RUSSIAN ART

NOW

ESSAYS BY
SZYMON BOJKO, JOHN E. BOWLT, RIMMA & VALERY GERLOVIN

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RUSSIAN
SAMIZDAT ART

Essays by John E. Bowlt, Szymon Bojko, Rimma and Valery Gerlovin

Edited by Charles Doria

WILLIS LOCKER & OWENS PUBLISHING
NEW YORK

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Special thanks to Almuth Carstens, Keith Hammond, Birger Ollrogge, Pauline Ores, Steve Roeser and Thomas Zummer.

Assembled by Rimma and Valery Gerlovin
Book design: Valery Gerlovin

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Printed in the United States of America

Published by Willis Locker & Owens Publishing
71 Thompson Street, New York, NY 10012

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Main entry under title:

Russian samizdat art.

Bibliography: pp. 193–197
Includes index.
1. Dissident art—Soviet Union—Addresses, essays, lectures. 2. Art, Modern—20th century—Soviet Union—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Bowlt, John E. II. Doria, Charles.
N6988.R854 1986 700′.947 85-52230

ISBN 0-930279-04-2

ISBN 0-930279-05-0 (pbk.)

ISBN 0-930279-03-4 (limited ed.)

7117523

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Introduction

Russian samizdat art, which will be defined in various ways here, signals a return to our consciousness of an older tradition–that of the well-made object or book that can be passed from hand to hand and contains multiples of meaning and significance, depending upon who is performing the viewing or the handling. This is something we can sense long ago in Homer's description of Achilles' shield or Helen of Troy's tiara–a visible heirloom, a carrier of myth across generations and through national and cultural boundaries. This tradition, reborn in Russia in the late fifties and sixties under conditions of material wellbeing but spiritual and intellectual torment, is now making itself known in our part of the world, thanks to this most recent wave of emigre artists and makers to reach our shores. If, as the Gerlovins observe, Russia is so vast it has no need to count its heroes, we must then count that loss our gain. But beyond the esthetic fertilization and cross-pollination cycles of artistic emigration produce, whether from Russia or any other country, we ought to notice the emphasis in samizdat art-making on the object itself, which by its very existence serves as comment upon and critique of the society that witnessed its birth and nurtures its creators. The critical stance samizdat art imposes on its audience is unique. To see it, feel and touch it, is to be pleasantly stung by the shock of revolution, alienation and the will to change.

What, if any, might be the program behind samizdat remains, at least to me, mysterious and serendipitously vague. Whether by chance or design, most of the best samizdat art seems rooted in negative capability: an inability to accept things as they are, in this case Soviet-style reality, accompanied by an earnest desire for change and renewal, but in what direction, into what untried realms of thought and ideation, remains resolutely unclear.

Samizdat, then, represents not only a little-known tradition of art and art-making in the West, but also a refreshing, non-commercial way of viewing the

world as a whole, sometimes romantic, at others enraged, polemical and anarchic. Always, however, the artists and their pieces stand infused by a steady stream of rigorous intellectual inquiry and esthetic experimentation. Indeed, the very climate which saw samizdat's creation and development required that its artists and makers innovate constantly from such unpromising materials as used x-ray film and stale black bread. Make it new in a land that believes in but will not practice or unleash the radiance inherent in its social and political history and constitution–a situation not all that unfamiliar to those of us born in the USA.

To further introduce the writers and artists appearing here would, at this point, add nothing and possibly even detract from the business at hand, for this book belongs to them. However, we should notice that while Szymon Bojko narrates the history of Russian artistic emigration in this century, John Bowlt gives us the same story from an art-historical perspective. Rimma and Valery Gerlovin, though, take us personally into the studios and workshops of samizdat art, conduct revealing and intimate interviews with the artists, and in general bring to light a wealth of tales from the artistic establishments and undergrounds of Moscow and Leningrad. Let us hope these creators and their creations find fertile soil here, and the long-sought personal freedom to create in peace, while they struggle to find and shape an audience as astute and sympathetic as the one they remember from their land of origin and still in many ways celebrate.

Charles Doria
New York City

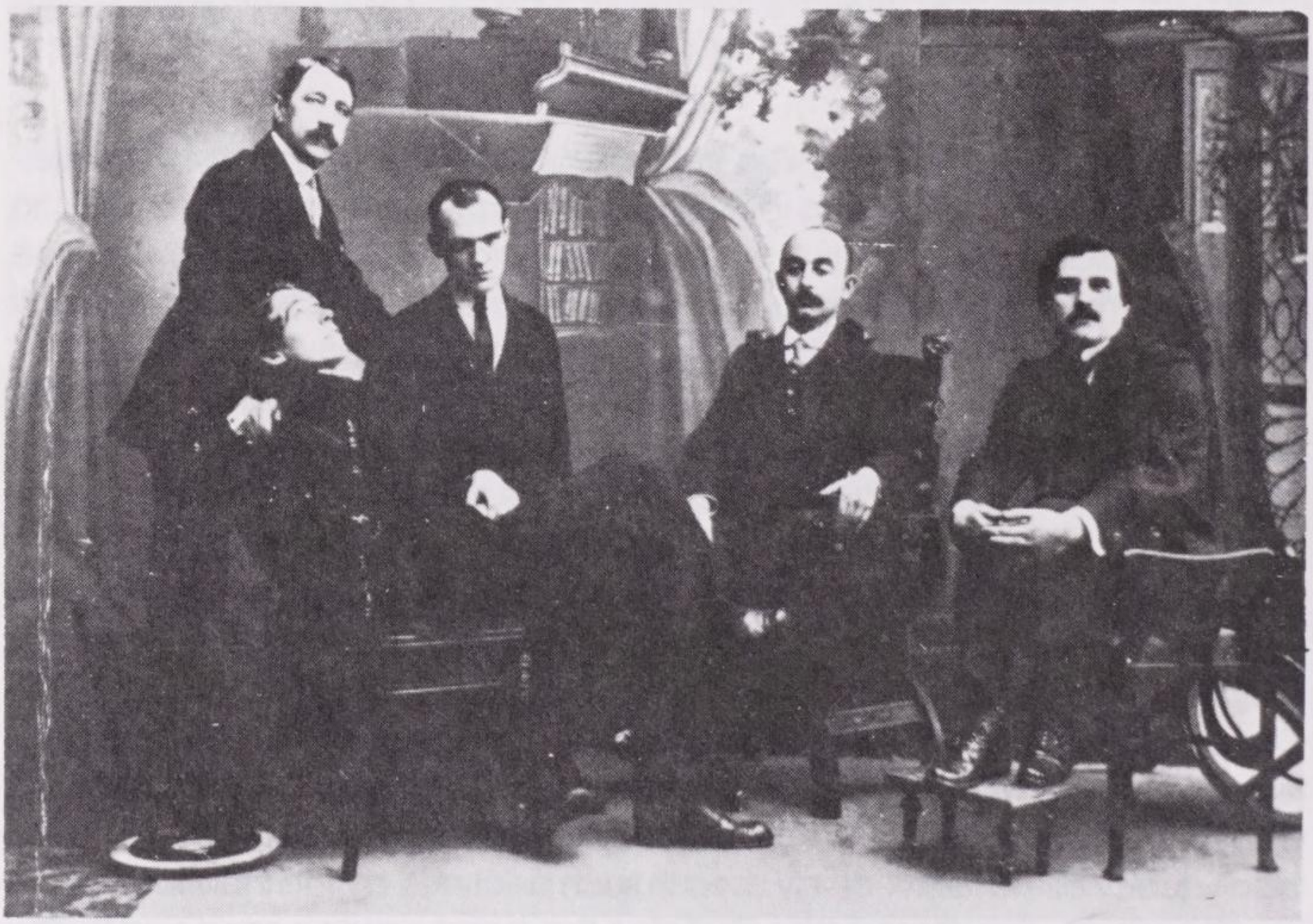
A SLAP IN THE FACE OF PUBLIC TASTE:

THE ART OF THE BOOK AND THE RUSSIAN AVANT-GARDE

John E. Bowlt

To write about the books compiled and illustrated by the Russian avant-garde–that constellation of artists and ideas that transformed the evolution of Russian art in the 1910s and 1920s–is not an easy task. Practically all the primary and secondary members of that group of movements such as David and Vladimir Burliuk, Natalia Goncharova, Vasilii Kandinsky, Mikhail Larionov, El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova, Vladimir Tatlin–were involved in book design and/or illustration and, thereby, moved in close contact with the radical poets of that time such as Elena Guro, Velimir Khlebnikov, Alexei Kruchenykh and Vladimir Mayakovsky. Although some scholarly research has been undertaken in the documentation and assessment of this discipline,[1] many avenues of enquiry have yet to be pursued: for example, a comprehensive directory to the Cubo-Futurist, Suprematist and Constructivist booklets is still lacking, and information on the materials published outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg/Leningrad, e.g. in the Ukraine and Georgia, is still hard to come by.[2] Appreciation is hampered still further by the inadequacy of the terminology used in such analyses, by the indistinct notion of what exactly constituted a book during the avant-garde period and by the relative scarcity of works owing to their limited editions (e.g. 300 copies) and also to the frequent differences and discrepancies between one copy and the next.[3]

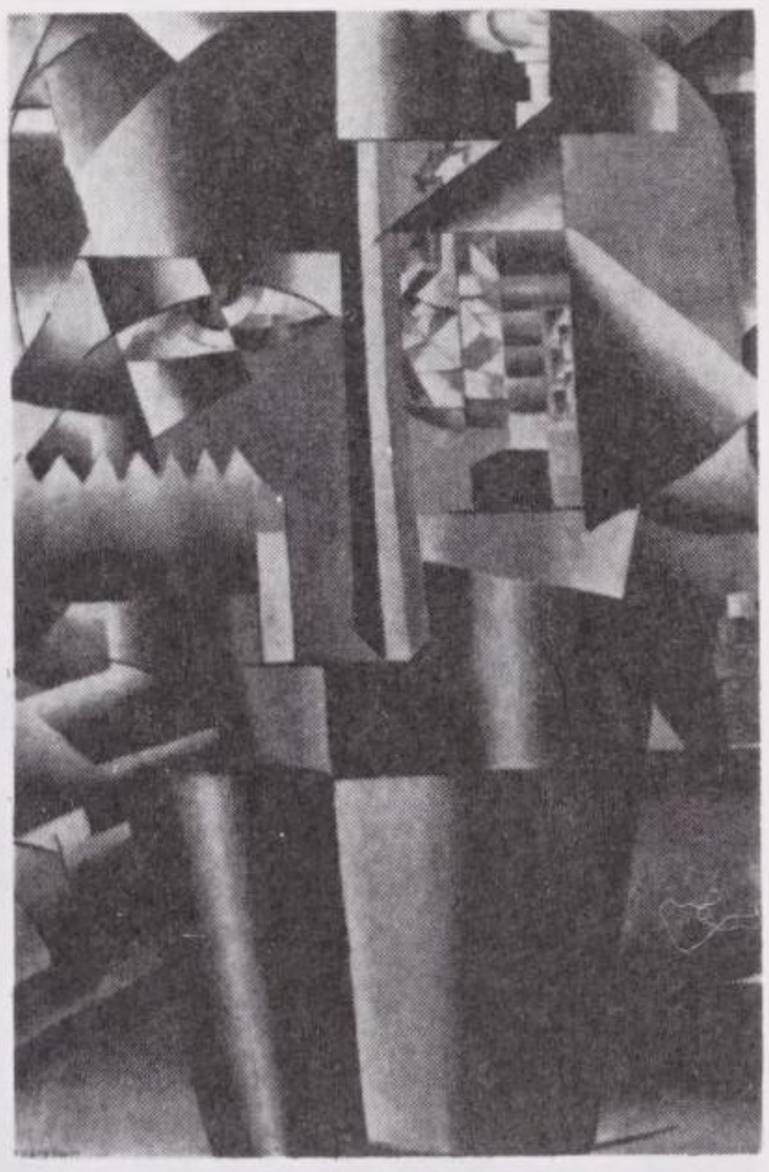
In spite of these difficulties, the illustrated booklets of the Cubo-Futurists are alluring, not just because they entertain through shock and jocularity in their words and images, but also because they can be viewed as an intimate gallery of modern Russian art–containing all the isms (and more) that Hans Arp and El Lissitzky described in 1924. Not only do the same stylistic principles appear concurrently in the paintings and book illustrations of, for example, D. Burliuk, Larionov and Malevich, but also the book illustrations themselves are sometimes paraphrases or "miniaturizations" of major paintings (as in the case of some of Malevich's graphic contributions of 1913-14). In the latter case, these representations often have no direct reference to the text and are to be viewed as visual accompaniments rather than as illustrations in the conventional sense (cf. Malevich's lithograph of a woman, reaping inside the first edition of *Troe*/The Three/by Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh and Guro/St. Petersburg, 1913). Such prints may be "irrelevant", but, then, alogicality was an active ingredient of avant-garde literature and art, and the deliberate insertion of the non-sequitur constituted a direct affront to the reading public–nurtured on the Victorian cultural and



Group photograph of (left to right) Mikhail Matiushin, Alexei Kruchenykh, Pavel Filonov, Iosif Shkolnik, and Kazimir Malevich.

social tradition of order, sequence and explicability.

