lit and have no windows, while the 3rd floor should be lit with natural light getting through many windows.



THE FORCE MAJEURE ACTIONS

Open Gallery, Moscow, Russia

2010



These paintings were created by the artist in collaboration with his 4-year-old son Osip. The boy drew some abstract colorful backgrounds – looking like maps – while Andrey Kuzkin inhabited these maps with schematic people. The act of performative painting was a metaphor, the artist's son personifying the elements not subject to humans.

The key point of the project was demonstrating weakness of humans, our dependence on outer forces we can't control. The visuals of the series bring to mind cave art. When working on the paintings, the artist elicits associations with Bosch's major catastrophes or Bruegel's skeleton armies.

Turning to naïve cave-like art and referring to primitive artistic practices, Mr. Kuzkin connects layers of distant history and geological time. His paintings seem to show us things below the ground – bone remains, traces of long gone battles, results of mass epidemics and so on, and so forth.





UNTITLED
OIL ON CANVAS
2011

UNTITLED
OIL ON CANVAS
2011





UNTITLED
OIL ON CANVAS
2011

UNTITLED
OIL ON CANVAS
2011



UNTITLED
VIDEO
2011



TOGETHER

Performance
CCI Fabrika, Moscow

2010



HEROES OF LEVITATION

Stella Art foundation, Moscow, Russia

2010



This project builds on the leitmotif of Kuzkin previous work — the search for a universal, final base of our existence, hope for a meaning beyond the limits of life's glaring hopelessness. The central piece of the exposition consists of three human figures moulded out of bread. Naked, primordially ludicrous, they are presented in the simplest postures, trying to overcome the forces of life's earthly gravitation.

Three naked male figures with disproportionately huge heads, modelled roughly out of an undefined grey-brownish substance. They are so enormous that they are incapable of handling their own size and weight. Their spasmodic gestures are evidence of their lack of the most basic skills needed for survival. And one can hardly fight the impression that they were only born yesterday, even though their bodies are already on the verge of disintegration. These creatures dominate the space of the exhibition so much that it seems like a toy house, in which their bodies are both transitory and inappropriate. Or maybe, hints the same intuition, they only appear this way in the tunnel of our own routinely ruined perception. Whereas in reality their place is somewhere else, somewhere where this perception cannot reach”.

All this is founded on feeling, on pure emotion. In this case art's role is to express something that cannot be expressed with words, or if you could, it would be trite and vulgar. I like simple people, hard workers, all those people living next door. The differences between us are irrelevant. I speak of death, of the fact that we are all equal before it and it arouses similar emotions in everyone. How my heroes look has nothing to do with social criticism: such interpretations would be much too simplistic. One wants to find the things all people share: the undeniable, indisputable things. They are just people. Simple mortals. All of us are. And our problem, our shared problem, still wouldn't be solved, however hard you try.







The second part of this statement is at least as much, if not much more, important than the first: eventual flight is more important than the destruction, even though the destruction may be its immediate cause. In a way that goes against the grain of visual art, it is precisely what is absent, hidden from the author-spectator, that is proclaimed to be in the centre. While what remains, allowing of no appeal, visible to us, what is present here and lies at the root is all this emotional effect is the ugliness of physical disintegration. And it has the power to push our perception beyond the limit of what is visible to it, where these figures, crushed by earthly gravity, suddenly become heroes of levitation. They must become that, if only drawing from the title of the project and the author's intention, from its logic, so convincing in its absurdity. As well as from the symbolic qualities of the material their bodies are made of.

This clay-like grey-brownish substance is in fact bread. Bread mixed with salt, soaked in water and bound by glue: basically, it is a "turya" mush, the food of beggars. If we add to this that Kuzkin first stumbled upon the recipe for the material of his sculptures on a website entitled *kriminala.net* (literally, "crime doesn't exist"), it becomes clear that the creative source of this sculptor's work is buried in the very thick of life. Life, with all its age-old dialectics. Earth brings forth grain, which in turn becomes bread. The substance of bread resembles the flesh of the earth itself. And while we call the best of people "the salt of the earth", they are also its bread. Not to mention the rest of us, who basically constitute that very "bread of the earth". Moulded out of dust in order to return unto dust, only to reach once again towards the sky as the ears of wheat. And yet, the symbolism here is as evangelical as it is pagan. And the pathetic extremes are fused into the bland-looking batter open to a certain simple, extremely platonic (from Andrey Platonov, not Plato) magic, chosen for some reason or other to rule over our space.



