

SERGEI BORISOV. ZEITGEIST

DATES:

MAY 18 – JUNE 18, 2017

VENUE:

MMOMA, ERMOLAEVSKY 17

CURATOR:

CATHERINE BORISSOFF

The Moscow Museum of Modern Art in partnership with the RuArts Foundation presents a retrospective exhibition of Sergei Borisov titled "Zeitgeist", which is held in celebration of the 70th anniversary of one of the most sought-after photographers of the turn of the century.

The term Zeitgeist translates from German as "spirit of the time" and, in the exhibition curator Catherine Borissoff's view, succinctly describes the artistic philosophy of Sergei Borisov. Regardless of their genre — be it portrait, studio cityscape, or nude photography — the artist's works almost always reflect characteristic features of certain periods of history, which Borisov has always been and is still chronicling. Thus the contemporaneous viewer can observe the collapse of the USSR ("The Russians Are Coming", 1985) or discover the roots of selfie culture in the photograph "A Selfie with Putin" of 2014.

Photographs selected for "Zeitgeist" are arranged according to themes and each theme is presented in chronological order. This allows one to thoroughly explore not only the development of Sergey Borisov's visual language but also the most exciting episodes of underground artistic life in both cultural centers, Moscow and St Petersburg, as well as daily life in these cities from Soviet times to now. The exhibition also showcases Borisov's advertising photography of the 1980s, primarily the album covers of Soviet pop stars released by the Melodiya record label. During the process of working for the label, the artist designed more than 60 album covers including those of Alla Pugacheva, Oleg Gazmanov, Yury Antonov and many others.

A separate part of the exhibition is dedicated to the legendary "Studio 50 A", which was one of the powerhouses of unofficial intellectual life in the USSR in the 1980s. It was there that new protagonists of then-emerging culture and art were brought to light. This was the site where the still reasonably unknown Viktor Tsoi and Petr Mamonov gave their concerts, the "New Artists" group created their artwork and Timur Novikov was gathering paintings which by the end of the 1980s had grown into a huge collection. Borisov's studio was often compared with Warhol's factory, due to the fact that "Studio 50 A", just like its American counterpart, attracted a wide range of free-spirited people. The studio hosted exhibitions, presentations and gatherings of those who, then

overshadowed by official culture, ten years later would become symbols of the new post-Soviet era.

Alongside the iconography of the idols of the 1980-90s (Boris Grebenshchikov, Timur Novikov, Ilya Kabakov, Pakhom, Viktor Tsoi, Sergei Kurekhin, Afrika, Zhanna Aguzarova, Olga Sviblova and many others) the exhibition features archive materials and memorabilia, which contribute to recreating the atmosphere of the studio.

The exhibition also includes nude and street photography, in which Sergei Borisov's unique photographic language serves to acutely convey the sentiments of irony and protest that were characteristic of the perestroika period. Published in such magazines as *Le Monde*, *Face*, *Tempo*, *Actuel*, *Interview* and *Photo Borisov*'s photographs offered an account of rapidly-changing Russia to the European public, who were often astonished by his work and what it documented.

Although the exhibition aims to present the fullest possible account of Sergey Borisov's work, in the curator's words, this is not a retrospective in the strictest sense. Such a term implies completion of an artistic journey, however "Studio 50 A" still exists today and Sergei Borisov continues recording contemporary realities, occasionally taking an ironic and mocking stance.

As part of the exhibition a video interview with Sergei Borisov, which was recorded for the occasion, will be shown.

Sergei Borisov was born in Moscow in 1947. In the 1970-80s he photographed Soviet pop stars, rock and pop bands for posters and Melodiya album covers. In 1979 Borisov set up "Studio 50 A" — the powerhouse of bohemia of that time. Sergei Borisov still actively works today with his photographs being exhibited in museums and galleries both in Russia and abroad.

Catherine Borissoff was born in 1978 in Moscow. She graduated from the Department of Journalism of the Moscow State University. In 1999 – 2001 Borissoff worked as Deputy Head of the Illustration Department in the *Izvestia* newspaper, then in 2001-2009 as Photo Editor in such magazines as *L'Officiel*, *Elle*, *GQ*, and *Snob* and later as Head of the Photography Department in the publishing house SPN-media. Borissoff curated personal exhibitions of Gilles Bensimon (Petrovsky Passage, Moscow; Stroganov Palace, St Petersburg; Kiev), Sergey Borisov (Corinthia Hotel, St Petersburg) and of various editions as part of the Fashion and Style in Photography festival (2001, 2003) and the Biennale of Photography (2002, 2004). Since 2010 Catherine Borissoff has been working as Art Director of the RuArts gallery and has curated more than 50 projects in this role.

Selected solo exhibitions:

"Girls, Girls, Girls" (RuArts Gallery, Moscow, 2017); "Glasnost and Perestroika in Moscow" (AKKA Gallery, Zurich, 2015); "Studio 50 A" (RuArts Gallery, Moscow, 2015); "People and Their Time" (Manege Exhibition Hall, Moscow, 2007); "Sergei Borisov, Moskau. Village. Town. City. Photographs" (Alex Schlesinger Gallery, Zurich, 2004); "Bieler phototage" (Jegge Gallery, Biel, 2004); "Nude" (the 4th International Month of Photography in Moscow "Biennale of Photography", Manege Exhibition Hall, Moscow, 2002); "Generation X" (New Manege, Moscow, 1996); "Russia, Generazione X" (Il Diaframma Kodak Cultura Gallery, Milan, 1996).

Selected solo exhibitions:

"The Worker and Kolkhoz Woman. Personal Case" (MEA Manege, Moscow, 2015); "Archive M" (MMOMA, Moscow, 2015); "Beauty without Glamour" (The Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, 2013); "Time Bells" (The Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, 2013); "Glasnost" (Haunch of Venison, London, 2010); "Hooligans of 80's" (Manege Exhibition Hall, Moscow, 2009); "Soc Art" (La Maison Rouge, Paris, 2007); "Soc Art" (The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 2007); "The Alternative Art of 60's-90's" (Central House of Artist, Moscow, 2006); "Nonkonformisten" (Bern, Zurich, Geneva, 2005); "Collaborators" (The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, 2005); "Photo relay race: from Rodchenko to our days" (Moscow House of Photography, Moscow, 2004); "Moscow. City. Spectacle. Capital of Photography" (Wallach Art Gallery, University of Colombia, New York, 2003); "Aufbruch" (Bayer Exhibition Centre, Leverkusen, 1998); "Renewal and Metamorphosis" (MIT Museum, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 1996); "Saint Petersburg – a glance from a stranger" (The State museum of History of Saint Petersburg, Saint Petersburg, 1995); "Damaged Utopia" (Kunstlerwerkstadt, Munich, 1995).

Collections:

Moscow House of photography; Museum of Photographic Collections; Moscow History Museum; Moscow Museum of Modern Art; The State Tretyakov Gallery, Contemporary Art Department; Ashdod Museum of Art, Israel; Kunsthau, Zurich; Musée de l'Elysée, Lozanna; MIT-Museum, Cambridge; Museum University State of Texas, Austin; The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, New Brunswick; The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick; DAR Arte Russa Contemporanea, Rome.