Even a cursory glance at the key publications of the Russian Cubo-Futurists (e.g. *Vzorval*/Explodity/by Kruchenykh with illustrations by Goncharova, Nikolai Kulbin, Malevich and Rozanova/St. P., 1913/*Slovo kak takovoe*/The Word as Such/by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov with illustrations by Malevich and Rozanova/M., 1913/, and *Porosiata*/Piglets/by Zina V. and Kruchenykh with cover by Malevich/St. P., 1913) demonstrates immediately sharp contrasts with preceding artistic and typographical methods.[5] Generally speaking, it might be asserted that, in the 19th century, the prose and poetry illustration had been little more than that, i.e. a handmaiden to the text, desirable, but not indispensable. The avant-garde book, however, used the "illustration" as a component part of the text and often the work could not function without the image and vice versa. Of course, this proximity and frequent interpenetration of the two media was not altogether new in the tradition of book design, for we can trace similar harmonies and disharmonies in medieval illuminated manuscripts and in the 18th and 19th century broadsheet (American and Russian). Indeed, the

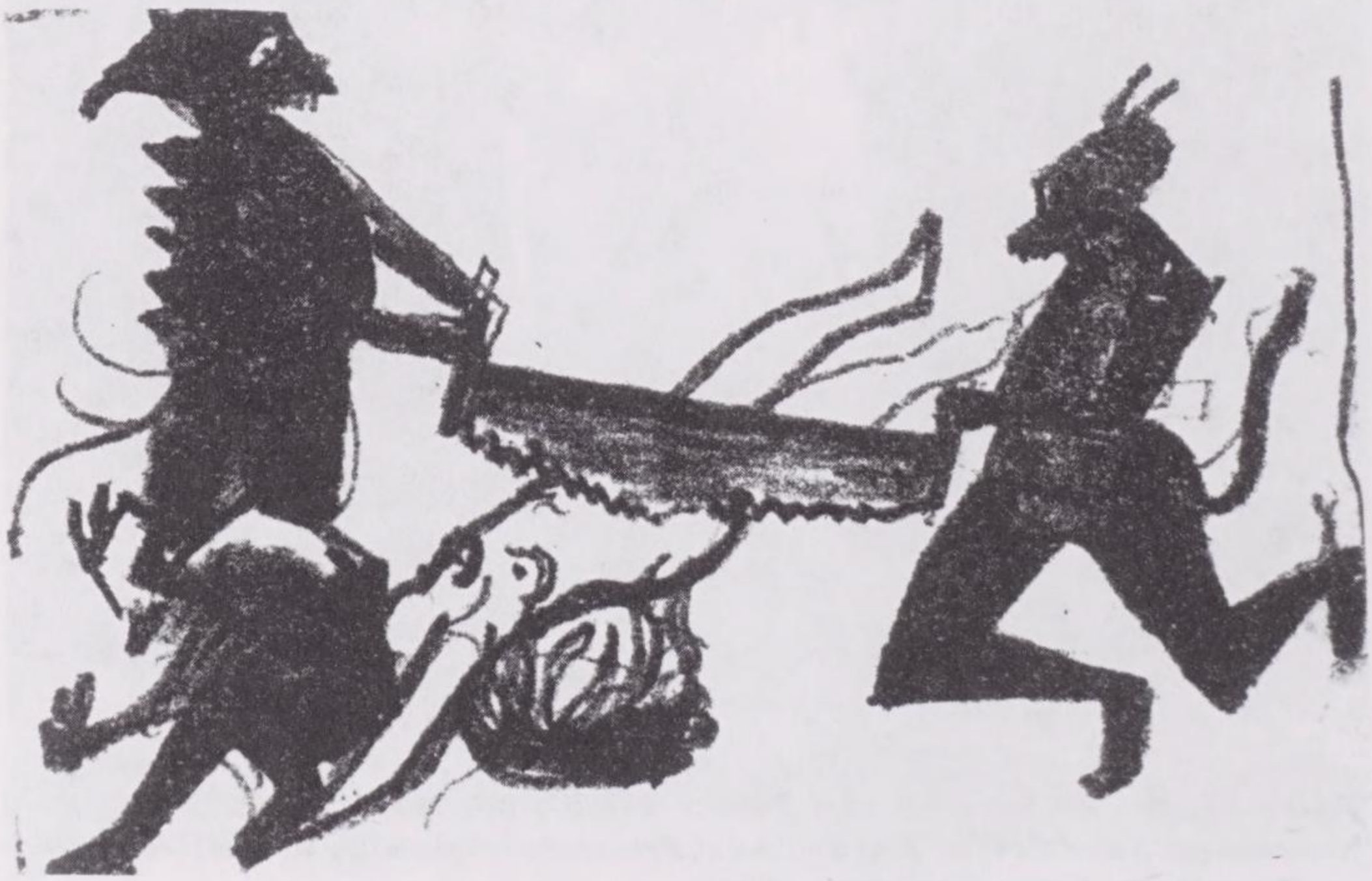


Kazimir Malevich: *Portrait of a Builder Completed,* 1913. Lithograph inserted between pp. 2 and 3 of the first edition of *Porosiata* [Piglets] by Alexei Kruchenykh and Zina V., St. Petersburg: EUY, 1913.

Kazimir Malevich: *Portrait of Ivan Kliun*, 1911. Oil. Russian Museum, Leningrad.

convention of the Russian *lubok* (the cheap, handcolored broadsheet) is of particular importance to the context of the Cubo-Futurist book and, for example, both editions of the Kruchenykh/Khlebnikov *Igra v adu* (A Game in Hell, M., 1912, 1913)[6] owe much to the devices of the *lubok.*

Furthermore, and paradoxically, even though the Cubo-Futurists wished to desanctify art (hence the pigs and bad words in some of Larionov's paintings or the Jewish in-jokes in Chagall's),[7] they were no less elitist, no less sophisticated, no less esoteric than their immediate literary and artistic forebears, the Symbolists: their books, too, were published in miniscule editions, they were often incomprehensible, and decipherment of their messages relied on a keen understanding of contemporary cultural developments in Russia and the West. The Cubo-Futurists may have condemned the Decadent poets Konstantin Balmont and Valerii Briusov for their "perfumed lechery" and "paper armor" (although Briusov was an avid collector of their books)[8] and have derided Mikhail Vrubel's "vain attempts at genius,"[9] but, in actual fact, they were much obliged to the heritage of the *fin de siecle.* As the critic Genrikh Tasteven once wrote, the Futurists were simply the "maximalists" of the Symbolists.[10]

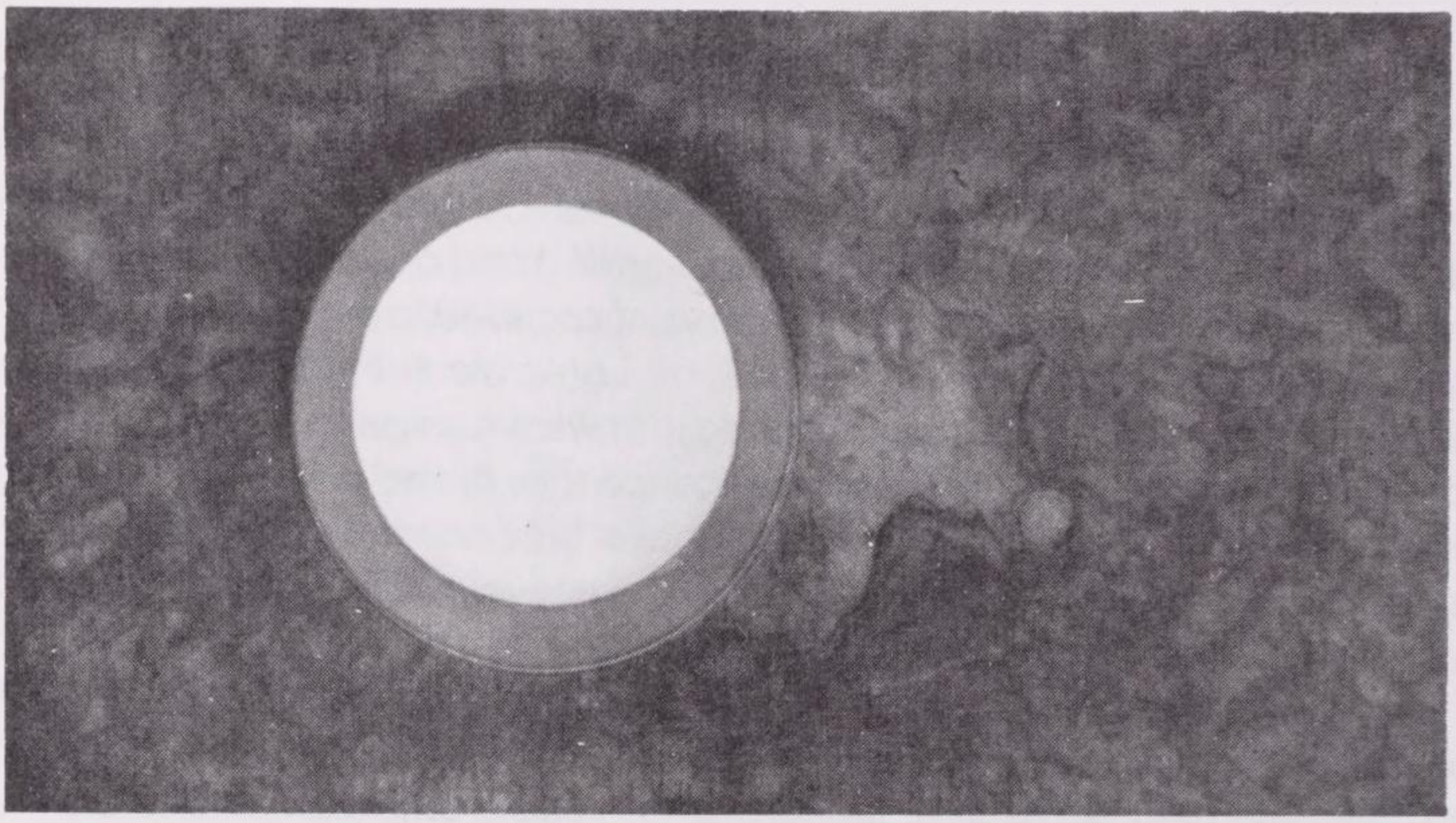


Kazimir Malevich: Illustration for the second edition of *Igra v adu* [A Game in Hell] by Alexei Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, Moscow: Kuzmin and Dolinsky, 1914.

There were many philosophical and esthetic ideas that linked the avant-garde with the Symbolists–interest in artistic synthesis (the illustrated book is a clear example of this), the awareness of abstract art as a potential, subsequent development, the realization that Russian culture was undergoing a renaissance and that this, in turn, perhaps signified and anticipated a transformation of a broader, social kind. Both camps subscribed to these positions and in this sense Tasteven's rhetorical assertion is justifiable. But the Cubo-Futurists also entertained ideas and experiences that were foreign to the Symbolists: they did not support moderation and elegance, they did not, by and large, sympathize with the Symbolists' mystical impulses, they no longer respected the reader, and they certainly did not possess the encyclopedic knowledge and worldly wisdom of writers such as Andrei Bely and Briusov.

As far as the look of the book is concerned, the Cubo-Futurists can rarely be confused with the Symbolists. Their raucous titles (e.g. *Moloko kobylets* /Milk of Mares/ by Khlebnikov with illustrations by the Burliuks and Alexandra Exter /M., 1914/, *Tango s korovami* /Tango with Cows/ by Vasilil Kamensky with illustrations by the Burliuks /M., 1914/, *Futuristy. Rykaiushchii parnas* /The Futurists. Roaring Parnasus/ by D. Burliuk and others with illustrations by D. Burliuk, Pavel Filonov and

Lubok **[cheap, handcolored print] of ca. 1850 entitled** ***Punishments Inflicted on a Wicked Rich Man.*** **Lithograph.**



Ivan Puni: *Relief with a Plate*, 1919. Oil, plate, board. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

Ivan Puni /St. P., 1914/), their reliance on accident and the spontaneous gesture (e.g. the "nonsensical" mutation of the word *kniga* /book/ into *gniga* /gook/ in Kruchenykh's *Zaumnaia gniga* /Transrational Gook, M., 1916, with illustrations by Rozanova/ which, with its absurd button sewn on to the cover reminds us of Puni's Dada painting with a plate of 1919),[11] the eccentric distribution of characters on the page as in Kruchenykh's *Vzorval,* and the deliberate interchanges of roles (for example, D. Burliuk signed his two articles on Cubism and texture in *Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu* /A Slap in the Face of Public Taste /M., 1913/N/ikolai/Burliuk)–such activities differ immediately from the staid sobriety of the *fin de siecle* stylists such as Alexandre Benois and Konstantin Somov. But let us digress for a moment and dwell on this particular tradition which, while alien to the experimentation of the avant-garde, actually provided it with much vitality and continued to develop with it right until the 193Os. We have to be familiar with this tradition in order to better understand the Cubo-Futurist book.

The "un-Futurist" book, i.e. the fine edition, reached its apogee in Russia just before and after 1917, when designers such as Benois, Sergei Chekhonin,

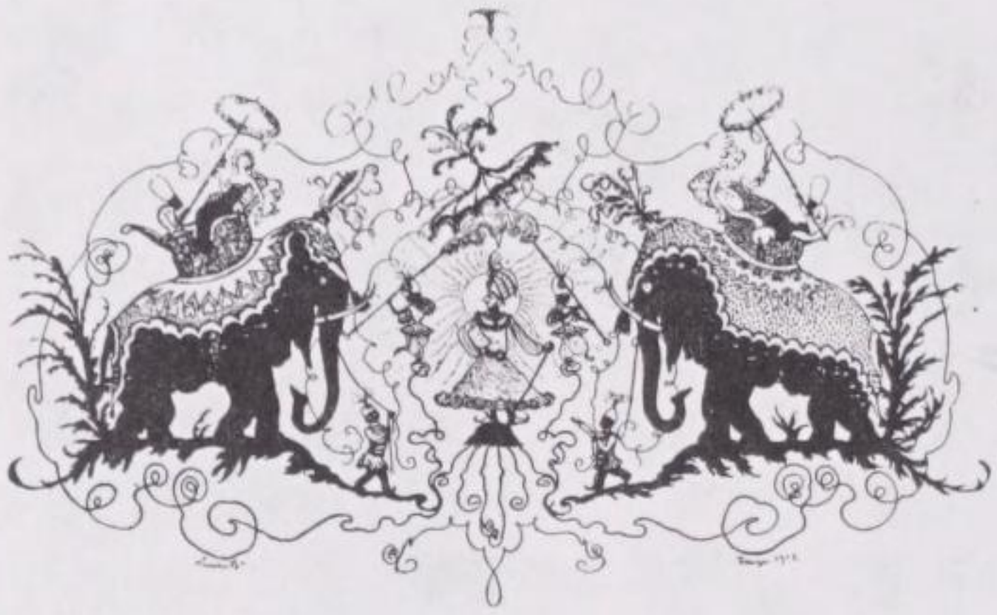
Olga Rozanova: cover for the book *Zaumnaia gniga* [Transrational Gook] by Alexei Kruchenykh and Aliagrov, Moscow, 1915 (1916 on cover). Collage. ▶

Кручёных.
Алягров

Зауми книга

цвѣтныя гравюры
о. Розановой

1916 г.



Александръ Бенуа.
(A. Benois).

сахъ, и эта книга одна въ цѣломъ соборѣ была ярко освѣщена сосредоточеннымъ отъ абажура свѣтомъ: по нейто и пѣли патеры. И это ихъ равнодушіе къ тому, что въ церкви никого нѣтъ, и громкій голосъ, какъ-бы счастливый одиночествомъ, какъ-бы говорящій: „и никого не надо, одни проживемъ", почти испугалъ меня и смутилъ: „фу—какъ жрецы Ваала! и также орутъ". Я достоялъ до конца службы. Она тянулась долго, безъ красоты, монотонно въ смыслѣ однообразія. Наконецъ все окончилось. Что это за служба въ порядкѣ римскаго богослуженія (было часа 4, а можетъ быть 6 по-полудни)— я не знаю Но они встали, ни мало не спѣша, поводя плечами, какъ солдатъ, надѣвающій ранецъ, и пошли, своей не усталой, крѣпкой походкой, грубо и твердо. Я перекрестился по православному. Кой-кто посмотрѣлъ на меня въ темнотѣ. „Ты зачѣмъ тутъ? И тебя не надо, никого не надо. Мы одни тутъ и совершенно счастливы. Богъ и мы".