7 WORKS BY ANDREY KUZKIN

Matthew Bown Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2010

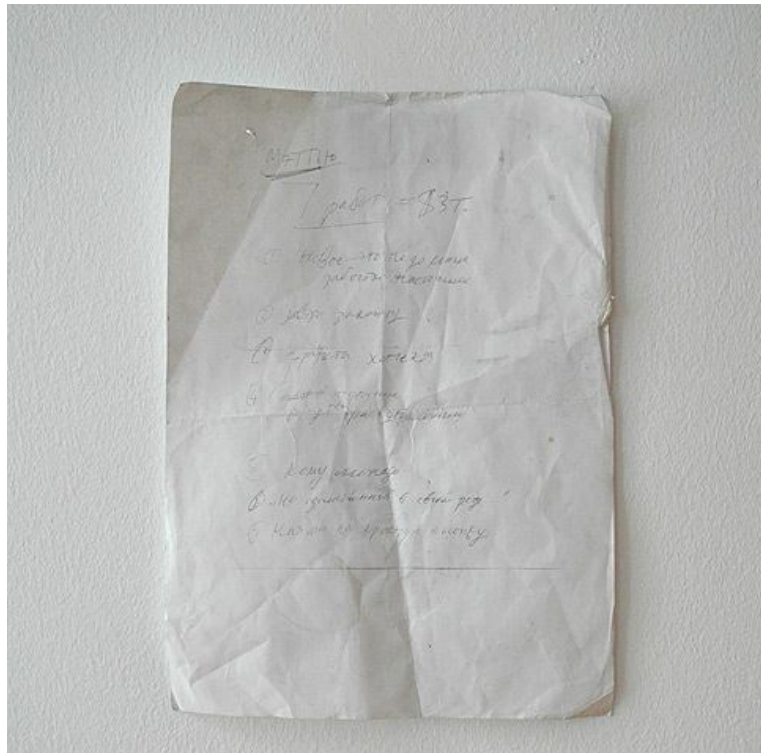


In 2008 the gallerist Matthew Bown acquired seven works from the first show by Kuzkin, held at the ArtStrelka Projects gallery in Moscow run by the late Olga Lopukhova. In May 2010 Matthew Bown decided to show these works in his gallery in Berlin. To his consternation, he discovered that the box containing the seven works by Kuzkin had been taken away by mistake two weeks earlier and delivered, together with genuine gallery rubbish, to the Neukölln waste processing centre. The box had been pulped within 48 hours.

In response to the destruction of the seven works, Kuzkin has created a new installation at the Matthew Bown Gallery. A mound of wood and paper rubbish from the gallery and the Neukölln waste processing centre sits in the middle of the floor. Seven empty picture frames are hung on the walls. During the vernissage, the gallerist sits on a chair in the corner to ensure that none of the exhibited waste is removed inadvertently. Also on display is the only remaining genuine relic of the event: a photocopy of the original receipt for the works, with description and price.

In fact, the process of creation and destruction initiated in this case by accident by the Matthew Bown Galerie is integral to Kuzkin's work. Also forming part of Kuzkin's show at the Matthew Bown Gallery is the video record of *Time-Space Continuum*, an action by the artist at the Stella Art Gallery, Moscow. Over a period of more than seven hours Kuzkin drew a single pencil line along a 9-metre length of gallery wall. The event had an extreme performative aspect: not once did the artist allow the pencil to lose contact with the wall. At the end of the performance, the artist erased the line from the wall, collected the residue that was rubbed off onto the floor and burnt it.





