

Mother Russia

俄國仕女圖

Introduction from the curator

I think this show is about beauty. What is beauty? What are the canons of contemporary beauty? As we know from reading the history of art, its representation changes in relation to its time. The interpretation that artists have given to beauty in history reflect tastes and moods of society.

In her shots Esipovich, almost opposing an idealized and overbearing version of beauty, claims an aesthetic of 'ugly', if not grotesque. While noting the dwarf, is spontaneous referring to Hugo's characters, as well to the echoes of Milton when looking at women's decaying bodies, whose former glory is obscured by time as in a sort of 'Paradise Lost'. In this tension we recognize the desire for a romantic beauty, dynamic, discordant, always changing. 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty' in the words of John Keats. More than words, the images of Esipovich, seem to produce reality. And in doing so meet the need of a universal communication, which opens the door to the Absolute. This is a strong connection to the writings of the German poet Friedrich Schlegel and to the concept of romantic irony which helps to address a dialogue with serious and challenging contents without losing one's own subjectivity.

In the images of Anastasia Khoroshilova, portraits of nuns refer to a practical understanding of beauty, which seems to reflect the strict morality of the religious themselves. Portrayed in their simplicity and in the act of carrying out daily activities (such as milking a cow, or combing a horse) these nuns communicate through their faces dedication and efficiency. In some ways her portraits brings us back to the Flemish Dutch painting of the seventeenth century, to certain works by Johannes Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch, Nicolaes Maes and other representatives of the Dutch Golden Age. With the use of black and white, Khoroshilova gives greater austerity to this representation and beauty appears as the triumph of the soul over the body.

策展人語

我認為，這個展覽的主旨是美。甚麼是美？當代的美又有麼規範？自閱讀藝術的歷史得知，美的呈現隨著時間，社會的品味及心境轉變。是次展覽將透過比較一群新晉俄羅斯攝影師，從而對美這題目開展首次的地域探討。

Esipovich的照片彰顯了「醜」（若不被視為是奇異怪誕的話）的美學觀，幾乎顛覆了人們對美的理想化和傲慢的描述。看到侏儒便很自然地想到雨果筆下的人物，一如看到女性衰敗的身軀，便聯想起彌爾頓（John Milton）《失樂園》中時間對風華絕代的鞭撻。在如此綳緊的拉力下，我們明白到浪漫的美、活力、不和諧的慾望一直不斷在改變。濟慈（John Keats）說過：「美就是真實，真實的美。」（Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty）更勝語，Esipovich的影像似乎是在製造現實；同時，也滿足了世界通用溝通的需要，打開了通往Absolute之門。這跟德國詩人施萊格爾（Friedrich Schlegel）的作品和浪漫的反諷概念有著強烈的連繫，在處理對話時既要有認真和具挑戰的內容，卻又不失個人的主觀性。

在Anastasia Khoroshilova拍攝的人像照，修女們展視了對美的一種實際理解，這似在反映宗教中嚴謹的道德觀。相中修女們的簡樸生活，做著日常的工作（例如擠牛奶或替馬兒梳毛），通過她們的臉容，表達出專注和效率。在某些方面而言，Khoroshilova的相片把我們帶回十七世紀荷蘭佛蘭德地區的畫作，甚至是維梅爾，霍赫（Pieter de Hooch），梅茲（Nicolaes Maes）和「荷蘭黃金時代」其他代表人物的一些作品。利用了黑白二色，Khoroshilova在表達上突出了極大的制約，美就如靈魂戰勝了肉體般呈現。

Mother Russia

俄國仕女圖

It is difficult to decipher the concept of beauty that can be found in the series of Olga Chagaoutdinova on women prisoners in Russia. Yet inevitably we find ourselves within the thinking of the twentieth century and with all that this century of extreme antithesis, of continuous discovery and accelerated destructions has represented. Women annihilated by deprivation of freedom, remind us of the mental and spiritual decline of modernity. We are faced, as the essayist Umberto Eco warned, with the polytheism of Beauty, where it is no longer possible to find an ideal. The model of beauty is what individuals filter from the mass media. A beauty that can be masculine, provocative, moderate and forgotten. Yet, as for what is often required by consumer society, almost ironically, these portraits redeemed from their uselessness show us a beauty sometimes unexpected.