Впечатлѣніе, какъ и повсюду, постоянно въ Италіи: „ну, съ ними довольно трудно заговаривать о соединеніи церквей. Они сшибутъ васъ съ ногъ, просто самымъ движеніемъ, бытіемъ своимъ, раньше чѣмъ вы успѣете договорить первую фразу „предложенія", сшибутъ—и перейдутъ черезъ васъ, и пойдутъ къ своимъ цѣлямъ, и заорутъ, какъ здѣсь, что-нибудь грубое изъ Missalum, безъ воспоминанія о васъ, безъ сожалѣнія васъ, потому-что имъ нужно и хочется имѣть по этой огромной средневѣковой книгѣ, какъ соловью славному, который поетъ и упивается и до міра ему нѣтъ дѣла, ни — до слушателей. Это — вѣра. Да, это тоже вѣра,

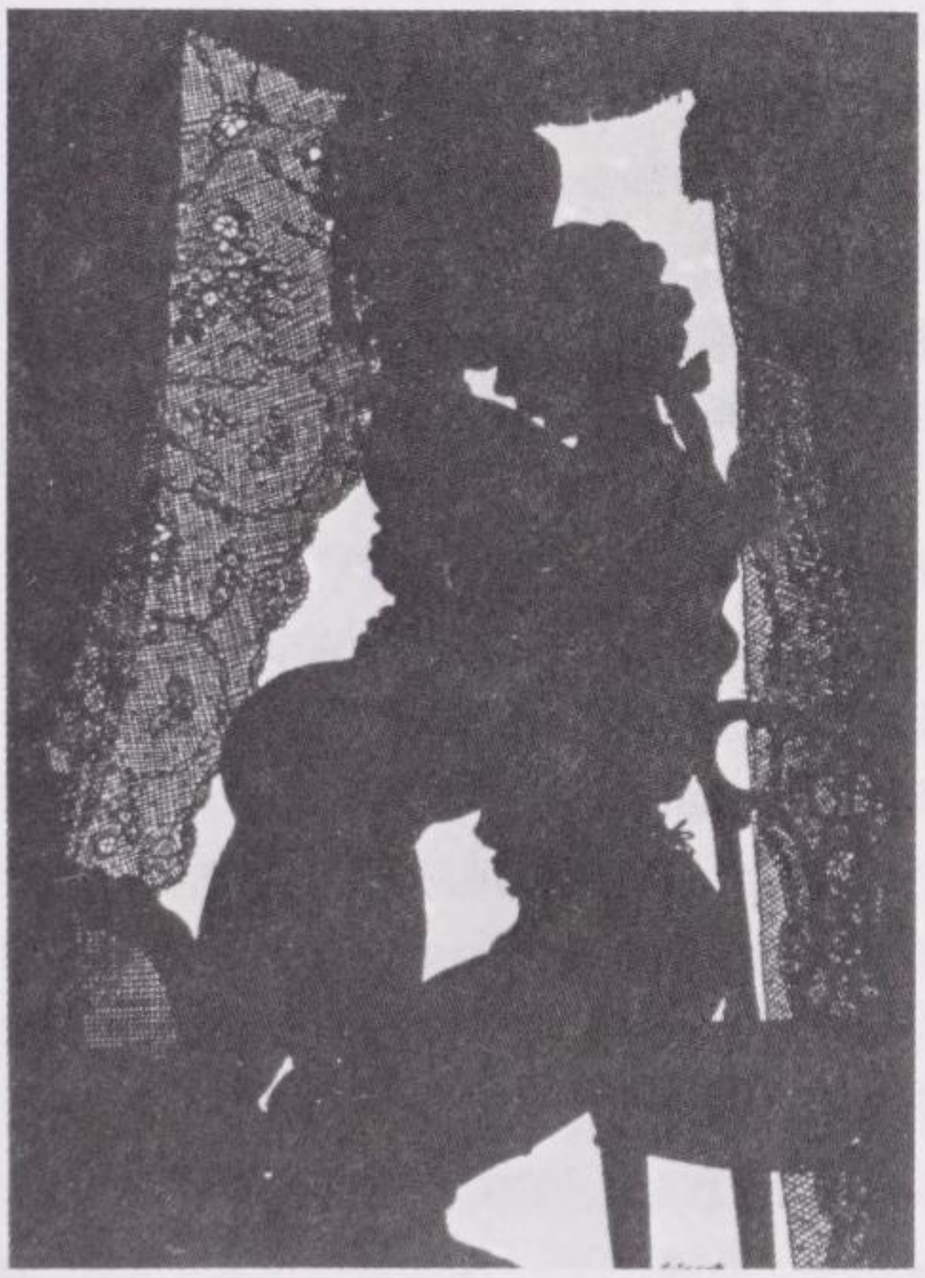
Page from the magazine *Mir iskusstva* [The World of Art], St. Petersburg, 1902, Vol. 8. The text is part of Vasilii Rozanov's article entitled "Florence"; the ornament is by Alexandre Benois.

Leon Bakst: cover for a brochure advertizing the magazine *Mir iskusstva*, St. Petersburg, 1903.

Mstislav Dobujinsky, Dmitrii Mitrokhin, Georgii (Yurii) Narbut and Somov replaced the often excessive ornamentation of the Victorian book with restrained and elegant filigrees. This trend was encouraged by a number of collectors and patrons' societies in St. Petersburg, particularly by the St. Eugenia Society and Vasilii A. Vereshchagin's Circle of Lovers of Russian Fine Editions. The latter was responsible, for example, for I. I. Leman's impressive *Graviura i litografiia. Ocherki istroii i tekhniki* (Engraving and Lithography. Outlines of their History and Technique, St. P., 1913). The increased interest in the limited, deluxe book parallelled the general refurbishment of the Russian decorative arts, and often the book designers of this period were also active as stage, fashion, and porcelain designers. For example, Benois, who was responsible for many illustrations and vignettes in the journals *Mir iskusstva* (The World of Art, St.P., 1898-1904), *Zolotoe*

runo (The Golden Fleece, M., 1906-09), *Starye gody* (Bygone Years, St. P., 1907-16) and *Apollon* (Apollo, St. P., 1909-17)[12], also created sets and costumes for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and Chekhonin, who produced many charming illustrations and covers for children's stories, became head of the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in 1918.

The reassessment of the book as an artifact, and the rapid evolution of the art of fine design were occasioned in part by the rediscovery of 18th and 19th century Russian engravers, draftsmen, architects, and decorators. Even though the technical level was uneven, it did constitute a tradition that was developed and enriched by artists such as Benois, Ivan Bilibin and Dobujinsky during the early 20th century.[13] They excelled in all print media–engraving, etching, xylography, zincography, linocut, they organized special exhibitions to propagate their achievements and published specialist journals on the graphic arts. During the 1900s through the 1920s, many collections of original engravings



Konstantin Somov: illustration for *Le Livre de la Marquise,* Petrograd: Golike and Vilborg, 1918, p. 157.

Konstantin Somov: illustration for *Le Livre de la Marquise.* Planned luxury edition, Moscow, 1916. Formerly in the collection of Vladimir Girshman, Moscow.

by "elegant" artists appeared in the two capitals. Published for the most part in very small, exquisite editions, these books and folios were collectors' items, intended for a limited clientele and covering themes that tended to elicit a nostalgia for the past, a curiosity about exotic countries or a strong erotic response. Typical of this vogue was Somov's cycle of illustrations for *Le Livre de la Marquise* (first published in 1908)[14] and the album of linocuts by Sergei Kolesnikov called *Mongoliia* (Mongolia, M., 1922), and Ivan Pavlov's *Ugolki Moskvy* (Corners of Moscow, M., n.d.). The culmination of this unprecedented interest in the fine edition was the exhibition "The Graphic Arts in the USSR 1917-1927" at the Academy of Arts, Leningrad in 1927 (catalog by Erik Gollerbakh and Vsevolod Voinov) and Viacheslav Polonsky's solid monograph *Mastera sovremennoi graviury i grafiki* (Masters of Contemporary Engraving and Graphics, L., 1928). However, neither of these sources referred to avant-garde book design, i.e. to such extraordinary typographical constructions as *Pomada* (Pomade by Kruchenykh with illustrations by Larionov, M., 1913), *Dokhlaia luna* (Croaked Moon by D. Burliuk et al. with illustrations by D. Burliuk et al., M., 1913), and Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Vladimir Mayakovsky: Tragediia* (Vladimir Mayakovsky: A Tragedy with illustrations by D. and V. Burliuk, M., 1914). It was as if this alternative tradition had not existed, as if, by tacit agreement, the impropriety, disorderliness and vulgarity of the avant-garde book were considered unworthy of scholarly investigation. The conspiracy of silence that removed discussion of the avant-garde from Soviet culture was, therefore, inaugurated by intelligent, academic critics of the time and not necessarily by pen-pushers from Stalin's cultural bureaucracy.

The graphic attainments of Benois, Chekhonin, Somov may delight the eye and titillate the senses, but their moderation and good taste were foreign to the avant-garde. True, artists such as the Burliuks, Goncharova, Larionov and Malevich used and abused the preceding conventions, but they did not espouse a Realist, illusionistic style and reacted immediately to the standard kind of book illustration whether satirical (as, for example, Alexander Agin's 1846 caricatures for Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*) or documentary (as, for example, Ilia Repin's pieces for *Scribner's Magazine* in 1892). On the other hand, these angry young men took full advantage of the Tsar's proclamation of civil liberties, including freeedom of the press, issued in 1905. Before that time, jurisprudentially, the book designs and other antics of the Cubo-Futurists would have been unthinkable in a society that, in 1890, proscribed a picture of Cupid "because the genitals can be seen" and in 1902 forbade newspapers to reproduce portraits of Tolstoi "forever."[15] The Cubo-Futurists also exploited the Russian book market and publishing world which, from the late 19th century onwards, had expanded and advanced by leaps and bounds: with the advent of Symbolism came the little magazine, the professional reviewer, the intimate edition and the vanity press. In other words, by ca. 1900 Russia already possess-

Ведь я горящій булыжник дум ем

Сегодня в вашем *кричащем*
тосте

Я овенчаюсь моим безуміем

Сцена постепенно наполнчется Человек без уха Человек без головы и др Тупые Стали безпорядком едят дальше

В Маяковскій

Граненых строчек **босой**
алмазник

Взметя **перины** в чужих жилищах

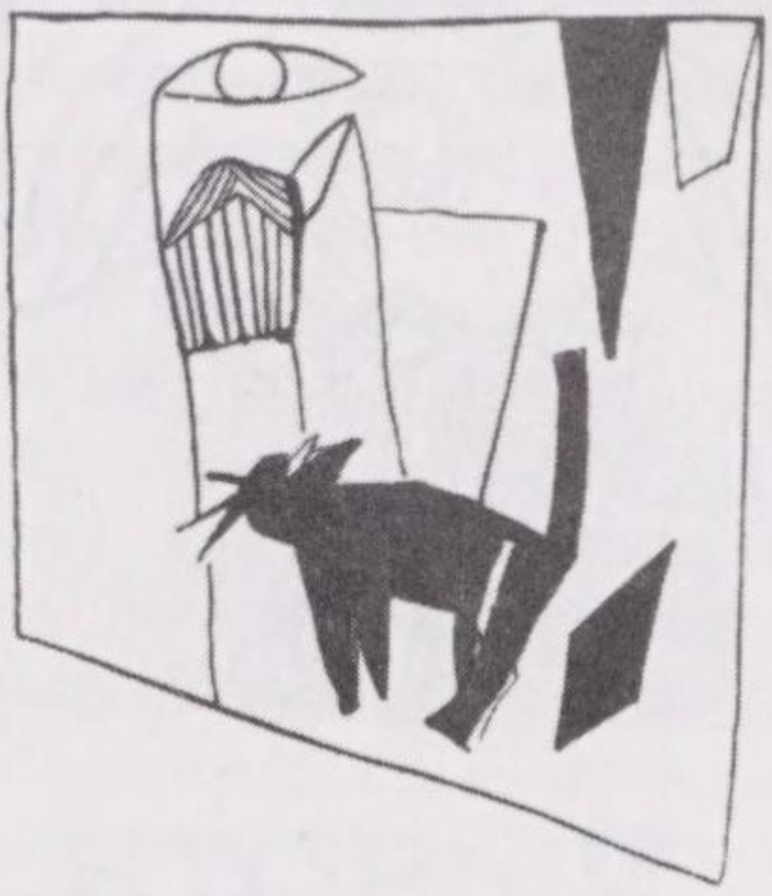
Зажгу **се**годи**ня** всемірный праздник