TIME SPACE CONTINUUM

performance
Stella Art Foundation, Moscow

2008



NEED TO CHECK / TRUST ISSUES

ORIGINAL Print house, Moscow

2007

Alienation

installation
chair, acrylic
2007





Something keeps me from falling

installation
rope, metal hook, shirt
2007



I'm here.

installation
rag slippers, light bulb, charcoal, graphite
2007

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

EVERYTHING THERE IS, IT IS ALL MINE

VI Berlin Biennale für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin, Germany

2010



ONE MAN TOOK OFF HIS CLOTHES, SHAVED ALL OF HIS HAIR AND HAD NAMES OF ALL KINDS OF ILLNESSES WRITTEN IN LATIN OVER HIS BODY. THEN, HE DISPLAYED HIMSELF IN A GLASS BOX.

My shaved naked body was ornamented with all kinds of human diseases in Latin (they used a marker to inscribe the names over organs affected by the illnesses). Covered with these writings, for 4 hours I stayed lying on a white pedestal covered with a glass box.

I came up with this performance concept long ago, but ultimately decided to do it after my close acquaintance, curator Olga Lopukhova, died unexpectedly. Actually, this performance is my dedication to her.

With it, I meditate over human vulnerability and death. It became my way of trying illness and death on – in order to overcome my fear of them. In the performance, I am my own self and at the same time an abstract representative of the human race, who demonstrates that all the people get sick and die in the end.









Performance documentation

THE PHENOMENON OF NATURE OR 99 LANDSCAPES WITH TREES

Vienna, Moscow, Cape Town, New York, Anadyr, Upsala, Bath, Kiev,
Hague, Almaty, Krasnoyarsk, Hamburg

2010 - present time



I'd like to fall off the stairs and dump head down into the asphalt
So that my feet would wave like tree branches...

A. Kuzkin, 1996

Cramming yourself into a grave
Is inheriting the Earth.
What is to inherit the Earth?
It is exhausting one's patience...

Egor Letov, 1989



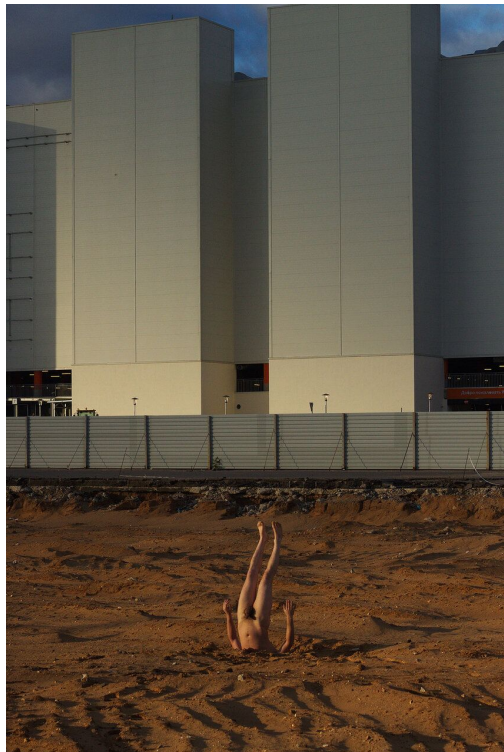


ONE MAN GOT UNDRESSED, HID HIS HAD IN THE ASPHALT UPSIDE DOWN AND STAYED LIKE THAT FOR SOME TIME, WAGGLING RHYTHMICALLY

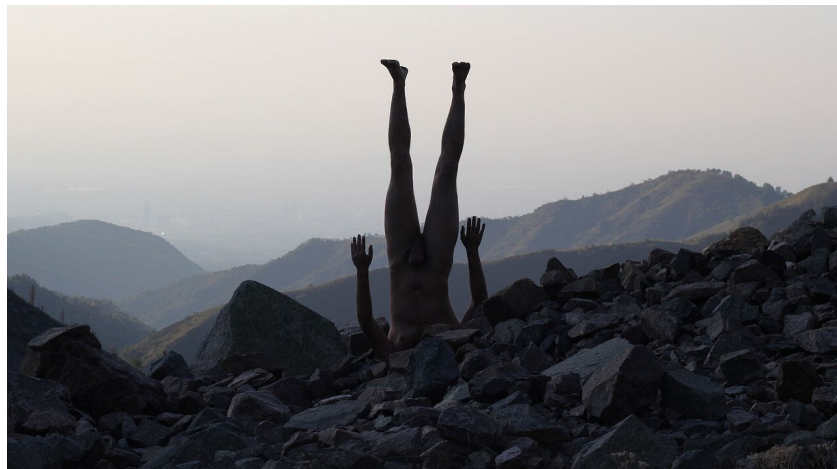
Humans are like trees. A human is a creation of the Earth – just like plants growing over it. The performance represents a motto - From culture to nature!