In the photos of Sasha Rudensky, the expression of the women portrayed becomes private and inward looking. Almost mysterious. Women are engaged as the author stated "in a self-conscious performance of identity creation", rather than in a challenge of emancipation which also figures in the swordswoman with mask and shorts. The male haircut with biceps in evidence reflect almost androgynous desires and the woman in traditional dress appears somewhat fake and adolescent. A generation disoriented, who act life in order to not feel abandoned. Yet symbolism pervades these images, presenting as well, young people needing to find new ways of understanding reality and new sources of revelation. There is a soft mysticism, full of sensuality, reminiscent of the themes of a decadent sensibility and of an epiphanic vision as described by Walter Pater. Strange colors, strange poses, strange faces all bring us to a transcendent Beauty and somehow to the imagery of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

This exhibition is the second stage of a research project started in 2011 that aims to investigate through photography the concept of beauty and its representation in the digital and postmodern age. The photographers, all from Russia, have gathered in 2012 at AsoloArtFilmFestival in Italy to show the face of female portrait photography. The exhibition looks at how women are represented in modern day society and their role in the transformation of Russia. The exhibition is especially timely in the light of the two year sentences handed down to the members of Russian punk/ art collective Pussy Riot.

Steve Bisson, curator

*Steve Bisson is the chief editor of the Journal of Photography Urbanautica and founder of PhotoExhibitions.org. Since 2011 he becomes the art director of AsoloArtFilmFestival.

Olga Chagaoutdinova所拍攝的俄羅斯女性在囚人仕系列作品中，所表達美的概念真的很難解釋。但卻無可避免地把我們帶進二十世紀的思想，在這個時期中所代表的極端對比、不斷發現、及加速破壞的想法。女性因自由被剝奪而被消滅，提醒我們當代的精神和心靈的淪落。正如散文作家艾柯 (Umberto Eco) 的警告，我們所面對的是多重主義的美，當中已無可能找到一個最理想的美的境界。個人對美的楷模是個人從大眾媒體中過濾出來的。美可以是剛陽的、挑畔的、溫和的，甚至是被遺忘的。在消費社會所需求下，諷刺地，這些人像照從無價值中被救贖，並向我們表現出令人意想不到的美。

Sasha Rudensky的攝影作品中，女性的表情變得很個人化，又沉靜內向，甚至近乎神秘。如作者所述「身份創造中自覺性的表演」，女性並非只是帶上面具和穿上短褲，以女鬥士般的姿態向解放挑戰，而是積極參與。男性化的髮型和二頭肌明顯反映了對中性化的慾望，而穿上傳統裙子的女性看來是有點造作和年少無知。一個沒有方向的時代，人們生活不過是不想感到被遺棄而已。象徵主義瀰漫、充斥著這些圖像，表現出年青人需要尋找新方法去理解現實和揭露現實的新源泉。這是一種軟性的神秘論，充滿了感官享受、引人聯想起佩特 (Walter Pater) 描述頹廢的感性和使人頓悟的幻覺的主題。奇異的色彩、姿態、和面容，全都把我們帶進超凡的美，有如前拉菲爾派兄弟會畫家的意象。

這次展覽是一個研究計劃的第二階段。這個研究計劃在2011年開展，目的是通過攝影去研究美，以及美在數碼時代和後現代時代中的表現。參展的攝影師全都是來自俄羅斯，他們在2012年在意大利舉行的Asolo藝術電影節中集合起來，展示女性人像照攝影的一面。這次展覽探討女性如何在現代社會中呈現自己，以及她們在俄羅斯的轉變中所擔當的角色。正當俄羅斯流行樂隊Pussy Riot的成員剛被判監兩年，這次展覽可說是來得特別合時。

策展人 Steve Bisson

Steve Bisson是攝影網站Urbanautica的主編和PhotoExhibitions.org的創辦人自2011年起，他擔任意大利Asolo藝術電影節的藝術總監

Alla Esipovich

<http://esipovich.com>

Alla Esipovich was born in Leningrad 1963, graduated from the State University of Arts and Culture majoring in Cultural Studies and Art-expertise. Alla Esipovich is the prize-winner of the competition «Se-Zam 2002» for the series «Portraits» in «SPb.Sobaka.ru» where she was the head of the photo-department in 2000–2004. 2005– participation in Portfolio «Russian Contemporary photography» for the exhibition «Russia», New-York, Guggenheim Museum.