Таких богатых и пестрых нищих

Старик с кошками

Оставь

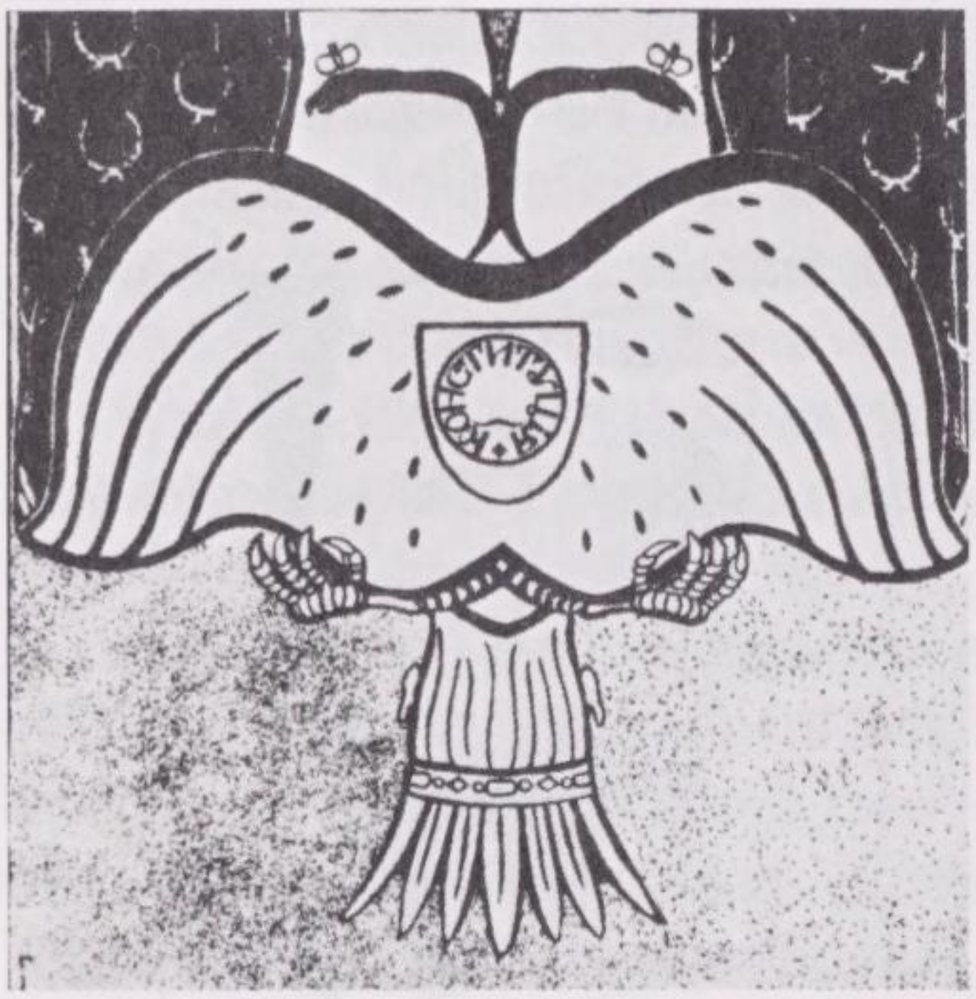
Зачѣм мудрецам погремушек потеха

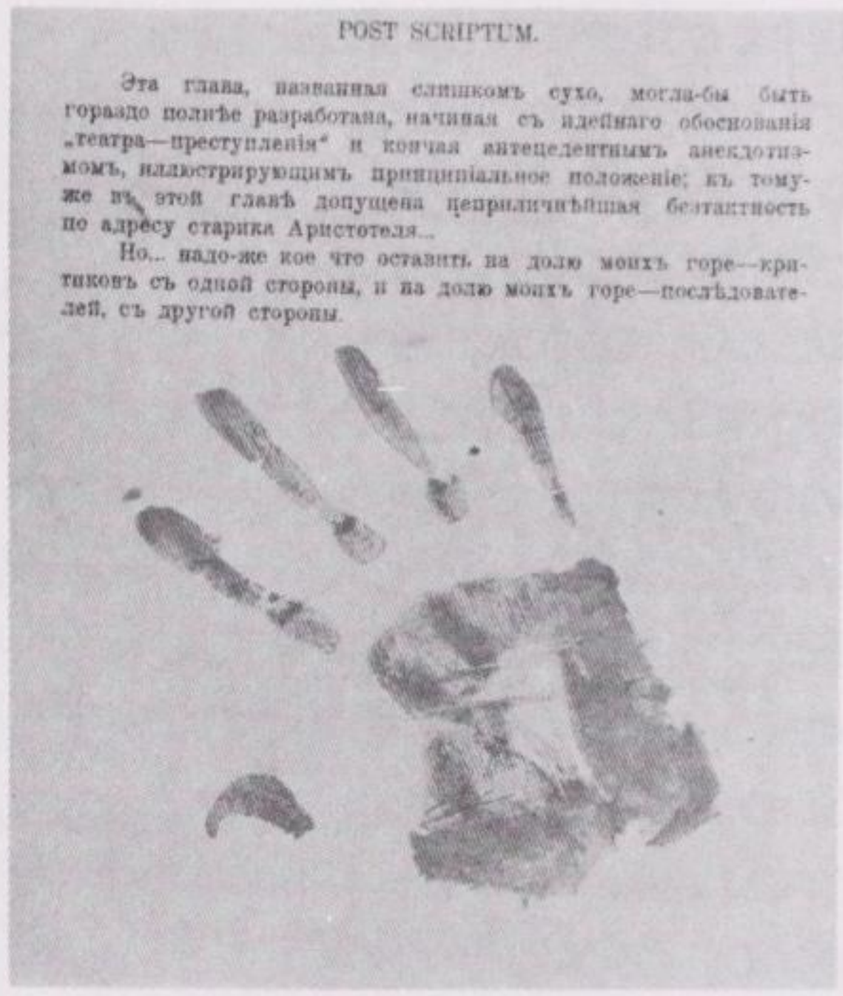


David Burliuk: "The Old Man with Cats". Page for Vladimir Mayakovsky: *Vladimir Mayakovsky. Tragediia*, Moscow: Gileia, 1914.

ed the literary apparatus that, whether amicable or hostile, played a key role in the Cubo-Futurist endeavor. After all, it was precisely this community that D. Burliuk and his colleagues had in mind when they issued their Slap in the Face of Public Taste in December, 1912, declaring that "The Academy and Pushkin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphics."[16]

Within the rhetoric and sensationalism of the Russian avant-garde there were many serious artistic ideas that were to have particular importance for the development of 20th century art in general, but there were also vulgar gestures, shock tactics and much foul language that were used to shake the foundations of the Russian establishment. For example, Malevich and his friends once posed for a group photograph beneath a grand piano suspended from the ceiling upside down; Kamensky showed a mousetrap at an art exhibition in Moscow in 1915; Goncharova, Larionov and others walked about Moscow with their faces decorated with Rayonist designs; Mayakovsky donned his famous yellow vest and paraded through downtown Moscow; Kruchenykh threw hot tea into the laps of his audience. Such highjinks formed the charged, emotional at-





Zinovii Grzhebin: *Eagle-Werewolf or Domestic and Foreign Policy.* This satirical drawing (the meaning becomes clear when the "eagle" is turned upside down) was published in the journal *Zhupel* [Bugbear], St. Petersburg, 1905, No. 1.

Nikolai Kulbin: illustration for Nikolai Evreinov's study of the modern theater, *Teatr dlia sebia* (The Theater for Itself), Petrograd: Pervaya zhenskaia tipografiia, 1915, Vol. 1, p. 65

mosphere in which the Cubo-Futurist booklets were published.

But once again we may question the apparent iconoclastic novelty of these publications. Hadn't the radical, revolutionary magazines of 1905-06, illustrated by artists such as Bilibin, Dobujinsky and Zinovii Grzhebin been just as scandalous? What could have been a sharper rebuttal of public taste than Grzhebin's depiction of the Tsar's hind quarters called *Eagle-Werewolf* in 1905? Such illustrations and the titles of the journals themselves (e.g. *Zhupel* /Bugbear/, St.P., 1905-06 or *Adskaia Bomba* /Hellish Bomb, Stavropol, 1907) served as important precedents to the often shocking pieces by the Burliuks and their colleagues, even though their emphasis was on esthetic innovation and not on political commitment. During the period of social reaction (1908-14) caricature and parody of this kind did not disappear, although the focus of attention changed from the government structure to the bourgeois household or to the world of artists and literati. Among the journals that favored this inclination were *Satirikon* (Satyricon, St.P., 1908-13) and its successor *Novyi Satirikon* (New Satyricon, St.P., 1914-18), and some of the artists who worked for them such as Vladimir Lebedev, Re-mi (pseudonym of Nikolai Remizov) and Mayakovsky

quickly gained a reputation for their comic, if sometimes grotesque, caricatures of contemporaries and cartoons of conventional values. A very amusing example of this kind of production is the set of parodies of famous paintings published in St. Petersburg in 1912 which includes Remizov's bizarre rendering of the Mona Lisa.[17] Surely, this kind of image was just as provocative as throwing "Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoi, et al., et al., overboard from the Ship of Modernity,"[18] or Malevich's own interpretation of the Mona Lisa in 1914.[19]

ВЫСОЧАЙШІЙ МАНИФЕСТЪ.

БОЖІЕЮ МИЛОСТІЮ,

МЫ, НИКОЛАЙ ВТОРЫЙ,

ИМПЕРАТОРЪ И САМОДЕРЖЕЦЪ ВСЕРОССІЙСКІЙ,

ЦАРЬ ПОЛЬСКІЙ, ВЕЛИКІЙ КНЯЗЬ ФИНЛЯНДСКІЙ,

и прочая, и прочая, и прочая.

Смуты и волненія въ столицахъ и во многихъ м[illegible]стяхъ Имперіи Нашей великою и тяжкою скорбью преисполняютъ сердце Наше. Благо Россійс[illegible]осударя [illegible]разрывно съ благомъ народнымъ, и печаль народная—Его печаль. Отъ волненій, ны[illegible]икшихъ [illegible]етъ явиться глубокое нестроеніе народное и угроза цѣлости и единству Держа[illegible]шей.

Великій обѣтъ Царскаго служенія повелѣ[illegible] Намъ в[illegible] силами разума и власти Нашей стремиться къ скорѣйшему прекращенію столь [illegible]ой для [illegible]арс[illegible]муты. Повелѣвъ подлежащимъ властямъ принять мѣры къ устраненію [illegible]ыхъ про[illegible]й бе[illegible]дка, безчинствъ и насилій, въ охрану людей мирныхъ, стремящихся къ [illegible]ойному [illegible]лнені[illegible]ащаго на каждомъ долга, Мы, для успѣшнѣйш[illegible]полненія общихъ [illegible]еднамѣч[illegible]хъ Н[illegible]ъ умиротворенію государственной жизни мѣръ, [illegible]ли необходимы[illegible]бъедин[illegible]дѣятел[illegible]ъ высшаго Правительства.

На обязанность П[illegible]ьства возлагае[illegible]ы вы[illegible]еніе не[illegible]лонной Нашей воли:

1. Даровать насел[illegible]езыблемыя основы граж[illegible]ской с[illegible]ы на началахъ дѣйствительной неприкосновенности ли[illegible]и, свободы совѣсти, слова[illegible]обраній [illegible]оюзовъ.

2. Не останавливая [illegible]едназначенныхъ выборовъ въ Госуда[illegible]венную [illegible], привлечь теперь же къ участію въ Думѣ, въ мѣрѣ возможно[illegible]оотвѣтствую[illegible] кратко[illegible]тающагося до созыва Думы срока, тѣ классы населенія, ко[illegible] совсѣмъ лишены и[illegible]ельныхъ правъ, предоставивъ, засимъ, дальнѣйшее развитіе[illegible]о избирательнаг[illegible]а вновь установленному законодательному порядку,

и 3. Установить, какъ не[illegible]никакой зако[illegible]не могъ воспріять силу безъ одобренія Государстве[illegible]ъ отъ наро[illegible] обезпечена была возможность дѣйствительнаго учас[illegible]ствій поставленныхъ отъ Насъ властей.

Призываемъ всѣ[illegible]вспо[illegible]олгъ свой передъ Родиною, помочь прекращенію сей неслых[illegible]ь всѣ силы къ возстановленію тишины и мира на родной зе[illegible]

Данъ въ Петерг[illegible]нь октября [illegible] Рождества Христова тысяча девятьсотъ пятое, Царствованія [illegible]надцатое.

На подлинномъ [illegible] Имп[illegible]ичества рукою подписано:

„НИКОЛАЙ".

Къ сему листу Св[illegible]ралъ-Маіоръ Треповъ руку приложилъ.

Ivan Grabovsky and N.G. Shebuev: parody on the Tsar's Proclamation of Civil Liberties, 1905. The piece was published in the journal *Pulemet* [Machine-Gun], St. Petersburg, 1905, No. 1.

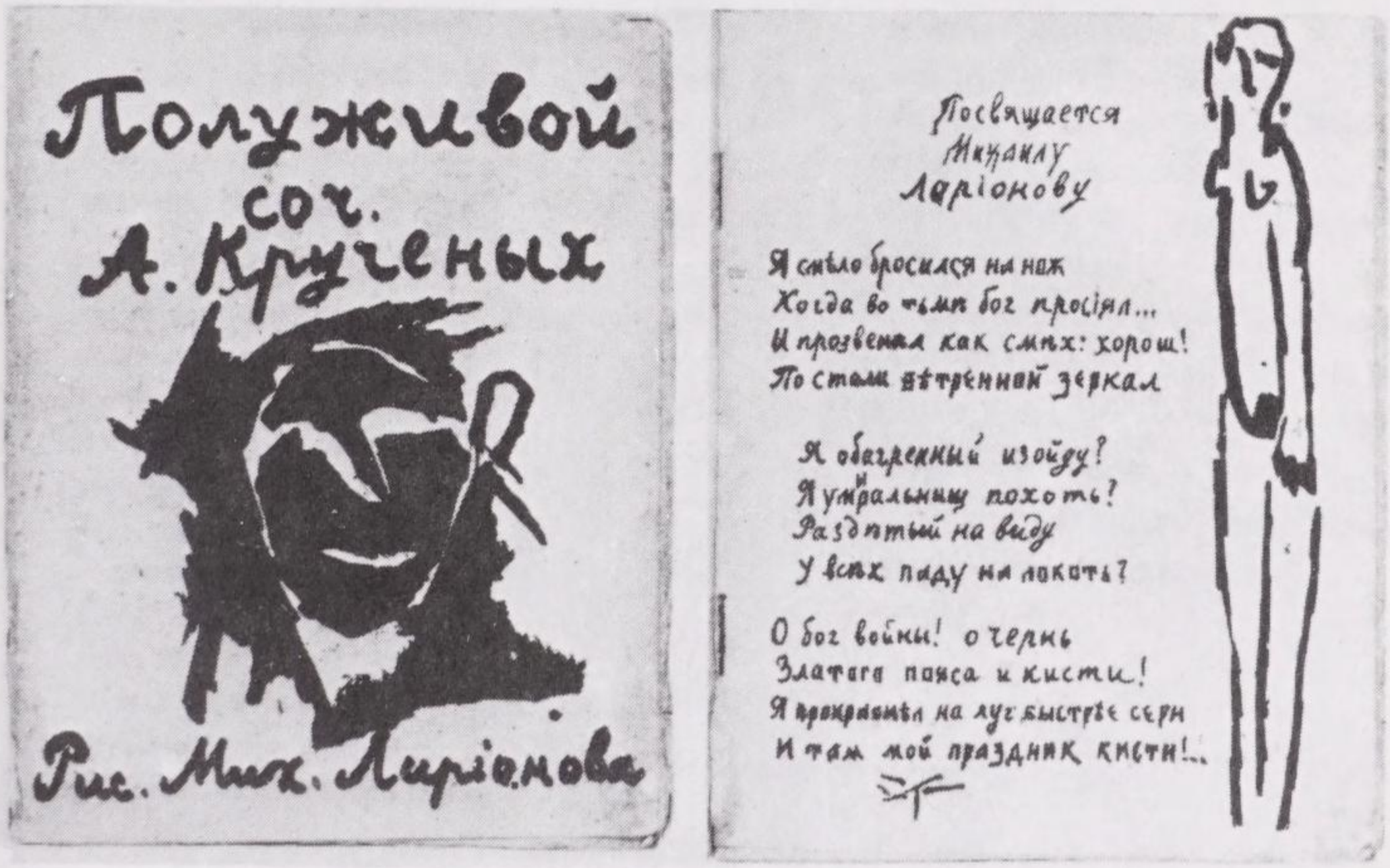
Re-mi (Nikolai Remizov): *Mona Lisa.* Ths caricature was published in Alexei Radakov et al.: *Sokrovishcha iskusstv,* St. Petersburg: Kornfeld, 1912, unpaginated.