This performance is about people and the Earth. It is about the necessity to live and the impossibility to comprehend. About wishing to be a plant, so natural and beautiful, along with absurdity and unenforceability of this wish. Wherever you are, metaphysically your position doesn't change.







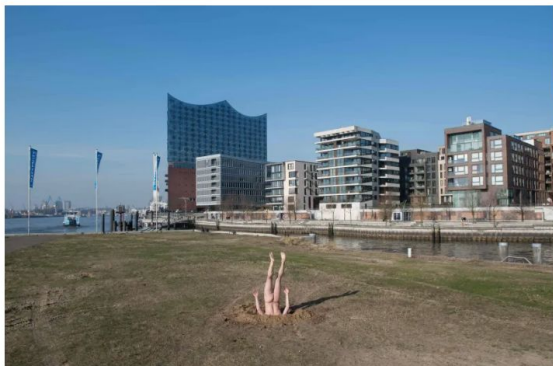


THINGS TO DO ENTERTAINMENT

'I just want to get undressed and stand on my head'



By **SUSAN STEADE** | ssteade@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group
PUBLISHED: February 8, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. | UPDATED: February 8, 2018 at 2:59 p.m.



Russian conceptual artist Andrey Kuzkin performs naked and headlong near the Elbphilharmonie concert hall in Hamburg, northern Germany, on February 8, 2018. The performance was part of the series "The Phenomenon of Nature or 99 Landscapes with Trees". (Daniel Reinhardt / dpa)

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Was macht der nackte Mann vor der Elbphilharmonie?

Spoiler: Er ist Russe. Und das Ganze hat mit Protestkunst zu tun – und mit Asphalt und Bäumen.

Tim Heshkov

aktualisiert: 13.02.2018, 11:22



Der russische Konzeptkünstler Andrey Kuzkin will 99-mal Baum sein. (Foto: Daniel Reinhardt/dpa)

[link](#)

IN A CIRCLE

Art-camp Veretyevo, Moscow region, Russia

2008



ONE MAN WAS WALKING IN THICKENING GROUT FOR 5 HOURS WITH A ROPE AROUND HIS WAIST

A wooden frame 6 by 6 meters large and 30 cm deep was filled with grout, and a thick rope was fixed right in its center. Having wrapped the loose end of the rope around his waist, Andrey Kuzkin kept walking in circles until the grout was too thick and he got too exhausted to proceed.

According to the artist, the performance symbolized human existence. Day after day, generation after generation people do the same things. When they are young, doing them is easy, as they are vigorous and keen. As people become older, their energy levels go lower, and doing these things get more difficult, and in the end people slow down drastically – and die.



