

Press Release

VIKTOR PIVOVAROV PAVEL PEPPERSTEIN

OPHELIA

6 April – 19 May 2012

Private View: Thursday 5 April, 6-8 pm

Opening Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10am-6pm



Pavel Pepperstein, *No. 1* from the series 'Ophelia', 2012

Regina Gallery is pleased to present a two-person show featuring father and son artists Viktor Pivovarov (b. 1937) and Pavel Pepperstein (b. 1966). Conceived as two separate bodies of work, the exhibition will include new large-scale paintings, drawings and watercolours by both practitioners, taking as their shared starting point scenes from the life of the Shakespearean character Ophelia.

For their first exhibition together in London, Pivovarov and Pepperstein have chosen a subject that fascinated the most English and bookish of early avant-gardes - the Pre-Raphaelites. Ophelia is perhaps best known through Millais' representation of her in the collection of Tate Britain. She is the lover of Hamlet, who drowns herself in Shakespeare's play when the Prince's family make efforts to misguidedly keep them apart.

For the current show, Pivovarov's works take the form of a personal diary, borrowing episodes from the story of this young girl, including her slow descent into madness. Pepperstein's watercolours follow on the narrative, meanwhile, describing a group of fish-tailed mermaids, perhaps as an allegory of what might of happened to Ophelia after her death, or what she might imagine for herself in another life. Pepperstein has also written of the two mermaids representing the coupling of the two languages that bridge the show - Russian and English.

For two artists for whom literary elements have always been extremely important, Viktor Pivovarov's practice is most closely linked to his early career. He began as a children's book illustrator during the 1960s and 70s. At that time in Moscow he developed in parallel to his professional output - and along with peers such as Ilya Kabakov - the form of the 'Album'. These conceptual series often followed a narrative logic, one drawing following on to the next, and allowed for private ideas to be passed around among members of the local underground scene.

Growing up in such surroundings - his father being a well-known illustrator and pioneer of conceptual art - it is perhaps unsurprising that Pepperstein's art has maintained such strong literary roots. This is exemplified by the fact that Pepperstein has himself authored several novels and continues to produce illustrations for his own stories. Pepperstein's work has also followed the form of an 'Album' at times, for example in his black and white illustrations for his book 'A Prague Night' published in 2011.

Whilst Pivovarov and Pepperstein have successfully developed distinctive artistic careers, belonging to two separate periods of Russian art history, their practices remain intimately linked. Pivovarov and Pepperstein's works often feature simply described characters, coloured with a sparse palette, and laid out on the page in a way that is familiar from the illustrations of earlier 20th Century practitioners from Aubrey Beardsley through to Robert Crumb. Pivovarov's work in particular takes the simple, autonomous character-types found in late-Malevich paintings, whilst Pepperstein's practice often refers back to the modernising projects of Suprematism and their visions of a future world. Pepperstein's work especially draws upon a language of signs, symbols and Utopic predictions.

The current show is one of only a few times the pair have worked together since their landmark project at Kunsthaus Zug in 1999. As such the exhibition offers a rare opportunity to compare and relate the practices of these two artists who are widely regarded as among the most innovative and challenging exponents of their generations.

Victor Pivovarov grew up in Moscow and since 1982 has lived and worked in Prague, Czech Republic. Recent group exhibitions include 'Undeniably Me' at the Galerie Rudolfinum, Praha (2011) and 'Ostalgia' at the New Museum, New York (2011). His solo exhibitions include 'Lemon Eaters' and 'Them', both held at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow (2006, 2011).

Pavel Pepperstein grew up in Moscow, where he continues to live and work. During the 1990s he was a founder member of the group 'Medical Hermeneutics Inspection'. Group exhibitions include 'Ostalgia' at the New Museum, New York (2011); 'Modernikon' at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2010); and 'Making Worlds' curated by Daniel Birnbaum at the 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice (2009). His first solo show at Regina Gallery was in 2000, titled 'The Russian Novel', and his most recent solo show at Regina London was 'From Mordor With Love' (2010).



Viktor Pivovarov, *Untitled*, 2003

About Regina Gallery

Regina Gallery was established by Vladimir and Regina Ovcharenko in Moscow in 1990, a time of startling change, political involvement and experimentation on the Russian art scene. It quickly earned a reputation as an urgent and unique platform, for performance in particular, hosting landmark projects with Moscow Actionists such as Oleg Kulik, as well as staging important group and solo shows by Soviet-generation conceptualists (Ivan Chuikov, Andrei Monastersky) and emerging artists from the former USSR (Pavel Pepperstein, Oleg Golosiy).

In April 2010 Regina Gallery opened a new space in London, situated at 22 Eastcastle Street in the arts-hub of Fitzrovia. The venue is the first permanent space run by Regina Gallery outside of Moscow, and continues to present the most exciting international art as well as focusing on established and emerging art from Russia and Ukraine. For many of these artists Regina Gallery provided the earliest opportunity to present their work to the public in a relatively free, independent context outside of the usual circle of official exhibitions and private apartment shows. Regina has since distinguished itself by being one of the most pioneering commercial galleries in Russia to develop an international program, giving exposure to now-established names from the USA and elsewhere (Gabriel Orozco, Jonathan Meese, Mike Kelley), as well as regularly collaborating with notable curators from across the world.

Regina Gallery regularly takes part in international art fairs including Art Basel, Frieze Art Fair, Art Basel Miami Beach and The Armory Show and its artists have been invited to take part in major shows including Documenta Kasel, São Paulo and Venice Biennials.

Regina currently represents around 30 established and emerging contemporary artists, including those from UK, France, Germany and elsewhere.

Current exhibitions:

Regina Moscow

Rose Wylie

3 February 2012 - 17 March 2012

Upcoming exhibitions:

Regina Moscow

Evgeniy Antufiev

21 March 2012 - 21 April 2012

Regina Moscow

Natasha Struchkova

27 April 2012 - 26 May 2012

Art Fairs:

8 - 11 March 2012: Armory Show

4 - 7 May 2012: Frieze New York

14 - 17 June 2012: Art 43 Basel

For further information and press enquiries please contact:

Alexandre Daletchine, alex@reginagallery.com, +44 207 636 7768