‘No Comment’

We see photographs of elderly people, representing various professions and different social classes. All this is straight photography, without any computer working or printing ploys. The fashionable media nuance is unrequired; the task here is something quite different. It is cardinaly important that there should be nothing started; nothing “stagey”. There is also the ethical problem regarding the manipulation of old men and women and making them pose. Yet the artist does not make them do this. If they themselves want to pose, regarding the situation of self-demonstration and self-presentation as same way of manifesting their own identity, they are welcome to do so. The social aspect? This is also present in the series. It is impossible to live society and be free of society, according to Vladimir Lenin, the creator of the very society in which the heroes and heroines spent most of their lives. There is indeed much is Soviet and much that is social here

– in the outer appearance of heroes and heroines, in the patterns of their behaviour and in the typical interiors. There are, however, no Conceptual or Art accents, even though the material could have led onto this. One photograph of an interior, for example, dolls co-exist with images of the Madonna and Lenin. The attention is not, however, specially focused on this. As Russian artist Eric Bulatov used to say, this is the “parallel reality” of our existence – and no more. There are also sing of a local cultural contiguity. The photographs are all of Leningraders, who only recently became Peterburgers. While these aspects sometimes attract our attention, they are not the most important things. What is? Why does the artist reject so many attractive– media, staged-playful, social-emblematic– baits, to which both socially advanced and simple viewers are so prone?

Alla Esipovich, 1963出生在列寧格勒, 畢業於國立藝術和文化大學, 主修文化研究和藝術專業。Alla Esipovich在«SPb.Sobaka.ru»舉辦的«Se-Zam 2002»比賽中以«人像照(Portraits)»的攝影系列得獎。2000–2004年, 她是該組織攝影部的主管。2005年, 她以«俄羅斯當代攝影(Russian Contemporary photography)»作品集參加紐約古根漢美術館(Guggenheim Museum)舉行的«俄羅斯(Russia)»展覽。

「No Comment」
(不予置評) 系列

我看到老人家的照片, 代表了各種專業和不同的社會階層。這些攝影作品, 都沒有經過任何電腦或沖印的特別改造。這些照片不需要潮流性的媒體作任何輕微改動; 但卻有一個不太一樣的要求。首要的是, 沒有任何的驅動, 沒有任何的造作。這也關乎對於要操控老公公和老婆婆擺姿勢引來的道德問題。然而, 藝術家並沒有強迫他們做出任何姿勢。但如他們想做擺出任何姿勢以展現自我和表現自我, 並表達他們的自我身份, 他們完全可以按自己的意願去做。社會的尊重? 這個觀念亦在此系列中表現出來。為英雄們創造社會的列寧說過, 要生活在社會的同時亦免於社會限制根本是不可能的。這真的, 當中很多都在反映在蘇聯時代, 尤其當時的社會狀況, 英雄們的外表、行為的

模式、和典型的內部心理。那些都沒有強調概念或藝術, 儘管它有本應可以將它引領進去的原素。例如, 有一幅拍攝室內的照片, 一些洋娃娃跟麥當娜和列寧的影像同時出現。可是, 注意力卻不在於此。如俄羅斯藝術家Eric Bulatov時常說, 我們的出現不過是「平行的現實」, 沒有其他了。同樣, 亦有歌頌本土文化的匯聚。照片中全部都是來自列寧格勒的人, 而他們不過是最近才成為了聖彼德堡人。當這些東西吸引我們的關注, 但他們卻不是好重要的。那麼, 什麼可是最重要? 為什麼藝術家拒絕那麼多吸引人的原素—媒介、嬉戲鬧劇、有典型社會象徵—這些不都是無論是社會先進和簡單的讀者都傾向喜歡的看點嗎?

Anastasia Khoroshilova

<http://www.khoroshilova.net>

Anastasia Khoroshilova was born in Moscow in 1978. Since 1997 membership in “The Russian Union of Art Photographers”. She holds studies of Photography at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Folkwang School), Germany by Prof. Joerg Sasse, passed with distinction from 1999-2004. Since 2007 she lives and works in Berlin and Moscow. Since 2012 lecturer for “Project Photography” at The Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia.

