FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPENING JANUARY 26, 2013
Concerning the Spiritual In Russian Art, 1965-2011

MINNEAPOLIS (January 4, 2013)-- The Museum of Russian Art presents Concerning the Spiritual In Russian Art, 1965-2011, selections from the Kolodzei Art Foundation. Opening January 26th in the Museum’s Main and Mezzanine Galleries, the exhibition brings together seventy paintings, works on paper, photography, sculptures, and installations by forty-seven artists exploring themes of spirituality in the art of the Soviet Union and Russia. The title for the exhibition is derived from Wassily Kandinsky’s Concerning the Spiritual in Art of 1911, one of the 20th century’s most influential books on art theory.

Religion and spirituality played an important role in the post-Stalinist cultural revival as alternatives to Communist ideology. However, until Mikhail Gorbachev’s attempt to reform the Soviet regime, known as perestroika, the exploration of religion through art was unacceptable to Soviet authorities. Even the depictions of churches were considered religious propaganda. During the Soviet era, artworks with religious themes were often removed from exhibitions and banned from public display.

In spite of this, many Soviet artists transcended the anti-religious stance of the government by basing their art upon forbidden religious themes. Religious themes in nonconformist art, or unofficial art, as it was also called, served many purposes: an escape from day-to-day life, a private expression of faith, or a protest to government restrictions on religion.

With the birth of a free and democratic Russia, the lifting of the Iron Curtain in 1989, and access to free discourse and religious expression, Russian artists shifted their priority and perspective. Some artists tried to recapture a sense of what it meant to be Russian by turning to personal narrative subjects. By the mid-1990s, Russia had become part of the international art scene with many of its artists addressing subjects and ideas similar to those of their counterparts in London and New York.
This exhibition presents works by forty-seven artists who can be grouped generationally into three stages. The first group began their careers at the time of Nikita Khrushchev's "Thaw" and took part in the early unofficial exhibitions of the 1960s and 1970s. The second group of artists emerged in the late-1970s and early-1980s. The third group became known during the 1980s to the present. The artists in the exhibition include Anatoli Slepyshev, Francisco Infante, Petr Pushkarev, Gennadii Zubkov, Tatiana Levitskaia, Ernst Neizvestny, Dmitri Plavinsky, Oscar Rabin, Yakov Vinkovetsky, Alena Anosova, Olga Bulgakova, and Oleg Vassiliev, among others.

Museum Director and President Christopher DiCarlo commented, "We are pleased to present this selection of works of art from the world-class collection of the Kolodzei Foundation as a way to complement TMORA’s traditional focus on Soviet Realism by showing these visually and conceptually striking works by Soviet and contemporary Russian artists."

About the collection: The Kolodzei Collection, founded by Tatiana Kolodzei in Moscow during the height of the Cold War in the 1960s and continuing today with her daughter, Natalia, is one of the world’s largest private art collections. The comprehensive collection, with over 7,000 pieces by more than 300 artists from Russia and the former Soviet Union, chronicles four decades of nonconformist art from the post-Stalinist era to the present. The Kolodzei Art Foundation, Inc., a New Jersey based 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public foundation started in 1991, organizes exhibitions and cultural exchanges in museums and cultural centers in the United States, Russia, and other countries, publishes books on Russian art. For additional information visit http://KolodzeiArt.org.

Concerning the Spiritual in Russian Art, 1965-2011 is on view through June 9, 2013.

High-resolution images available upon request.

About The Museum of Russian Art (TMORA)

The Museum of Russian Art, a non-profit, educational institution, is the only museum in North America dedicated exclusively to the preservation and exhibition of all forms of Russian art and artifacts from many eras. TMORA is located in a state-of-the-art, historical building at 5500 Stevens Ave. S. (intersection of I-35W and Diamond Lake Road) in Minneapolis. Museum hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Monday-Friday), 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Saturday) and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (Sunday). Admission is $9 for adults, $7 for seniors, $5 for children 14 and up, as well as university students with ID; children under 14 are free. Museum members receive free admission. To learn more about the Museum’s exhibitions, events and history, visit http://tmora.org/ or call 612-821-9045.
Concerning the Spiritual In Russian Art, 1965-2011
Selections from the Kolodzei Art Foundation
The Museum of Russian Art
5500 Stevens Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55419
January 26 – June 9, 2013

List of Artists

Alena Anosova
Petr Belenok
Edward Bekkerman
Leonid Borisov
Farid Bogdalov
Olga Bulgakova
Oleg Bourov
Irene Caesar
Mihail Chemiakin
Sergei Denisov
Maria Elkonina
Rimma Gerlovina
Valeriy Gerlovin
Valerii Kendaurov
Anton S. Kandinsky
Konstantin Khudyakov
Vyacheslav Koleichuk
Vitaly Komar
Natalia Kostaki
Ivan Kolesnikov
Yefim Ladyzhensky
Valentina Lebedeva

Tatiana Levitskaia
Sergei Maliutin
Alexander Melamid
Artem Mirolevich
Igor Molochevski
Ernst Neizvestny
Natalia Nesterova
Shimon Okshteyn
Vladimir Ovchinikov
Dmitri Plavinsky
Valerii Pianov
Petr Pushkarev
Oscar Rabin
San San Kara (Alexander Karasev)
Ekatherina Savtchenko
Alexander Sitnikov
Eduard Shteinberg
Anatolii Slepyshev
Alexei Tyapushkin
Oleg Vassiliev
Yakov Vinkovetsky
Alexander Zakharov
Gennadii Zubkov