



CHELSEA ART MUSEUM
HOME OF THE MIOTTE FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

Concerning the Spiritual Tradition in Russian Art: Selections from the Kolodzei Art Foundation

Press Preview: Thursday, April 14, 4pm – 6pm; **R.S.V.P. press@chelseaartmuseum.org**
Opening Reception: Thursday, April 14, 6pm – 8pm
Exhibition: Thursday, April 14– Saturday, June 18, 2011

**GALLERY TALKS *lead by curator* Natalia Kolodzei
4pm on Saturdays, May 28, June 4 and June 11**

Concerning the Spiritual Tradition in Russian Art: Selections from the Kolodzei Art Foundation examines the intersections of artistic and religious consciousness that explore spiritual expression in the Soviet Union and Russia. This exhibition confronts the historical collisions of the sacred and secular, the conflict of government censorship, and freedom of expression under the Communist regime. During the Soviet era, such works of religious subject matter were often banned from public display, and in some cases, they were even confiscated.

Images of Christian churches or objects of veneration, as in the works of Oscar Rabin, Dmitri Plavinsky, and Anatolii Slepyshev, were considered religious propaganda. Art that was supportive of religion in any way was unacceptable to Soviet authorities. Regardless, a number of Russian artists turned to religious themes as a protest to government restrictions, an escape from Russian day-to-day life, or a private expression of faith. While some artists embraced traditional imagery depicting Russian churches, religious icons, or images from the Old and New Testament, other artists, such as Leonid Borisov and Gennadii Zubkov, expressed their spiritual ideas in more abstract, geometric forms. By the mid-1990's, after Russia had emerged on the international art scene, artists shifted their focus to new subjects and ideas like digital media, as is used in the work of Konstantin Khudyakov and Alena Anosova.

This selection of 60 works by 43 artists, spanning from the 1960's to the present, illuminates the progression of various artistic and political movements in Russia. Featured artists from the 1960's and 1970's participated in significant, unofficial exhibitions that challenged the official, approved style of Socialist Realism. Artworks from the 1980's to the present reflect the emergence of a free and democratic Russia, after the era of *Perestroika*. *Concerning the Spiritual Tradition in Russian Art* offers the viewers a glimpse into artistic traditions of Russian artists who, despite oppression, fervently re-appropriated sacred imagery as a way of conveying rebellious expression.

The title for the exhibition alludes to Wassily Kandinsky *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* of 1911.

Featured Artists

Alena **Anosova**, Edward **Bekkerman**, Farid **Bogdalov**, Leonid **Borisov**, Olga **Bulgakova**, Oleg **Bourov**, Irene **Caesar**, Mihail **Chemiakin**, Maria **Elkonina**, Valeriy **Gerlovin**, Rimma **Gerlovin**, Dimitry **Gerrman**, Francisco **Infante**, Otari **Kandaurov**, Anton S. **Kandinsky**, SanSan **Kara**, Konstantin **Khudyakov**, Mikhail **Koulakov**, Yefim **Ladyzhensky**, Valentina **Lebedeva**, Tatiana **Levitskaia**, Sergei **Maliutin**, Komar and **Melamid**, Artem **Mirolevich**, Igor **Molochevski**, Ernst **Neizvestny**, Natalia **Nesterova**, Alexander **Ney**, Shimon **Okshteyn**, Vladimir **Ovchinnikov**, Valeri **Pianov**, Dmitri **Plavinsky**, Petr **Pushkarev**, Vitaly **Pushnitky**, Oscar **Rabin**, Eduard **Shteinberg**, Alexander **Sitnikov**, Anatolii **Slepyshev**, Alexi **Tyapushkin**, Yakov **Vinkovetsky**, Alexander **Zakharov** and Gennadii **Zubkov**.

The Kolodzei Collection, founded by Tatiana Kolodzei in Moscow during the height of the Cold War in the 1960's and continuing today with her daughter, Natalia, is one of world's largest private art collections, with over 7,000 pieces by more than 300 artists from Russia and the former Soviet Union, and chronicles four decades of nonconformist art from the post-Stalinist era to the present. The Kolodzei Art Foundation, Inc., a US-based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public foundation started in 1991, organizes exhibitions in museums and cultural centers in the United States, Russia and other countries, often utilizing the considerable resources of the Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art, arranges cultural exchanges and publishes books on Russian art. In 2011 the Kolodzei Art Foundation celebrates 20 years of supporting Russian and Eastern European Art.

For additional information visit www.KolodzeiArt.org or email Kolodzei@KolodzeiArt.org

Chelsea Art Museum, home of the Miotte Foundation, presents contemporary thematic exhibitions that foster critical thinking about today's world. CAM strives to cultivate respect for the world at large, exhibiting seminal, but relatively unexplored dimensions of 20th and 21st century art, particularly focusing on international artists that have less exposure in the United States. The museum is founded on the legacy of abstract expressionist painter, Jean Miotte, whose foundation is housed within the museum.

For additional information or to request images, please send an email to:
press@chelseaartmuseum.org

Chelsea Art Museum

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(212) 255.0719 ~ www.chelseaartmuseum.org

Museum hours:

Tue – Sat 11am – 6pm
Thursdays 11am – 8pm
Closed Sunday and Monday

General admission: \$8 for adults

Directions: C/E to 23rd Street and 8th Ave.

SPONSORS

This exhibition is made possible in part by the generous support of the Kolodzei Art Foundation.