‘The Obedient’

In the mechanism of boarding schools, orphanages, shelters and religious educational institutions one important condition predominates: an order and rules of stay in community are established besides will and desire of the individuals who live, want to live, must live in it. Exactly, the requirement for them (rules) is dictated by completely not personal aspirations, but external reality situations of people. Such “closed” groups seem to me, are always represented to me by “islands” in infinite society of the modern world. First of all, I am interested in “points of intersection” of global social space with the ordinary device, “charter” of the separate social structures, which are designed, as a rule, counting on absence of an extraneous sight. Any “testimony” given by the person from outside, unmasks the difficult psychological constitution of mutual relations existing in this kind of community, reveals individual signs, “the labels” identifying the person. The person is released for some time from the established conventions in the “Closed group”,

it slightly opens a protective cover. In the work Obedient, all these issues seem to me to be very different. Voluntary acceptance of the monastic way of life, which is unconditional and unique, because of nun’s internal requirement of religious, Christian service forms, is to me an absolutely other system of mutual relations with “the worldly” observer. More likely, this is an unostentatious invitation to dialogue, which extent and depth depend more on the openness of the “visitor”, from his desire and possibilities to understand and estimate «the obedience» of monastic life. Simplicity and naturalness of female monastic obedience and its specific harmony have formed a basis for the idea and the concept of my work “Obedient”. It unexpectedly seemed to me, that the diligence, sincerity and majestic mildness of “sisters” identify and unite much more than daily prayers and cares of monastic duties. In the individual has appeared something more “general and high”.

Anastasia Khoroshilova, 1978年在莫斯科出生。自1997年起，成為俄羅斯藝術家聯盟(The Russian Union of Art Photographers)成員。1999-2004年，她在德國Duisburg-Essen大學(Folkwang學院)修讀攝影，師承Joerg Sasse教授，並以優異成績畢業。從2007年起，她在柏林和莫斯科生活和工作。從2012年，她在The Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia教授項目攝影(“Project Photography”)。

「The Obedient」 (服從者)系列

寄宿學校、孤兒院、收容所和宗教教育機構的機制裡，都被一個十分重要的規條支配著：要留下來就要遵守命令和規條，無關居住當中的人、想進入當中的人、或必需進駐的當中人的意願或渴求。正是這樣，規條就完全不需要從個人的意願出發，而是以局外人的實際情況來主宰。此等「封閉式」組群對我來說，就如同現代世界裡無限個社會中的「島嶼」。首先，我對全球社會空間和普通設置的「交叉點」很感興趣，不同的社會結構都有它為自己精心設計，並沒有依靠外來觀測所定下的規條。由局外人給予的任何「推薦」，都會揭露在這些社會上。人與人之間複雜的心理關係，

同時也揭示了社會中存在不同的個體，每個人會被不同的「標籤」而區分。修女人們因著信仰，自願地接受修道院的生活，這是無條件和獨有的。宗教服務於我而言，是另一套「世界」觀察者的相互關係。更可能是的，樸實的對話邀請，其廣度和深度取決於「觀察者」的開放態度了、其慾望和可能性去了解和估計「服從者」的僧侶生活。女性僧侶式的服從性既簡樸又自然，其獨特的和諧態度形成了「服從者」的想法和概念。對我來說，是意想不到的，修女們的勤奮、真誠和高貴的溫柔，所揭示的身份和團結的概念比每日祈禱和重視修道責任還要多。這些個人顯得比一般人更高於一些。

Olga Chagaoutdinova

<http://olgachagaoutdinova.com>

Olga Chagaoutdinova studied Russian language and world literature at pedagogical University of Khabarovsk from 1987–1993. She graduated then in historical culturology at Republican Institute for Humanities in St. Petersburg. Her interest in art started later in Canada where she received a MFA in photography in 2008. Olga Chagaoutdinova's work is included in several collections. She now lives and teaches in Canada. In 2012 she received Eleonora Duse Award at Asolo Art Film Festival and she curated 'Borderless International Exhibition' at Havana Biennale in Cuba.

“The zone ‘Prisoners’”

“Prisoners,” begun in 2005 and continued for two years, is a series of psychological portraits taken in a women's prison in the Russian Far East. The intent of the project was to observe human existence in a panoptic and punishing environment. Extended interviews with the prisoners allowed me to investigate the notion of personal identity, virtually extinguished under the pressure and rules of the penal system. Gender issues and the official suppression of sexuality within the penitentiary system constituted a further

aspect of my study. Another important intent was to examine the idea of portraits. The everyday life, modern world is full of portraits, which I think may not really tell anything significant about the subject. In the Zone series I wanted to see if the portrait could tell the viewer anything about the situation it captured. Looking at faces as a map of life, eyes as a mirror of the soul, and expressions as a witness to the human condition, I wanted the viewer to decide what these portraits conveyed.

