

VLAD KULKOV
MARBLES FROM HIROSHIMA

16/03 – 17/04
OPENING DAY: MARCH 15, 19:00

REGINA gallery is happy to present the new project of Vlad Kulkov “Marbles from Hiroshima”. The exhibition shows new experiments of the author in abstract art. “Marbles from Hiroshima” will be the 5th project of young promising artist from Saint-Petersburg in REGINA gallery.

Marbles from Hiroshima
(Notes on non-objectifiable “depths of things”)

This is not an image formulated by chance; indeed, the previous day in my hands appeared a small sachet with wonderful marbles – of transparent material, cylindered form, of subtle green nuance. Having read the annotation, I was surprised by the country and place of origin of this humble treasure: it was the hollow marbles from infamous Hiroshima.

The forces of chaos rose up at once in a form of vision: I imagined an explosion of overwhelming power which transforms creation and non-creation into the cloud of particles; the will, disintegrating and dressing in glass, destroying and crystallizing everything perceptible and known, present, the very matter of the physical presence. In the end, the existence of substance is wholly replaced by the power of this synthesis, deformation of space. Onward we encounter only various marbles as a trace of something that can be found as creation. Everything is reduced to the existence of marbles: society and its icons, the beautiful and imperfect, the traditional and anew, is transformed into sparkling particles. They are gathered and sold as souvenirs, just like traces of this catastrophe in mass culture are recklessly marketed today, without accepting the depth of such a dangerous step off the limits in human vision of state of matter. That is to say, only the graceful witness of enormous destructive outburst remains. Thus, I can go further to other visions that interest me sincerely.

Abstraction that balances on the brink of phenomenal and unseen and, on the other hand, essentially incorporates these grounds, is able to present itself as a colorful and spectacular, attracting adventure; yet as we know, even scary and destructive things may appear in perfect plastic, though they might ideologically be charged with anxiety, provoking rejection. The veil of un-being which deprives of real is draped upon them. Yet the processes of destruction and creation are essentially beautiful, solemn (but solely), they shed the vigorous glow of primal chaos. That's how the witnesses of these processes and phenomena are fixed in scenes of wonderful colors and proportions. To sum up, now we have many opportunities to observe unbelievable pictures of destruction of anything and everything and that seems to provoke the necessity to accept a-morphousness as the model of future. Understanding the nature of explosion helps not to dissolve oneself into myriads of marbles. All the more so as the East shows: the great image is of no form.

Vlad Kulkov

To characterize the art of Vlad Kulkov in a nutshell, it is of speed and spiral.

The image, like falling serpentine, tends downwards to meet the surface – it will remain a trace on it: a witness, or maybe a gift. Like a face put under the rain or anything else at hand for the urgent reception of godsend, the surface-picture here is secondary to the appearance – miraculous or just pleasant one. The rounding forms won't stop – the picture will continue with certainty, reveal itself in another picture, like an easy party boy on another night out. This art lives separate from the picture, the picture lags behind its speed.

In a new series of works presented at the exhibition "Marbles from Hiroshima" the abstract forms are seamlessly transformed into pseudo-natural ones – a sudden revenge of symbolism with its ivy and spikes. However, it's not an ordered labyrinth, but natural growth – not a French garden, but an English one. A demented emblem of USSR; intergrowth which is set free – as a seminal principle: let us just remember another artist from Saint-Petersburg, Pavel Filonov, and his "Song of world growth".

It can be said that art of Vlad Kulkov is the "written" art – like "writing", lettering. But it is not the power of calligraphy where a text dares to be more than a text – and remains a text. Rather, it refers to an autograph – for example, an autograph of a cinema star: a trace left – no matter where and how – by someone extremely important. Like rain or godsend.

Having spirally fallen and rounded up, the pictorial trace will continue with certainty – in another place, will fall and, again, round itself – with delight of a sleeper among the partygoers, with bounty of a neglected garden. "Where I am – there is the feast".

This art will not stop – the feast has a spiral form.

Victor Alimpiev

Vlad Kulkov is a compelling figure living and working in ex-Leningrad – exactly on the ruins of that fine city on the banks of Neva where 'New artists', such an important movement for Russian contemporary art, once emerged. But as the years slid by, only the name and decent heritage remain of 'New artists' and Kulkov should not be classified among their successors. Vlad is different; he is unlike everything that happens on the Russian art-scene. Abstract swirls, transforming into pillars of unimaginable coloration on canvas, and broadly figurative characters with gay smileys (though his interest in them seems to be temporarily lost) get along together in his artistic mind.

However, that's all irrelevant, just to begin with. To come over to facts, it is necessary to mention several landmarks of his career which are usually omitted in press-releases.

Vlad Kulkov is the only Russian artist whose works are held in Hort Family Collection (New York-LA), these are gross collectors of emerging art from New York, they gather works of growing stars. Also, sketches of Kulkov – unfortunately, you will not see them on that exhibition – were published by Phaidon publishing house in the book Vitamin-D2, an overview of the best recent works on paper. To a certainty, this also means nothing to the auditory... It is on about low awareness of the common man and casts a shadow upon the activity of educational institutions, and partly of the gallery itself as an institution. We will fill the gaps and give more information to the public.

The exhibition demonstrates one of the most active abstract artists of our times. He could be compared with celebrated representative of Leningrad abstract art-scene – Eugene Mikhnov-Voytenko (this name is familiar to you, I hope) in his reception of color and ability to transfer it on canvas at the touch of a button. But that analogy is too rude – unfortunately, history of Russian abstract art is not rich in names that lived through ages and are somehow familiar to the contemporary auditory.

It is the fifth exhibition of Vlad's works in REGINA gallery and each of them remained in mind in one's way. The first took place in 2008 at the «market top», as my colleagues tend to remember; the works of Vlad were fresh and sudden for then existing context and went to a dozen of various collections, including museum ones. His subsequent projects came more quietly, not in quite the same conditions, but always were notable for new elements that were embedded in the works or used in the work with space. This time he decided to restrict himself only with canvases painted in recent years – a stern and serious exhibition of abstract art.

Mikhail Ovcharenko

Vlad Kulkov was born in Liepaja (Latvia) in 1986. Graduated from Saint-Petersburg Art and Industry Academy; a PhD student at the Russian Museum. His solo exhibitions were held in Artberloga, Moscow (2010); he participated in The Armory show (2011) and in the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007). His works are held in collections of the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, The Hort Family Collection (USA) and in private collections in Russia and abroad. Kulkov lives, studies and works in Saint-Petersburg.