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NOW IS THE WINTER TO OPEN AT PROEKT_FABRIKA IN MOSCOW

Exhibition: Now Is The Winter
Curated by: Nicholas Muellner and Mikhl Sidlin
Location: Proekt_Fabrika, Moscow, Russia
Dates: May 24 to June 24, 2007
Website: www.ithaca.edu/rhp/niw

Nicholas Muellner and Mikhl Sidlin are pleased to present *Now Is The Winter*, an exhibition of new works in video, painting, photography and installation at Proekt_Fabrika in Moscow. This project brings together contemporary artists from the United States and Russia to explore current states of experience in the cultures of late empire. Contrary to Dada's angry, explosive response to a cruel and rapacious modernity, it is the thesis of this exhibition that contemporary art practice can point to moral, political and social crisis through the presentation of disappearance – disappearance of logic, of narrative, of emotion and knowledge. Susan Sontag famously described the act of photographing as “a soft murder, appropriate to a sad, frightened time.” *Now is the Winter* offers artwork that maps our soft terror – the abduction and discrete internment of the subject – across the terrain of visual experience.

This show builds upon diverse strands of international art practice that enlance cultural and historical representation with a pervasive sense of icy remove – evoking the evacuation of meaning, in word and action, that a moral freeze implies. These artists employ a wide array of media and tactics to variously attack, mourn or mock the silent tyranny of reactionary socio-political culture. An associated program of experimental film and video work from the United States will screen concurrently at Proekt_Fabrika, the State Contemporary Art Centre and the The Meyerhold Theatre in Moscow.

There is an inevitable diversion or masking in public life that occurs in the spaces between truth and rhetoric, and – sometimes more legibly – between rhetoric and action. Those absences, and these artworks, resonate with blankness, distance and hermetic silence. We live in a moral space that is spooky like an abandoned house in a Hollywood film: eerily empty, silent, still, but harboring violence, treachery and helplessness that is always explicitly invisible and implicitly behind our backs. The current economic and political hegemony of globalizing power has managed to enlarge these transitional spaces into gaping lacunae, in which there is a complete and unapologetic rupture between knowledge and language, and again between language and act. This counter-epistemological affront is so bold and thorough as to feel unassailable. This exhibition is an attempt to describe this current condition through these artists' pointed and subjective reports from the bleak field.

American artists include **Miles Coolidge**, a Los Angeles based artist whose photographic work presents familiar, vacant settings (most recently, Florida drawbridges in the raised position) in a way that unflinchingly describes the impenetrable flatness and absence of sincerity or depth – spatial and experiential – in our lived experience. **Sharon Hayes** is a New York based artist whose video works engage and awkwardly reconstruct the evasiveness of authenticity and self in the public and political domain. Ithaca, New York based artist **Ron Jude's** current project, *Alpine Star*, isolates and reproduces newspaper photographs culled from ten years of imagery from the artist's hometown newspaper in McCall, Idaho. These representations offer a world of loss and isolation, as the half-tone language of news gives way to existential isolation and incomprehensible action.

Nebojša Šeric Shoba is a New York based, Bosnian born artist whose video, photographic and sculptural works playfully and critically evoke problems of political and cultural identification within the disorienting and contradictory structures of contemporary global society. **Paul Swenbeck** is a Philadelphia based artist whose painting, photography, sculpture and installation work establishes narratively suggestive but spookily hermetic worlds of dark mythology, violence and magic.

Russian artists include **Natasha Struchkova** whose elaborate, large-scale digital cartoon paintings offer cheerful seductions that quickly dissolve into an impenetrable narrative and iconographic confusion of crossed references and interrupted spaces. **Rostan Tavasiev** creates work in a variety of media that consistently manipulates the raw material of innocence and pure contemplation into inscrutable and gently menacing forms. **Gleb Vysheslavsky's** recent photographic work embraces both the dilapidated failure of forlorn and unintended sculpture, and the current historical drama of mass protest on the snow-covered streets of Kiev. **Marian Zhunin** is a video and performance artist whose work consistently addresses the comedy and difficulty of fixing meaning and knowledge in contemporary experience. Recent videos include Day of Poetry, which presents the seriousness of complex language poetry in the compromising circumstances of the social sphere.

The film and video program, curated by **Michael Robinson**, also circulates around the notion of moral freeze, considering the problem via the specific aesthetic and structural concerns of the cinematic. As our world becomes increasingly dominated by narrative media, it has become a crucial task of media art to subvert the expectations of narrative, conjuring analyses of control through the reassessment and rearrangement of aesthetics themselves. Thus, the socio-political and personal phenomena of distance (and disenfranchisement) are evoked through the presentation and subtle dismantling of our cultures' most prevalent languages of seduction, entertainment and control. The program includes recent work by **Bobby Abate, Stephanie Barber, Jacqueline Goss, Rebecca Meyers, Julie Murray, Luther Price and Ben Russell.**

This project is supported by the Trust for Mutual Understanding, CEC Artslink, and the generous underwriting and organizational support of the Park School of Communications, Ithaca College. The Moscow program will be linked to an international symposium and screening program addressing intersections of media, art and politics, hosted by Ithaca College in October, 2007.

For further information about the exhibition, screenings or symposium, visit the project website or contact project organizer Nicholas Muellner at nmuellner@ithaca.edu or (607) 274-1984.