Kazimir Malevich: *Composition with Mona Lisa,* 1914. Oil. Private collection, Leningrad.

Just as the new artists parodied the hallowed image of the Mona Lisa and, thereby, the entire esthetic of high art, so they desecrated the book. Their publications were intended not only to shock the bourgeoisie by their scandalous and often erotic allusions, but also to undermine the conventional notion of the book as a fine edition, expensive, scholarly, prestigious. The Burliuks, Goncharova, Larionov, Malevich, Rozanova and their fellow illustrators rejected the esthetic of the *fin de siecle* book with its leather Art Nouveau covers, its serpentine illustrations and parchment paper, and returned the book to the status of the *lubok.* Instead of being an object of discernment and esteem, the book now became a joke, instead of being a symbol of truth and permanence, it was now a throwaway item, a piece of ephemera. Instead of being a logical, readable experience, "its words," as Kruchenykh wrote in *Te li le* (illustrated by Rozanova and Kulbin, St.P., 1914), "have no definite meaning";[20] instead of being a source of solace, it now attacked the reader's peace of mind and demanded an active, creative involvement. Just as the old *lubki* parodied im-

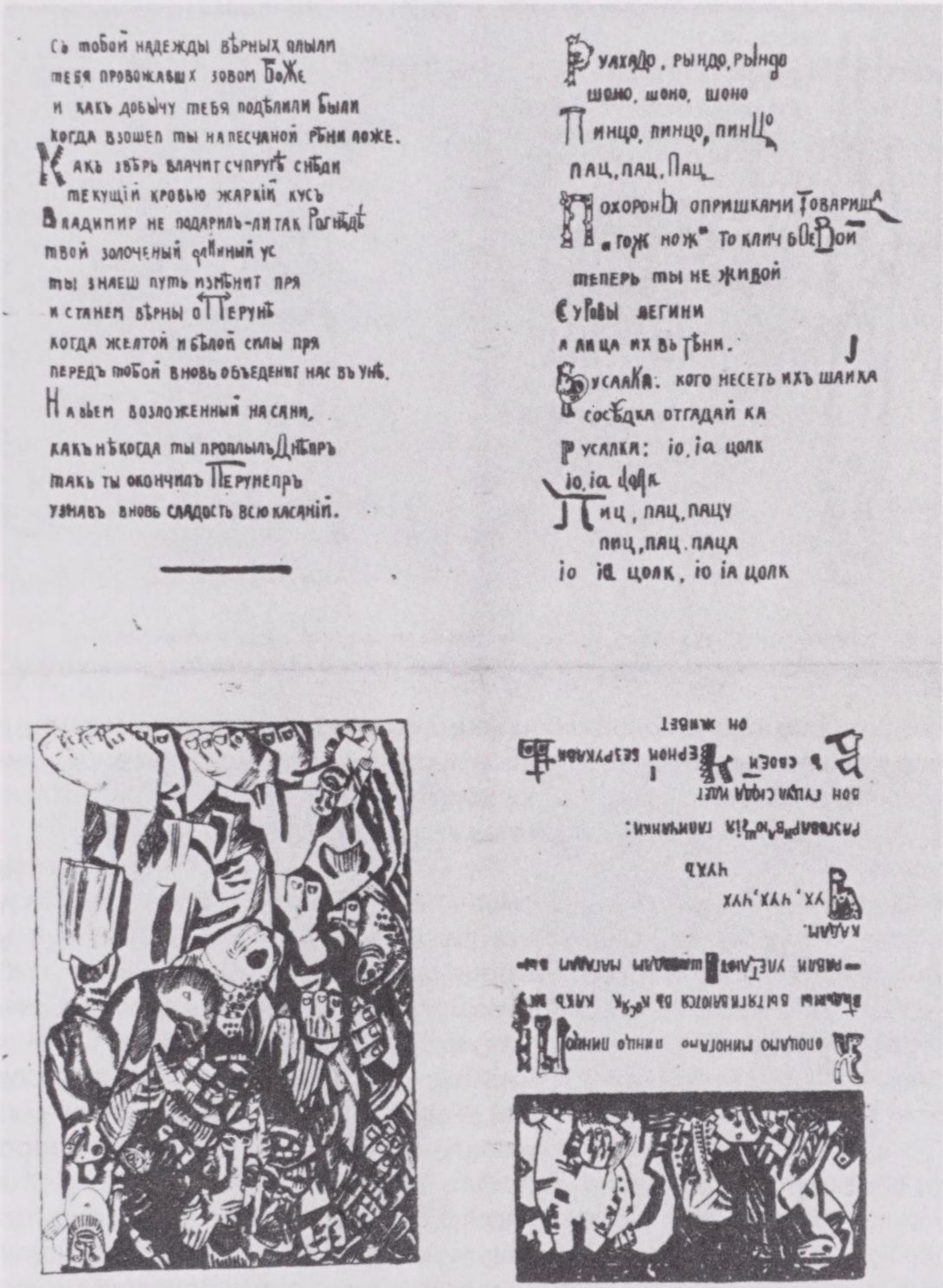
portant personages and social foibles of the time, interpreting them for an illiterate or semi-literate consumer, so the Cubo-Futurist booklets followed similar aims, relying on handwritten script and rude illustrations, incorporating mistakes in spelling and grammar and other typographical "mistakes," and using cheap paper (the first issue of *Sadok sudei* /A Trap for Judges, St.P., 1910/ was actually printed on wallpaper). As a matter of fact, Malevich's theoretical tract on Suprematism, *O novykh sistemakh v iskusstve* (On New Systems in Art), published in Vitebsk in 1919, relates directly to this Cubo-Futurist esthetic of book production: its lithographed clumsy script, its crossings-out and slips of the pen, its incongruous "illustrations" of geometric shapes recall the graphic devices of *Poluzhivoi* (Half-Alive by Kruchenykh with illustrations by Larionov, M., 1913) and *Vozropshchem* (Let's Grumble by Kruchenykh with illustrations by Malevich and Rozanova, St.P., 1913).

The methods mentioned above were employed by the avant-garde not only to ruffle the complacency of Russian society. They also reflected a sincere wish on the part of the Cubo-Futurists to combine the literary and the visual arts. If the French Cubists attempted this in their incorporation of letter and word col-



Michael Larionov: cover and illustration for *Poluzhivoi* (Half-Alive) by Alexei Kruchenykh, Moscow: Kuzmin and Dolinsky, 1913. Lithograph.

Natalia Goncharova: illustration for *Vertogradari nad lozami* [Gardeners over the Vines] by Sergei Bobrov, Moscow: Lirika, 1913. Lithographs in color.



lages into their paintings or if Apollinaire achieved a successful marriage of poetry and visual design in his *Calligrammes* of 1914-17, the Russians resolved the issue in their own way. First of all, it is worth remembering that many of the Cubo-Futurist poets–Kamensky, Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Mayakovsky, D. Burliuk–were also painters and, in some cases, attended art school. Conversely, a number of the artists, including Filonov, Malevich, Rozanova and Stepanova tried their hand at poetry. Not surprisingly, therefore, the creators of the Cubo-Futurist booklets gave simultaneous attention to the aural and the visual perceptions of the word. For example, Malevich designed his devils for *Igra v adu* as a vertical accompaniment to the downward reading of the poetry. Filonov also achieved a remarkable conjunction of artistic and literary devices in his designs for Khlebnikov's *Izbornik stikhov* (Selection of Poetry also illustrated by N. Burliuk and Malevich, St.P., 1914). This includes not only two illustrations by Filonov, but also his own calligraphy whereby he tried to match Khlebnikov's often abstruse and archaic vocabulary by a more accessible visual entertainment in the form of ideograms; for example, he drew the first letter of the word *rusalka* as a barebreasted mermaid and suspended the middle letter of the verb "fly away" above the rest of the word. Consequently, Filonov (and Malevich) is playing a calculated game with the viewer, inviting us to participate dynamically in the perception of the artifact–something that Lissitzky developed with his "architecture of the book" in the 1920s.

At this juncture it might be appropriate to concentrate on key contributions by two or three of the leading book illustrators of the avant-garde in order to discover how they interpreted and applied particular principles of design: Goncharova, Larionov, Malevich, Rozanova and Lissitzky are of primary relevance to the issue at hand.

In no small degree, Goncharova and Larionov were responsible for the "coming of age" of Russian art in ca. 1910, and their blending of Western influences (especially from Gauguin and Matisse) with domestic stimuli (especially folk art) is one of the most remarkable attainments in early 20th century Russian culture. In challenging Parisian supremacy, they focused attention on what they argued were esthetic concepts and objects of no less a value than those of Post-Impressionism and Cubism. They maintained that their exuberance and vitality derived in part, at least, from indigenous and also from Eastern sources: "Primitive art forms–icons, *lubki,* trays, signboards, fabrics of the East, etc.," they asserted, "these are specimens of genuine value and painterly beauty."[21] Goncharova and Larionov, in particular, began to give attention to such art forms as early as 1907-08 and injected new energy into Russian painting just as the previous dominant trend, Symbolism, was entering a state of decline. Perhaps their concentration on folk art was also, in part, a result of the democratic impulse of the 1905-06 revolution, although, by and large, the pioneers of the Russian avant-garde were apolitical, at least before the Oc-

tober Revolution, and they gave little thought to ideological social systems.

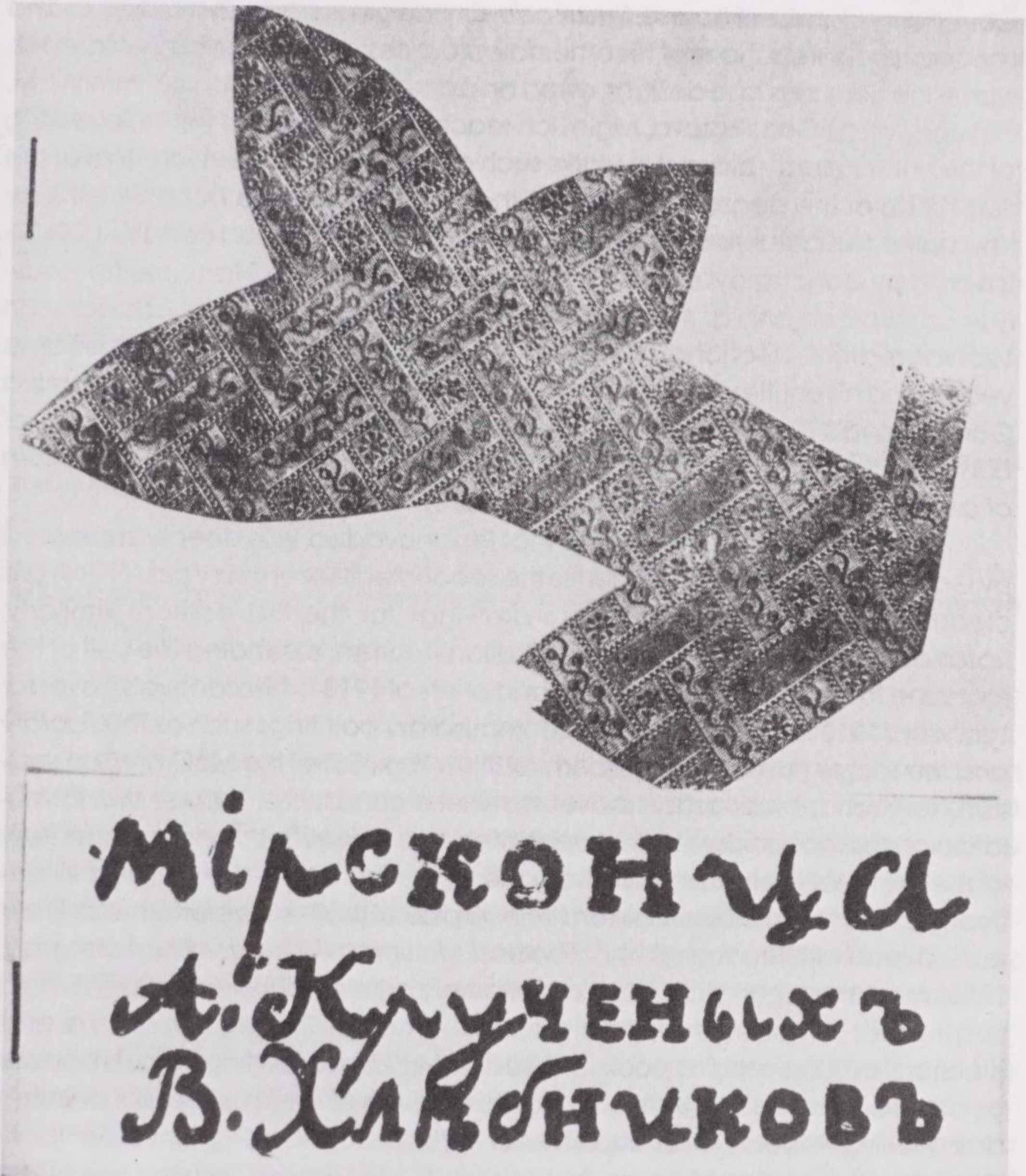
As the Neo-Primitivist movement developed after 1908, so its proponents looked ever more intently at their domestic roots, flaunted their derision of the West and issued xenophobic claims to the effect that "Neo-Primitivism is a profoundly national phenomenon" or "The *lubok* presents other constructions that are much more complicated than the visions of Picasso and Braque."[22] This esthetic Slavophilism found dramatic visual extensions in the paintings, drawings and book illustrations of 1910-13 and in the propagation through societies and exhibitions organized by Larionov and his colleagues (such as the 1910-11 showings of the "Jack of Diamonds" in Moscow). Moreover, as this enthusiasm for "things Russian" increased, so the awareness of Russia's alleged derivation from Oriental culture also became attractive. That is why Goncharova, in the preface to the catalog of her one woman exhibition in Moscow in 1913 could affirm that:

> The Impressionists are from the Japanese. The Synthetists, Gauguin, from India spoiled by its early renaissance. From the islands of Tahiti, he apprehended nothing, apart from a tangible type of woman. Matisse–Chinese painting. The Cubists–Blacks (Madagascar), Aztecs. As for the past–certain historians are sadly mistaken in deducing a Romanesque influence, even a German influence, on our icons.[23]

