

Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art

Press release
June 1, 2006

The Ministry of Culture and Mass Communication, the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography and the Moscow Biennale Art Foundation present the **Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art**. It will be held from **February 22 to March 22, 2007**.

Commissioner:

Joseph Backstein

Curators of the main project:

Joseph Backstein, Daniel Birnbaum, Iara Boubnova, Nicolas Bourriaud, Fulya Erdemci, Gunnar B. Kvaran, Rosa Martínez and Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Advisory Board:

Zdenka Badovinac (Director of the 'Galerija Moderna' in Ljubljana, Slovenia), **Saskia Bos** (Dean of the School of Art at the Cooper Union in New York City), **Kasper König** (Director of the Museum Ludwig, Köln), **Jean-Hubert Martin**, Director of the Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf and **Fumio Nanjo**, Deputy Director of the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.

The exhibition program for the Second Moscow Biennale will comprise several main exhibitions, more than 25 special projects and many shows featuring special guests.

The main project of the Biennale will be hosted by three exhibition spaces in the Russian capital: the former Lenin Museum, the Schusev State Museum of Architecture and a new space at the TSUM Shopping Center (before it is put into operation).

The total exhibition space will be approximately 10,000 sq m.

Unlike the First Moscow Biennale, the international team of curators will present a number of different shows produced by individual curators or groups of curators instead of a common collective project. All projects will share the common theme of **FOOTNOTES** about Geopolitics, Markets and Amnesia, and will together present the work of more than 80 artists.

The organizers hope that the structure of the main project – figuratively comparable to a book divided into chapters – will help spectators review the issues to be presented from various points of view.

Curators on the theme of the Second Moscow Biennale:

The second Moscow Biennale aims to promote awareness of the situation that art faces today after the radical geopolitical changes witnessed by the world in 1990s.

Social and political changes continue today. It seems to us that they have brought with them fundamental changes to art's status in society without enhancing art's real influence. Has advanced culture lost the "legitimizing function" performed in previous periods when new art was a crucial component of ideology, be it socialist or capitalist?

This is why today we can speak only of the footnotes – the comments that art itself makes at the margins of macroeconomic battles. Today the commentary and the marginal notes made by artists in relation to statements spoken in the language of Capital, in the discourses of Politics with a capital P seem more and more crucial.

It would seem that we live in an era in which the notion of artistic efficacy has to be renegotiated in the light of the subversive power of interpretative commentary. An era of radical footnotes.

The program of special projects for the Second Moscow Biennale will offer the most extensive picture of contemporary art in Russia and the post-Soviet space. Its shows will be conducted at almost all of Moscow's traditional exhibition spaces: the **State Tretyakov Gallery**, the **Moscow Museum of Modern Art**, the **National Center for Contemporary Art**, the **M'Ars Contemporary Art Center**, the **Moscow Art Center**, the **New Manege Exhibition Hall**, the exhibition hall of the **Ekaterina Foundation**, the **Vinzavod** cultural center, the **Proekt_Fabrika** exhibition center, the **ArtStreika** cultural center, the **ART4.RU Museum of Actual Art** and others.

Negotiations are underway to hold one of the Biennale's special projects at the **Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts**.

Highlights among the special projects of the Biennale include a show of Russian and Chinese Sotsart prepared by **Andrey Yerofeyev**, head of the contemporary art department at the **State Tretyakov Gallery**; "The Great Turning-Point," a project by **Ekaterina Dyogot**; "Urbanist Formalism," a project at the **Contemporary City** foundation, curated by **Yevgenia Kikodze**, and projects by artists from countries of the CIS, curated by **Lolita Jablonskiene** and **Valeria Ibrayeva**.

Works by international artists of world renown will be presented as a program entitled "Special Guests of the Biennale". The personal shows of the following artists will be held in Moscow with the support of embassies and cultural institutions of the corresponding countries: **Darren Almond**, **Valie Export**, **Yoko Ono**, **Pipilotti Rist**, **Jeff Wall** and **Robert Wilson**. Negotiations are also under way at present concerning personal exhibitions of **Andreas Gursky** and **Pierre Huyghe**.

The organizers of the Second Moscow Biennale plan to put special emphasis on the educational program. A number of meetings, conferences and debates will be held in conjunction with the Biennale, and a two-volume catalogue devoted to the main and

special projects of the Biennale will be published.

An international conference on the philosophy and issues of contemporary art and culture will be held shortly before the Second Moscow Biennale, in November 2006, moderated by **Sven-Olof Wallenstein**. Participants who have already accepted invitations to it include **Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Ranciere, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Saskia Sassen, Boris Groys, Mikhail Ryklin, Peter Sloterdijk** and **Bernard Stiegler**. The organizers are waiting to hear from **Slavoj Zizek, Alain Badiou, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh** and **Fredric Jameson**.

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A press conference took place on June 7th 2006, 12:30 at the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, Maly Gnezdnikovsky pereulok, 7, Moscow.

The press conference was attended by:

Mikhail Shvydkoi – Chief of the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, Head of the Moscow Biennale Organising Committee,

Maya Kobakhidze – Director of the Contemporary Art Department of the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography,

Alexander Zavolokin – Deputy Director of the Contemporary Art Department of the Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography,

Joseph Backstein – Commissioner and Coordinating Curator of the 2 Moscow Biennale,

Alexander Borovsky – Head of the Contemporary Art Department at the State Russian Museum (S. Petersburg).