BEING AN ARTIST IS BEING AN INDIAN

4 Shiryaevo Biennale of Modern Art
Shiryaevo Village, Samara Region

2009

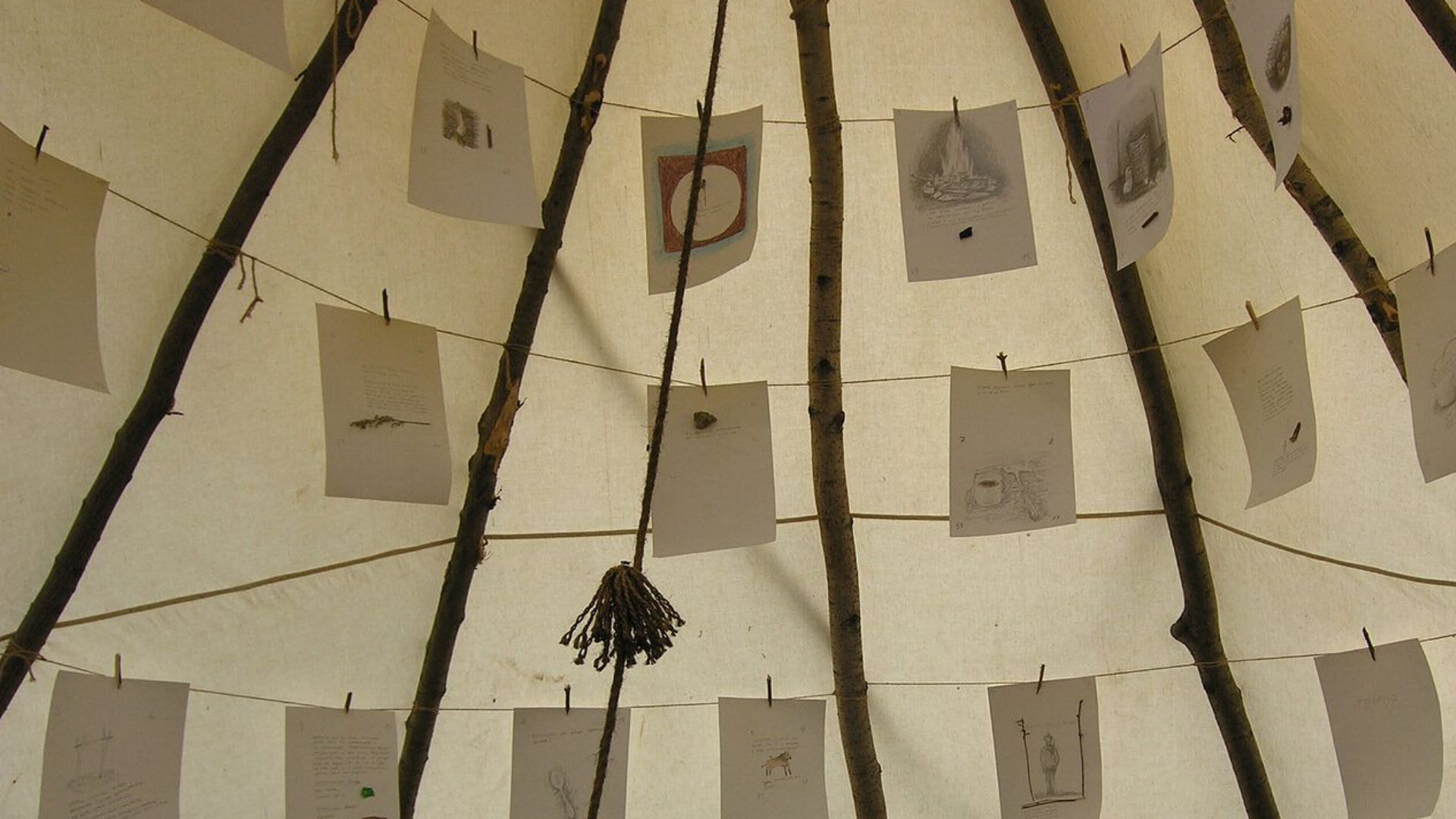


ONE MAN BUILT A TIPI IN A FIELD SURROUNDED WITH MOUNTAINS ON THREE SIDES AND BORDERING ON A RIVER ON THE FOURTH. FOR A WEEK, HE LIVED THERE BY HIMSELF, WRITING DOWN HIS THOUGHTS AND DRAWING EVERYTHING AROUND HIM. THEN, HE EXHIBITED HIS DRAWINGS AND WRITINGS IN THE TIPI AND ALLOWED VISITORS.

When they offered me the subject of America, my first thought was about Indians – and nothing else good enough or congruent with my vision crossed my mind. I've always preferred natural to urban environments. I've long set my heart on naturalness and freedom unconstrained by generally accepted standards of conduct. My ambitions and life philosophy have consistently made me feel like in a reservation. Today, it is hard to say whether this choice was conscious or imposed by my habitat.

