

PRESS RELEASE

Egor Koshelev
LAST ARTIST AND EXHIBITION WHICH HAS NEVER HAPPENED

08/04/2011 – 14/05/2011
Private Viewing: Thursday, 7th April, 7-9 p.m.

Regina Berloga is pleased to present a solo show of Egor Koshelev 'Last Artist And Exhibition Which Has Never Happened'.

'How today are creative pursuits and an exhibition's activity related? An artist works relentlessly, but the rhythm of exhibition life passes by – fatally keeping a sort of distance-lag – it can be reduced but not eliminated. If you paint a picture a year, this is a lost year – the contemporary artist understands this. If your masterpieces remain outside an exhibition space – it means there was no purpose in creating them.

Whatever you do, you must not disappear from sight, and if you do nothing, don't be ashamed to show it – in fact this seems to be the position of the majority of people, who claim. They are doing art. At the level of manifestation this operates rather well, but in fact the artist inevitably feels the incessant demands of gallery and exhibition spaces that are addressed to him. He is not able, in a full sense, to be free. He is no longer even himself – the environment, which would seem to be no more than a receptacle for pre-fabricated works, becomes a conductor of the peremptory will of society applied to art. In other words, the artist is not *in an empty space*, but in a region of hidden expectations, which are always disappointed. Each of today's exhibitions, in this sense represents the superposition of two exhibitions – those held, and those failed. The ability of the artist to fill the 'gap' between them makes it truly interesting. But hold on, hold on! – I do not want this meaning to be distorted metaphysically. Here the very simple and oblivious context take place – 'too beautiful', 'too primitive', 'too much of politics/nakedness/green', 'too many/few, too big/small works'. The artist is only able to give what he gives, but when his efforts obtain the form of an exhibition, even a successful one, the range of its influence spans from 'not really much' to 'totally wrong' (a failure will result in filling/rubbishing the environment). And here, as if to spite the happiness of metaphysical gentlemen, comes the assumption about the existence of a certain intelligible exhibition, which is 'exactly the very one'. To refute such an assumption is possible, having only shown it as inexistent – an extremely attractive aim for me, since the substantial part of my ideas will never be embodied in a way I would like to see. Now it is the physical presence of this impossibility that will become the main motive, which should sound.

In spite of everything the never happened takes its shape, and the Last Artist acts as an agent-mediator (let us immediately reject the pathos-arousing representation of the artist as superman – it's more likely *the last of all artists*). The described type of artist, by definition, cannot make anything 'happen' (i.e. successfully held) – so there is not a more effective way to carry out a non-existent exposition, that to entrust its creation to the artist. Over the last few years I have accumulated a whole series of projects, which for one reason or another have never been realised – something has remained at a draft level, something exists as in a couple of lines in my moleskin or just an idea which now and then returns to me as a question of one of Pasolini's characters: 'Why create art work, when it is so wonderful just to dream about them'. Here he comes, the Last Artist! – now I know who to offer this honorary position of the sewage pipe cleaner of my imagination...

Sometimes the intrusive presence of the Last Artist in my works results from my reflections about the phenomenon of a creative person in Russia and the way this strange figure (our local type of artist is rather weird – he constantly feels odd, useless, always ready to fail... like a disabled looking for a crutch) acts in a cultural space – what he is ready to do to make a name... In this context my character is an anonymous artist (at times queerly resembling myself) who realizes his uselessness and trying to overcome it he takes up one or another stance (for example, a socially orientated realistic art). However, each time he perceives its meaninglessness, and still he keeps on doing something, desperately watching how his hands turn into soulless instrument which endlessly replicates alien cliches and matrix. All that remains to do here is either refuse/stop (but the energy of our hero is more than enough for another 10 lives), or voluntarily acknowledge everything produced as rubbish and find excuses by means of critical commentary. And it is this critical ability that becomes the last straw of the "Last Artist".

Egor Koshelev, 2011

The exhibition runs from the 8th April to the 14th May
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