Olga Chagaoutdinova, 1987–1993年在Khabarovsk大學修讀俄語和世界文學。她隨後在聖彼德 Republican Institute for Humanities 歷史文化學畢業。她對藝術的興趣如於她在2008年在加拿大取得攝影藝術碩士學位。Olga Chagaoutdinova的作品被廣泛收藏。現時她在加拿大居住和教學。在2012年，她獲頒Asolo Art Film Festival的Eleonora Duse獎，並在古巴夏灣拿雙年展中「無國界國際展覽 (Borderless International Exhibition)」擔任策展人。

「The zone “Prisoners”」 系列

「The zone “Prisoners”」（「囚犯」區）系列在2005開始拍攝，進行了兩年。這是在俄羅斯遠東地區一個女子監獄內拍攝的一系列心理畫像。這個拍攝計劃的目的是要觀察在全景敞視和懲治的境域下人性的存在。通過深入的訪談，讓我研究個人身份的概念，它在懲罰制度下實際上已蕩然無存。在監獄制度內的性別問題和對性慾的正式壓制成為這個研究的延申方向。在現代世

界中，每一天的生活都滿佈畫像，然而，我認為這不一定能真正告訴我們畫像有什麼重要性。在「The zone “Prisoners”」的系列中，我想知道，這些人像照能否為讀者揭示，按下快門時所捕捉到的情景。看著這些臉容，就像是生命的地圖一樣，她們的眼睛就是靈魂的鏡子，而表情就是人性狀況的目擊者。我希望讀者自己決定這些人像照想帶出的意思。

Sasha Rudensky

<http://www.sasharudensky.com>

Sasha Rudensky was born in 1979 in Moscow, Russia. She studied Studio Art and Russian Literature at Wesleyan University where she received a BA in 2001. She received her MFA in photography from Yale University in 2008. Sasha is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography at Wesleyan University. She resides in Brooklyn, NY.

'Russian Women'

I photograph to preserve the complexity of the lives I encounter, each of my subjects a version of myself that never left Moscow: a student; a young mother; an aging dissident; an androgynous westerner. This body of work cultivates a posture that is simultaneously that of an earnest documentarian and a fiction writer. I seek to manufacture a fragmented, contradictory world of the newly minted Eastern Europe, engaged in a self-conscious performance of identity creation. My subject is an orphan generation of Russians and Ukrainians who have come of age in a social vacuum,

having disowned their past, but lacking any means of orientation within the present. The characters that I photograph are part archetype and part invention. My process of casting and directing mimics my models' conscious and subconscious editing of their public identities, inviting me to fashion them into the impossible prototypes of myself that never existed. The pictures negotiate that boundary between fiction and truth, performance and social document, reflecting the frayed edges of the constructed world that is contemporary Russia as it exists and as I invent it to be.

Sasha Rudensky，1979年在莫斯科出生。她在Wesleyan大學修讀工作室藝術和俄羅斯文學，於2001年獲得學士學位。2008年，她在耶魯大學獲得攝影藝術碩士學位。現任Wesleyan大學攝影副教授，並居於紐約布魯克林。

「Russian Women」 (俄羅斯女性) 系列

我拍攝是為了保留我在生活中遇到的複雜事情。每一個題材都是代表著從未離開莫斯科的我：一個學生、年青的母親、一個年紀漸老的異見人士、一個中性化的西方人。這些作品同時培育了認真紀實小說家和虛構小說家的態度。我追求在新打造出來的東歐製造一個不完整、充滿矛盾的世界，它糾結在身份創造中的自我意識表現。我的題材是俄羅斯人和烏克蘭人被遺棄的一代，他們在社會真空的時期中成長，要放棄以前的

種種，但又在當下缺乏任何能自我定位的方法。我拍攝的人物一部份是原型，一部份是虛構的。在試鏡和指導模特兒模仿意識和編改他們公眾身份的潛意識時，讓我把他們塑造造成不可存在的原型。這些照片是在探究虛構和真實、表演和社會實錄的分界線上，反映在編造的世界中所磨損的邊緣，這正是真實存正的當代俄羅斯，也是我虛構而成的俄羅斯。