So, I put up an Indian wigwam, or more specifically, a tipi in the very heart of a dish-shaped field located at the Volga and surrounded by mountains on three sides. I lived there for a week without contacting people. I wrote down my thoughts, feelings and whatever I did in a diary, which was presented to the audience after the performance was over.







You might wonder what I did while staying in the wigwam or walking around it. Well, I mainly did the cleaning and set the boundaries. I used some local materials to make a broom and often swept the ground around the wigwam. I did a special Indian lounger with twigs and rope (before the trip, I had looked it up in the Internet). I found some stones in the field and put them around the site. At the fireplace, in the center of my house I installed an Indian altar that looked like a small gate. This changed the interior of my round dwelling indeed. I made a bow and some arrows from locally found materials and spent a lot of time shooting arrows into the sky. I cooked food and walked down to the stream for a wash. I drew and wrote down things, and I can't say that I felt sad or bored, or lonely there.

On the closing day, the organizers brought a crowd of visitors to me, and I addressed them with the only question – “Do you have any tobacco?” This is a quote from my favorite movie, *Dead Man* by Jim Jarmush. An Indian keeps repeating it throughout the film, as tobacco is the only thing he needs from whoever he meets on the way.



BASIC QUESTIONS

Triumph Gallery, Moscow

2013

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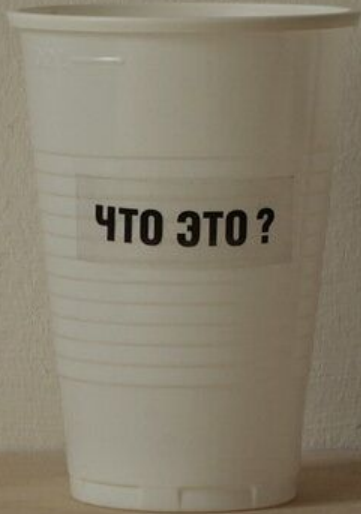
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ЧТО ЭТО ?

ЧТО ЭТО ?



410 310 ?



ЧТО ЭТО?

A white plastic cup with a label that says "ЧТО ЭТО?" (What is this?) in Russian. The cup is placed on a light-colored wooden surface against a plain, light-colored wall. The cup has several horizontal ridges and a small tab at the bottom. The label is a small white rectangle with the text in bold black letters.







ONE MAN CARVED «CHTO ETO?» (WHAT'S THAT?) ON HIS CHEST

I used a surgical knife to carve WHAT'S THAT? on my chest.

I came up with the idea of this performance as long as in 2011, but for a long time I couldn't bring myself to do it. I used to make small transparent stickers with this question and stick them on all and sundry. And I made pictures of these things. After that, I wrote the same question with a black marker on a window at my studio. One day, I realized that if I didn't do this performance at that moment, I would never do it, as I wouldn't find the moral courage to. So I made up my mind. I talked to Oleg Mavromati and Liza Morozova, and they both assured me it was worth doing – and that it wasn't going to be as awful as I feared. Well, I really was terrified. The most eerily thing is to start. As soon as you start doing something, the pain and fear cease. I always feel the same before getting into cold water. I would stand ashore trying to get a grip and jump in – and of course, sooner or later I enter the water, and swim, and enjoy it, but it is always hard to gain the courage. I believe this performance was a strong thing, and it was important to me.

This question can be taken as an existential one – what is pain? what is body? what is me? what is my life? and so on), but it can also be recognized from the history of arts perspective – what does this action mean today, in the current context, with due regard to experience accumulated by previous generations of performance artists?



FOOTPRINTS

Pustyn Village, Ivanovo Region

2007



ONE MAN SPREAD A WHITE CLOTH IN A FARMSTEAD. FOR A WEEK, HE WAS PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE THAT WALKED OVER THE CLOTH. AFTER THAT, HE CAREFULLY STORED THE CLOTH AND THE PICTURES HE HAD TAKEN.

In a small village 400 km away from Moscow, a large piece of white fabric (220 by 400 cm) was spread over the ground. For 7 days, people there lived their usual farming lives, going about their own business and inadvertently leaving their traces on the cloth. This resulted in a large abstract image, a kind of a real

The procedure of this image making was documented with 7 full color A3 photographs.