Goncharova and Larionov tried to prove their assumption by categorizing certain Russian artifacts, especially *lubki,* along with Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Hindu and Tartar works, as they did, for example, at the "Exhibition of Icons and *Lubki*" in Moscow in 1913. We should not be surprised, therefore, to see direct paraphrases of Russian *lubki* and other pieces of folk art in Goncharova's and Larionov's book illustrations of 1912-13. Goncharova's pieces in *Igra v adu* (1912), for example, including the cover, derive immediately from 19th-century lithographic broadsides such as *Punishments Inflicted on a Wicked Rich Man* of the 1850s. At the same time, both artists were acutely aware of Western developments, especially Italian Futurism, and not only did Larionov repeat panegyrical statements about the modern city, but he also expanded the Futurists' interests in energy, speed, and the cinema into his theory of Rayonism (1912-13) dependent on only the "laws germane to painting: colored line and texture."[24] Even though Goncharova and Larionov were skeptical of their Italian colleagues, they were surely paraphrasing Carra and Severini in their Rayonist illustrations to Sergei Bobrov's *Vertogradari nad lozami* (Gardeners over the Vines, M., 1913, illustrated by Goncharova) and Kruchenykh's *Starinnaia liubov* (Old-time Love, M., 1912, illustrated by Larionov). Indeed, Larionov, at least, had no qualms about borrowing from the Italians–as he did in his designs for Sergei Diaghilev's projected production of *Histoires Naturelles* in 1916. Quite justifiably, Fortunato Depero accused Larionov of "arranging my designs in his own man-

ner . . . plagiarizing them completely."[25]

Goncharova and Larionov were pioneers in the development of avant-garde design, although their concentration on the Cubo-Futurist book lasted

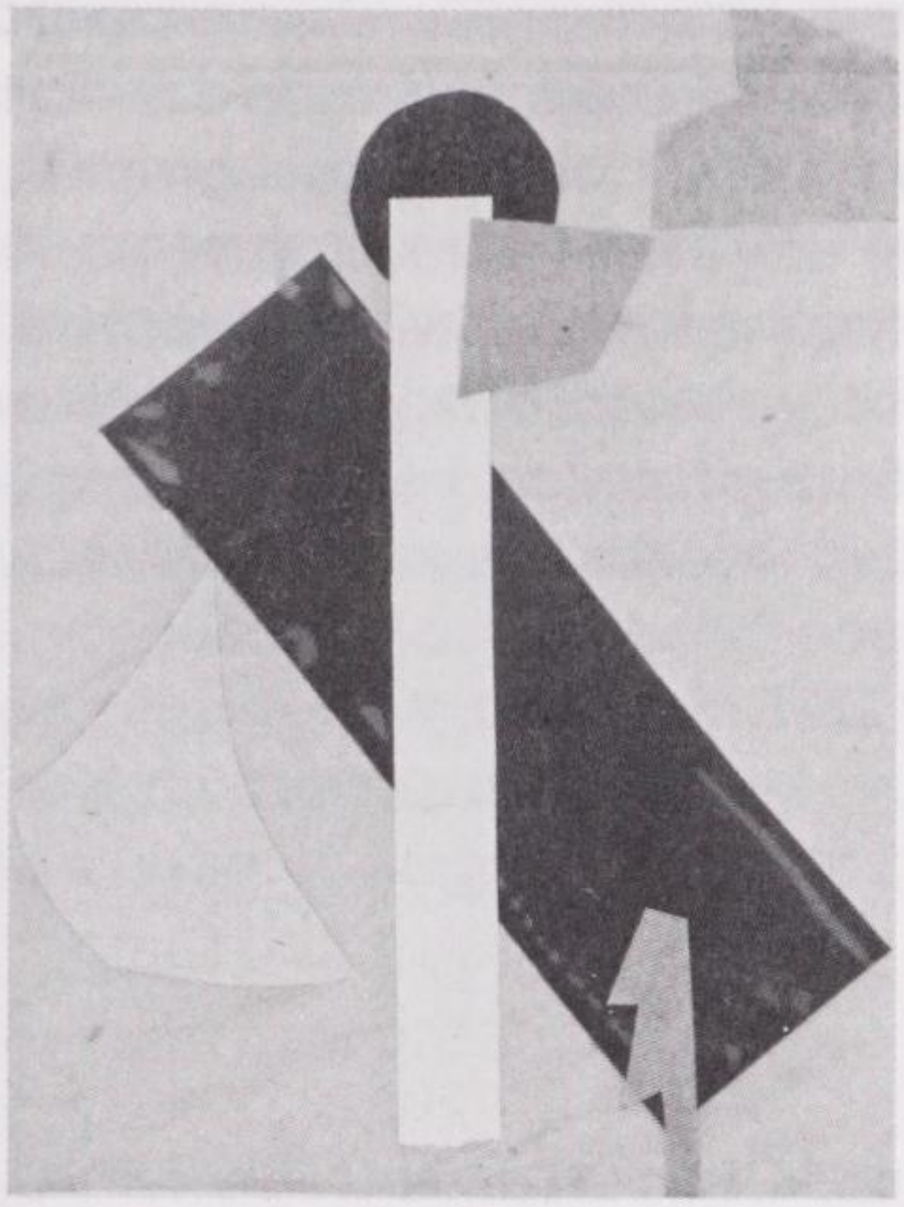


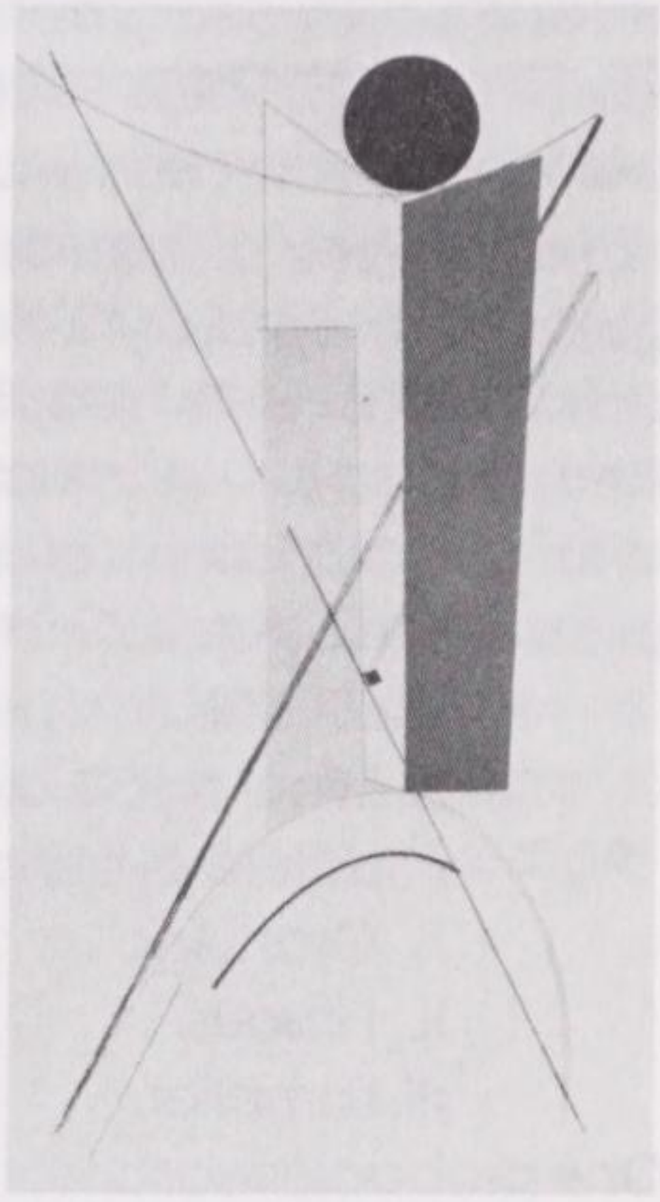
Natalia Goncharova: collage cover for *Mirskontsa* [Worldbackwards] by Velimir Khlebnikov and Alexei Kruchenykh, Moscow: Kuzmin and Dolinsky, 1913.

only two years, since, beginning in 1914, they gave increasing attention to the stage. The books that they chose to illustrate later such as *Tsar Saltan* (Paris, 1922, illustrated by Goncharova), while vivid and charming, had none of the provocative elan identifiable with *Mirskontsa* (Worldbackwards, M., 1912 by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov with illustrations by Gonacharova, Larionov, Tatlin and I. Rogovin), *Pustynniki* (Hermits, M., 1913, by Kruchenykh with illustrations by Goncharova), and, of course, *Igra v adu.* On the other hand, Goncharova and Larionov prepared the way for other talented designers, especially Malevich who, in his paintings and designs, owed an appreciable debt to Neo-Primitivism.

Through Goncharova, Malevich reached his sculptural sturdy rendering of the human body present in works such as the costumes for *Victory over the Sun* (1913) or the peasant woman on the cover of *Troe* (The Three, St. 1913, by Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh and Guro). Malevich even repeated certain subjects favored by Goncharova. His lithograph called *Death of a Man Simultaneously in an Airplane and at the Railroad* (1913), for example, which appeared in *Vzorval,* matches Goncharova's painting *Airplane above a Train* of the same year,[26] and his untitled lithograph of a carriage in motion in *Troe* brings to mind Goncharova's *Cyclist* of 1912-13 (Russian Museum, Leningrad). Both works, of course, find a common counterpart in Italian Futurism (cf. Boccioni's *Dynamism of a Cyclist* of 1913 in the Mattioli Collection, Milan).

It is relevant to mention here that Rozanova, too, was deeply impressed by Goncharova, and her designs for the second edition of *Igra v adu* (1914) are clearly inspired by Goncharova's drawings for the first edition. Similarly, Rozanova experienced the effect of Italian Futurism, extending the cult of the machine to her industrial paintings and prints of 1913-14. Rozanova's cover for *Vzorval* of 1913 brings to mind her contemporary paintings such as *The Factory and the Bridge* (Museum of Modern Art, New York; Gift of the McCrory Corporation, New York). It was a short move from these works to Rozanova's own formulation of abstract art dependent upon the mechanical, functional components of the material itself. Rozanova was one of the first avant-garde artists to advocate an art form based only on the interplay of its intrinsic elements, and her illustrations (with Kruchenykh) of *Vselenskaia voina* (Universal War, Petrograd, 1916) mark the highpoint of this "era of purely artistic achievements."[27] Using a sequence of twelve non-figurative, colored collages, Rozanova and Kruchenykh "illustrated" a book that had no text. These floating cutouts appear as pictures in miniature, extensions of Rozanova's own experimental painting and drawing, especially her Suprematist work such as *Non-Objective Composition* (ca. 1916, Russian Museum, Leningrad). *Vselenskaia voina* was one of two portfolios that Rozanova and Kruchenykh worked on in 1916, the other being *War.* The latter, carrying concrete references to the miliary events, was in the same vein as Goncharova's *Voina: Misticheskie obrazy voiny* (War: Mystical Images of the War, M., 1914) and Filonov's *Propeven o prorosli mirovoi* (Chant of





Olga Rozanova: collage illustration for *Vselenskaia voina* [Universal War] by Alexei Kruchenykh and Olga Rozanova, Petrograd, 1916.

El Lissitzky: Proun from *1 Kestnermappe,* Hannover: Ludwig Ey, 1923. Lithograph with collage.

Universal Flowering, Petrograd, 1915), whereas *Vselenskaia voina* was an "abstract" interpretation. True, in their dadaistic shifts and asymmetries, these paper collages sometimes suggest particular objects, but they can hardly be construed as guns, soldiers or angels of war. By the time she had arrived at this remarkable resolution, Rozanova had had considerable experience of avant-garde book design, making her debut in the March, 1913 issue of *Soiuz molodezhi* (Union of Youth, St.P.) and in the second edition of *Igra v adu*–in which her dynamic compositions are remarkably close to those of the Ukrainian artist Alexander Bogomazov. In 1914 she also contributed to the Kruchenykh/Khlebnikov *Te li le* and then, in 1915, to the *Zaumnaia gniga.*

Perhaps the real fascination of the Rozanova/Kruchenykh *Vselenskaia voina* lies in the fact that it both drew upon Malevich's Suprematist system and also pointed forward to other developments in the concept of the book: for example, as a cycle of abstract compositions, *Vselenskaia voina* reminds us of other abstract sequences such as Malevich's *34 risunka* (34 Drawings, Vitebsk, 1921) and Lissitzky's Proun folio of 1920-22.[28] The exciting album *34 risunka* pro-

vides a survey and graphic paraphrase of Malevich's major Suprematist paintings of 1915 onwards. Each image in this collection relates, therefore, to a similar painting.[29] But these black and white images are more than just graphic reproductions of particular canvasses–they are experiments in the art of abstract lithography. If the Suprematist paintings use the intrinsic elements of painting, these lithographed forms also exploit the essential ingredients of the lithographic art–black and white contrast, tonal gradation, textures. Indeed, what D. Burliuk once categorized as basic painterly textures can almost be applied to the diverse surfaces of *34 risunka*:

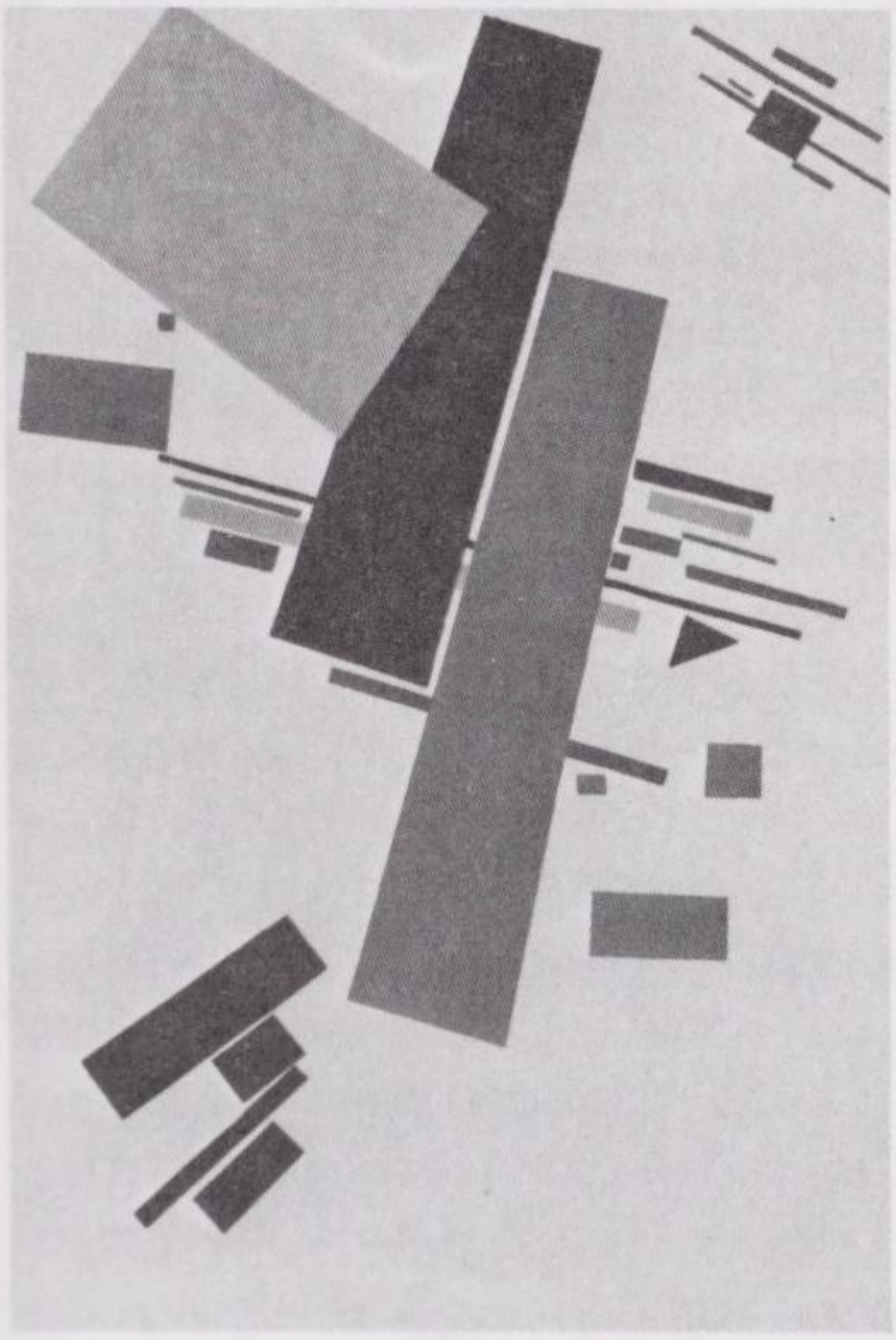
> The Plane of a picture can be:
> A. Even, and B. Uneven . . .
> Structure of a picture's surface:
> I. Granular.
> II. Fibrous.
> III. Lamellar.[30]

