

## MARIA SEREBRIAKOVA | *SUSPISCOUS GARDEN*

10 DECEMBER 2010 – 20 JANUARY 2011

Private View: Thursday 9 December, 6-9 pm

Regina London is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Russian artist Maria Serebriakova. Although she has exhibited extensively throughout Europe and in her native country, this will be the first major display to be staged in the UK. The exhibition reflects Serebriakova's current focus on painting and drawing, with elements such as landscapes and commonplace objects reoccurring in her highly personal imagery achieved through minimal means and employed with a particular subtlety of touch. The exhibition includes new large-scale paintings in acrylic, as well as several cycles of works on paper.

Serebriakova was born in Moscow 1965, and she currently travels back and forth primarily to Belgium, France, Germany and her home country. Her work therefore encapsulates both her Russian heritage and the various cultural traditions and life-styles she encounters. This lifestyle of Serebriakova and many of her generation is often referred to as 'artistic nomadism'. However, the working habits and inspiration for Serebriakova's work can also be traced back to the Russian 'Peredvizhniki' (wanderer) movement which was defined by an exceptionally emotional connection to landscape. The influence of the Russian Conceptualism movement of the late 80's can also be observed in Serebriakova's work; the inclusion of various objects in her work and the metaphorical status they are given allows Serebriakova to assign to them subjective and poetic meaning, irrespective of their practical use.

The title of the current exhibition is taken from the main cycle of works on paper on display, 'Suspicious Garden'. This shows the life-cycle of a field of anthropomorphic plants, whose green leaves and bright red petals continue to glow in the nighttime, as they blossom, reproduce and ultimately fade away. Here, the artist addresses the theme of life in a highly evocative manner, revealing an interest in narrative through symbolism and suggestion, whilst describing only the fewest of details. Elsewhere, imagery such as the falling snow in a landscape, that descends from the sky in uniform Modernist grids, continue to suggest that the language and pared-back vocabulary of conceptual art can be employed in a highly subjective, lyrical manner.

Serebriakova followed her vocational training course at art school, with preliminary art courses in preparation for art academy. However, she abandoned her studies upon discovering the avant-garde artists of the twentieth century which profoundly resonated with her. The influence of avant-garde period on her work can be observed, yet she predominantly follows her own pathway. A major turning point for Serebriakova, and which propelled her recognition as a major Russian artist was when she participated in Jan Hoet's prestigious Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany 1992. Aged just twenty seven, she was the youngest artist exhibited. Her work has also been internationally shown at ICA, Boston; at Zeno X Gallery, Belgium, and Giorgio Persano, Italy; and in the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. Her solo and group exhibitions include the Centre for Contemporary Art in Oslo, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and Regina Gallery, Moscow, with whom she first exhibited in 2002.

In his essay 'At the Borderlands of Memory and Desire', Mark Gisbourne describes Serebriakova as having established 'her own visual language' which combines photography, drawing, collage, sculpture and installation. Her focus is on everyday objects including chairs, books and tables which she observes as being 'lifeless' and having become void of all meaning. She 're-charges' these objects by removing them from their everyday contexts and presents them in a way which provokes a more complex and original understanding. Her work corresponds closely with the phrase by twentieth century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence'. Wittgenstein understood that not all can be expressed with language and that art has a significant role to play in allowing otherwise 'silent' ideas and subjects to 'speak'.

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