

PRESS-RELEASE

PHOBIA

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For myself this *Phobia* show sums up the quest I had during the last year. Unlike my previous personal display, its structure is much more complicated for, besides painting, it will present graphic works and objects, and the issues raised in my works cover a wide specter of things ranging from painterly interpretation of the sign to acute social phenomena.

The exhibition project got its name from my work with the same title which, from my point of view, is an exact enough reflection of the outlook of a modern Russian person. The phobia is an increasing feeling of fear triggered by uncontrollable economic and political processes – and today it is, perhaps, the only psychological factor to unite us. It is fear the of authorities, which is no less than the fear of the lack of authority, it is the fear of oneself and of others: of strangers, newcomers; the fear of reality perceived in its inherent existence, countless everyday fears... Our society is seeping with fear: it is in the hysterical temper of clerks at the next table in some café who are afraid to lose their job, it is the frustration of the creative class representatives who were literally wiped off from life by the crisis, it is in the appearance and the behavior of migrant workers who were made almost slaves by our irresistible yearning for wealth – many miles of fences of the elite suburb settlements and the rhetoric of TV news are its evidence.

Phobia offers different perspectives and points of view upon the causes and the forms fear is manifested in as it utilizes a whole specter of aesthetical influences ranging from Soviet fresco painting to Neo Dada, Neo- and Post Graffitiism. Here the enlarged depictions of signs characterizing my early works acquire the quality of the sociocultural metaphor, and traditional painting often gives place to an objects-painting where the painterly gesture apprehends non-aesthetical surfaces, like fragments of fences, old bedcovers, furniture fragments, etc.

Besides a letter, a sign, works of this display often feature extensive text fragments: the author's criticism, remarks overheard in the subway, transformed advertisement pitches – their form varies from the expressive rude language of lower classes and marginal subcultures to the ambiguous conceptualist's play with words and the potential of writing. The text goes through its elementary incarnations in the painted part of the display, it acquires the characteristics of a program statement and extensive comment outside it, being broadcast through the act of writing, and, depending on the characteristics of the surface, writing is transformed as a gesture, covering in its totality different plastic levels of display. Writing intrudes everywhere, providing the form and the meaning for all components of the artistic plan – it balances the painting with the found fragment of a plank or a piece of paper, while writing gives value to waste. In its total effect the process of writing can efficiently oppose the totality of fear, for the process of writing is available to everyone, and it could give creative potential to everyone, turning an ordinary person into an artist, a box zombie-of-a-slave turns into a powerful protest unit. Thus my *Phobia* does not only postulate the current sociocultural situation, it also provides a way to resolve it – a way that is available to each of us – and the way that seems to be ultimately simple and, at the same time, capable of bringing about decisive change.