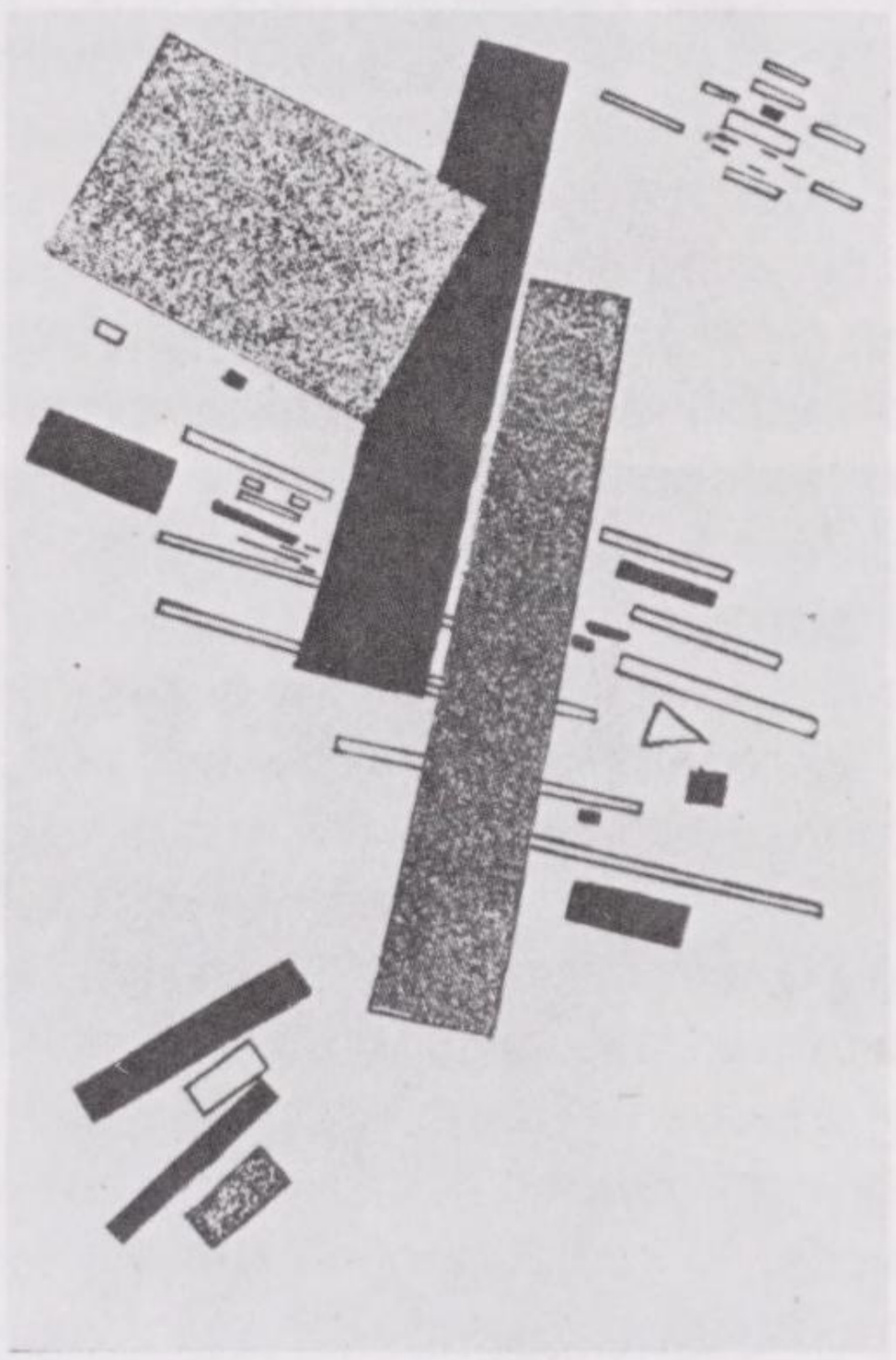
One probable reason for the artistic success of *34 risunka* (and of Malevich's *O novykh sistemakh v iskusstve*) is that Lissitzky, then a follower of Malevich, was in charge of the lithograph workshop at the Vitebsk Popular Art Institute where Malevich was director from 1919 to 1922; and it is rumored that Lissitzky himself lithographed these sheets. The Vitebsk lithography workshop was responsible for a number of interesting lithographic and hectographic publications, all inspired by Malevich and all now exceedingly rare. Mention should be made of the journals *AERO* and *Put Unovisa* (Path of Unovis), and Vera Ermolaeva's woodcut design for the February, 1920 production of *Victory over the Sun* in Vitebsk.[31]

That Lissitzky was deeply influenced by his proximity to Malevich in Vitebsk in 1919-20 can be seen when we compare his designs for Yiddish tales such as *The Bear* (Kiev, 1918) and his cover for *Jewish Folk Tales for Children* (Kiev, 1919)[32] with his *Pro dva kvadrata* (About Two Squares), conceived in Vitebsk in 1920 and published in Berlin in 1922–a Constructivist masterpiece. This extraordinary "biblio-construction," which contains the blatant paradox "Don't read–Take bits of paper, matchsticks, bits of wood, compose, paint, build," must be experienced as a poster or billboard or even as a movie rather than as a book. Instead of laboriously assimilating lines of letters in sequence, the eye immediately grasps the semantic value of each frame through the simple contrasts of "black and white (with flashes of red)" within the space of the page. The principles of the Proun[33]–the rejection of the axis, the convenience of entering the work at any junction–are equally active here. Each page can be accepted as a separate unit, independent of the story; typography is as much a complex of geometric forms as a sequence of linguistic signs; there is no ending–"further" is the last word.

The notion of the book as an artistic totality, catering equally to the senses

of sight and hearing was, of course, not altogether new. Sonia Delaunay and Blaise Cendrars had experimented with it in their collective publication *La Prose du trans-siberien et de la Petite Jehanne de France* (Paris, 1913) which, as a matter of fact, was well known in St. Petersburg; Filonov, Rozanova and Stepanova approached the concept in their works (cf. Stepanova's transrational book of verse and collages, *Gaust chaba,* M., 1919). But as in the case of his Prouns, Lissitzky reprocessed the sometimes tentative, imprecise ideas of his colleagues and took them to a new level of artistry. His several book and magazine covers of the early 1920s such as *Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet* (Berlin, 1922) and Olga Forsh's play *Ravvi* (The Rabbi, Berlin, 1922) are constructed on the same principles as *Pro dva kvadrata,* although less exuberantly. As in the title-page to the children's tale, a strong diagonal is used to connect statements on the cover of *Veshch*;

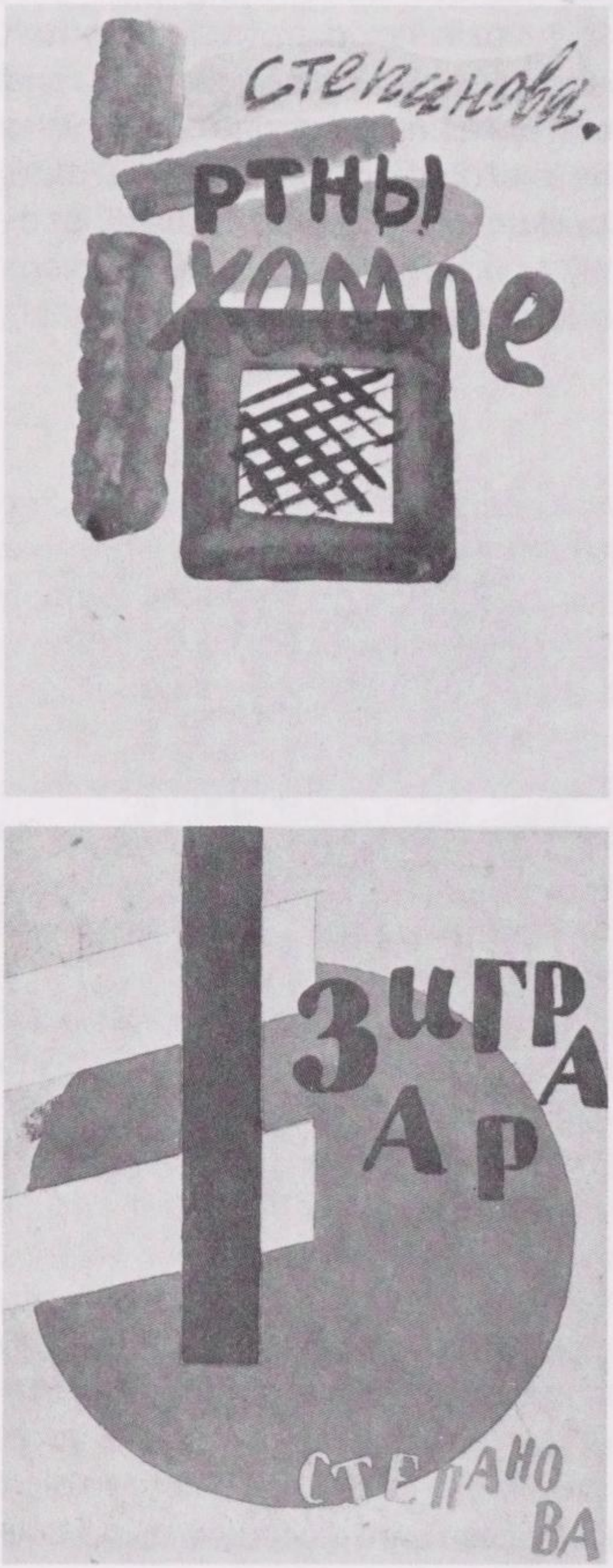




Kazimir Malevich: *Dynamic Suprematism,* 1915. Oil. Ludwig Museum, Cologne.

Kazimir Malevich: image from *Suprematizm. 34 risunka* [Suprematism. 34 Drawings] by Kazimir Malevich, Vitebsk, 1921 (1920 on cover). Lithograph.

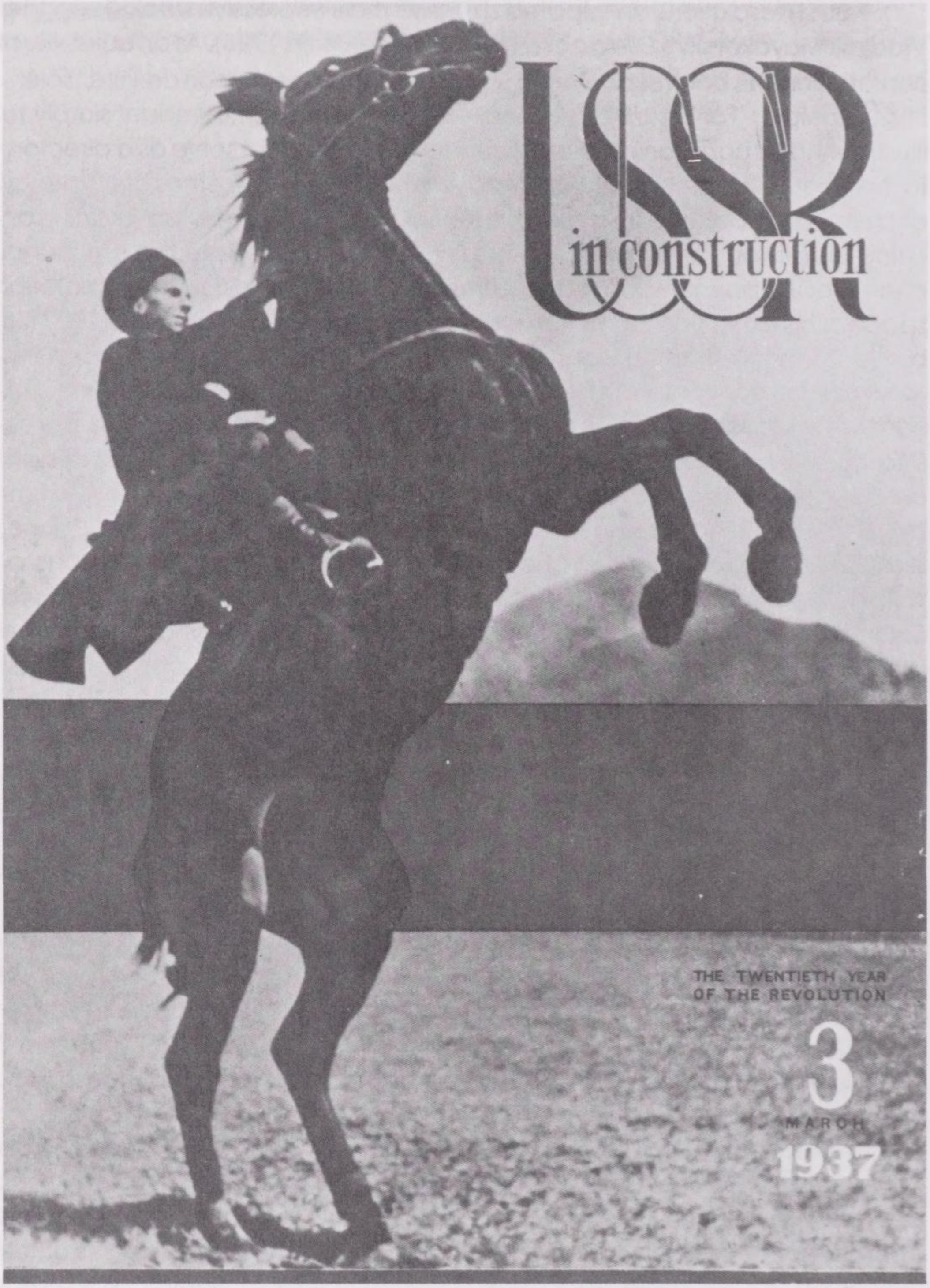
the P (surely, Lissitzky's favorite letter) and the exaggerated A of *Ravvi* are borrowings from the captions to *Pro dva kvadrata.*



Varvara Stepanova: four examples of graphic poetry, 1918 - 19. Watercolor and ink. Collection of Varvara Rodchenko, Moscow.