Here is this cloth, and the more time passes, the more valuable it will be. People will fade, but one week of their lives will stay on this canvas.

Realness and materiality of the piece created is of essence. It is as real as existence of the people that have made it.

TV, Internet, vivid pictures in slick magazines – all of them spawn endless virtual realities, modern people living in them as if asleep. This project aims to show a different reality, a reality of the Earth, a reality where a real person physically exists.





YOU'RE ALIVE - I'M ALIVE

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow

2010



ONE MAN DID EVERYTHING HE WAS ASKED FOR AN HOUR.

A computer program was designed for the audience to send me all kinds of commands like sit, lie down, run, walk, walk backwards, read poetry, shout or swear. They were also able to choose movement directions or combos of commands like "crawl backwards and read poetry".

Every watcher was offered to play this game for three minutes.

This performance stated that the contact with the audience is better than no contact, even if it is a master-slave relation. In the performance, I don't play a robot – I stay human even though my face is covered with a mask. I'd appreciate if the audience realized that to a certain extent all of us are in this position I've put myself in.



NATURE ACTIONS



IT'S MUCH BETTER HERE

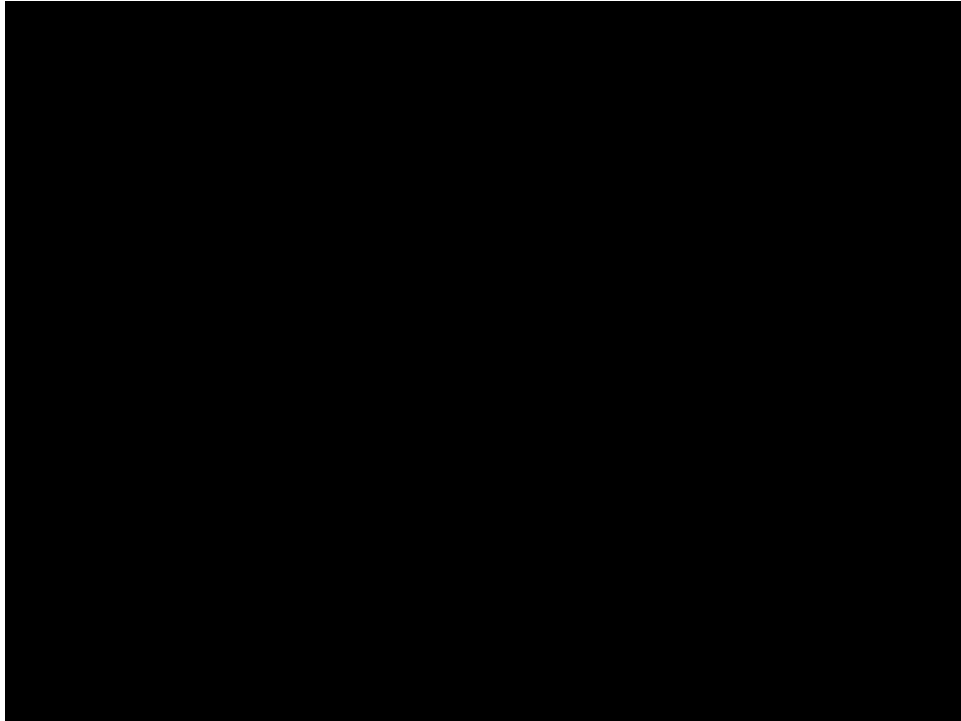


EVERYTHING I WANTED TO TELL BUT COULD NOT



THANK YOU

VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH ARTIST



Andrey Kuzkin: I went to the prison like I was going to work.
Short documentary by Russian Art Focus, 2021.



Di sicuro voglio che la mia idea sia chiara e comprensibile a tutti, come un poster, e che includa il concetto che ho spiegato prima.

On the occasion of the Centenary of the end of the First World War, 13 young artists from 12 nations, have created 13 different projects for the City destined to remain the heritage of Vittorio Veneto. The storytellers of the Progetto Giovani of Vittorio Veneto have followed and told this collective project that becomes public art.