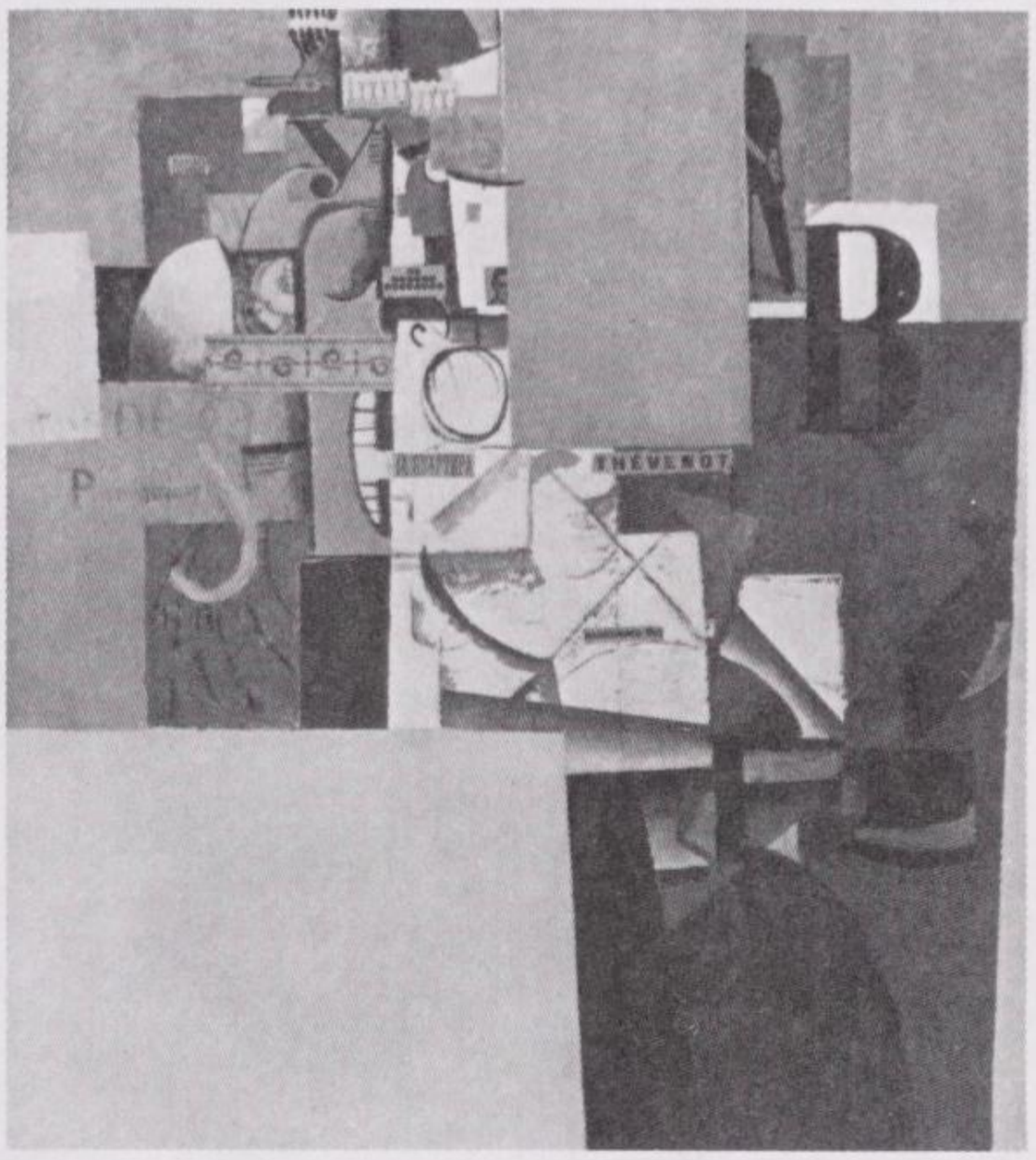
Such resolutions anticipated Lissitzky's most impressive book design, i.e. Vladimir Mayakovsky's *Dlia golosa* (For the Voice, Berlin, 1923). As an aural-visual construction, this book of poetry is a unique assemblage built on definite, "scientific" principles. For Lissitzky, the visual element here was not meant simply to illustrate–to accompany or even describe the text–but to serve as a directory to the poems. Furthermore, Lissitzky, paying homage to the ethos of efficiency and speed, introduced the thumb index as a quick reference tool just as in an office ledger or catalog. Finally, Lissitzky wished to correlate the emotional charge of the poems with that of the images: just as he modulated the interior space of his exhibition rooms from Dresden and Hanover in 1926 and 1927-28 by applying reliefs to the walls and just as he then led the visitor through this space by the "geographical" layout of the reliefs, so he incorporated the visual signs in the Mayakovsky book as guides to the reader's psychological response. *Dlia golosa* was Lissitzky's most extraordinary attainment in book design, although he continued to experiment in this field. For example, he made extensive use of photomontage in several catalogs and pamphlets of ca. 1930, and, like Man Ray and Moholy-Nagy, he hoped that the next stage would be "photo-writing." Together with Gustav Klutsis, Rodchenko, Sergei Senkin, Stepanova, and Solomon Telingater, Lissitzky tried to use photography as a dynamic, creative discipline as a member of the group October in 1928-32–one of the last manifestations of experimental design in the Soviet Union. Even in the 1930s, in spite of weak health and increasing political pressures, Lissitzky continued to apply photomontage in new and refreshing ways, and with Rodchenko, Stepanova, Nikolai Suetin and others, he made a vital contribution to the issues of the propaganda magazine *USSR in Construction* (Moscow, 1932-38). In many cases, the subtle integration of image and word, the sophisticated treatment of the documentary photograph, and the often unexpected resolutions of composition remind us of Lissitzky's audacious book designs of the earlier period.

The "visualization" of the Russian book in the 1910s and 1920s produced many exciting results, only a few of which can be mentioned here. A longer assessment would take into account Kamensky's so-called "ferro-concrete" poems of 1914-16 with their mixed typographies and universal accessibility, Stepanova's graphic poetry of 1919-20,[34] and Telingater's "voicegrams" for Semen Kirsanov's poetry of the mid-1920s.[35] But one conclusion that should be made is that the Constructivist achievements of the 1920s, especially in book design, were essentially the culmination of the pre-Revolutionary experiments and did not necessarily derive from the socio-political commitments of the Revolution. For example, Rodchenko's famous cycle of photo-collages for Mayakovsky's *Pro eto* (About It, M. 1923) can be viewed as extensions of Malevich's photo-collages in his transrational paintings (e.g. *Woman at an Advertisement Kiosk,* 1914, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam). True, in the post-Revolutionary avant-garde book, the medium may no longer be the on-



El Lissitzky (?): cover for the magazine *USSR in Construction*, Moscow, 1937, No. 3.

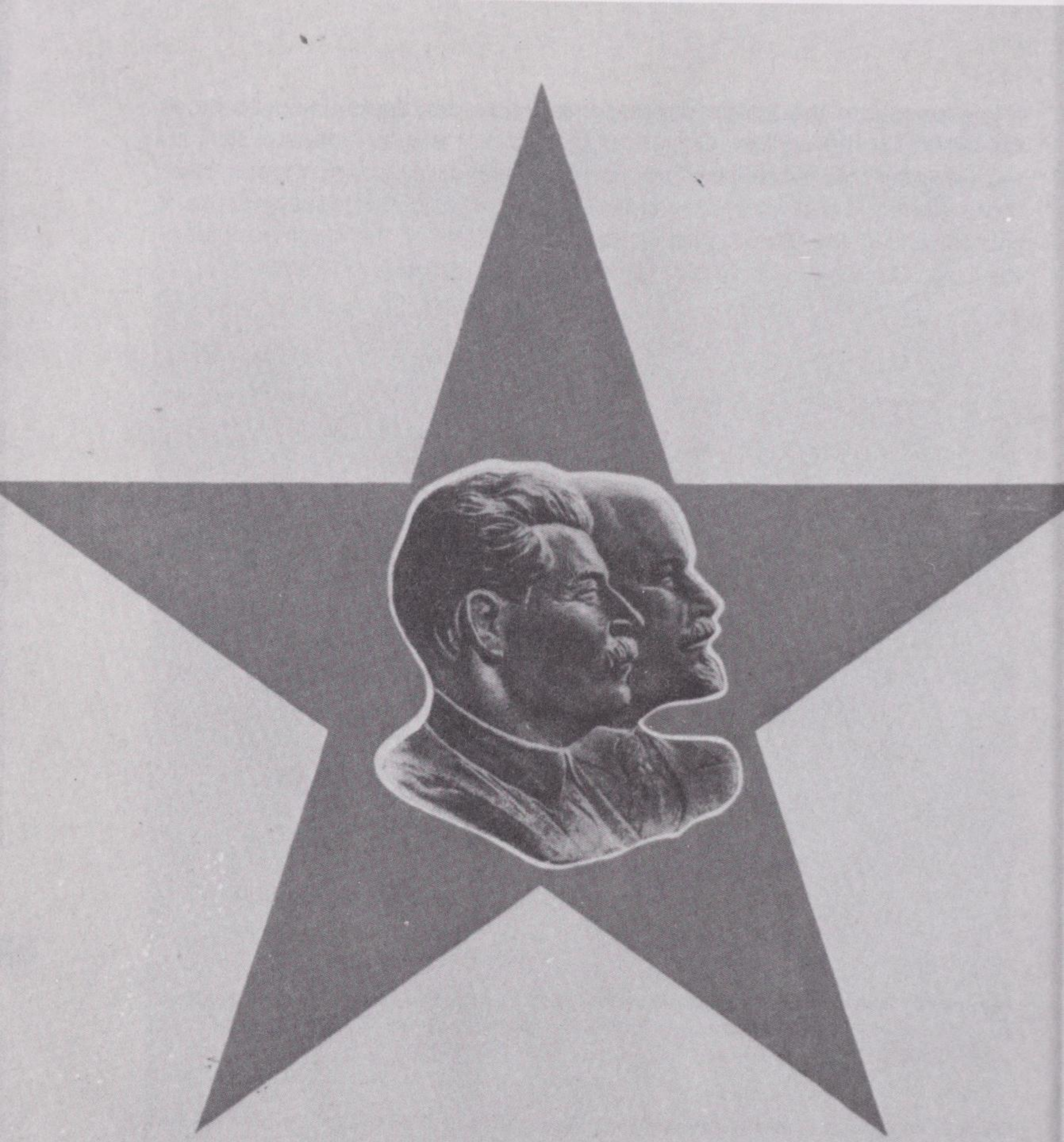
ly message, but the basic formal components remained similar to those espoused by the Burliuks, Goncharova, Larionov, etc.: asymmetry, shift, interpenetration of word and image, cheap paper (dictated by economic rather than by esthetic concerns just after 1917), desecration of "high" subjects, use of shock tactics.[36] The Constructivists smoothed and refined the rough gestures of the Cubo-Futurists, but they did not necessarily improve upon them.



Alexander Rodchenko: photomontage for *Pro eto* [About It] by Vladimir Mayakovsky, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1923, between pp. 30 and 31.

Kazimir Malevich: *Woman at an Advertisement Kiosk*, 1914. Oil. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

One direct consequence of Russia's political transformation was a rapid, increased reliance on the decree, the declaration, the tract, the debate, the polemic, i.e. a restoration of the *word* in its accessible, meaningful context. Perhaps of all the Soviet arts in the late 1920s and 1930s rhetoric was the most advanced, the most manifest, and the most creative, and the evolution of the



ОСНОВОПОЛОЖНИКИ ОРГАНИЗАТОРЫ И РУКОВОДИТЕЛИ РАБОЧЕ-КРЕСТЬЯНСКОЙ КРАСНОЙ АРМИИ

book in Stalin's Russia reflects this renewed power of the word as social communication. As in the 19th century, the image, once again, became a mere accompaniment to the text, an illustration of the fantastic messages delivered by an enormous propaganda machine. Book illustration thrived–and many

Vasilii Kamensky: *Ferro-Concrete Poem,* 1914. Reproduced in *Tango s korovami* [A Tango with Cows], by Vasilii Kamensky, Moscow: Pervyi zhurnal russkikh futuristov, 1914.

◄ Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova: frontispiece for the album *Krasnaia armiia* [The Red Army] edited by V.G. Sokolov, Moscow: Ogiz-Izogiz, 1938.

unorthodox artists worked as designers and illustrators at that time–but it was, precisely, illustration, a handmaiden to the story, demoted once again to an auxiliary position.[37] Moreover, the Soviet book itself, commissioned, printed and published exclusively by the state, could no longer accommodate individual deviance and eccentric interpretation. But perhaps there is another, more universal reason for the rapid decline of book design after ca. 1930–and not just in the Soviet Union. By then other communication systems presented themselves to the human imagination–the radio, the long-distance telephone, and the talkies. The fact that the Cubo-Futurists had given such careful attention to the book, that they had used it consciously as a primary means of communication indicates that, for all their "vulgarity," they respected the book as a special, inimitable artifact. [38]

THREE WAVES OF EMIGRATION

Szymon Bojko

INTRODUCTION

The third wave of emigre Russian intellectuals, writers, poets, artists and scholars to reach Western Europe and other continents peaked in the late 1970s. Like the two preceding waves, before and after the October 1917 revolution, it did not take the form of a spontaneous mass escape. It was rather a cumulative sum of individual destinies and decisions which the artists took often in dramatic circumstances after an inner struggle, in an atmosphere of forced unwanted partings, with an underlying desire to lead a normal life and enjoy creative freedom.

At the present time the whole phenomenon, in terms of its scale and geographic range, particularly in the sphere of fine arts, is unique. The actuality of abandoning the social system and artistic reality in which the emigre community had been shaped and in which it had functioned is different–as different as the process of its adaptation to thoroughly different systems of public life and values. The fact that mostly young artists each with their specific background and standpoint moved into the orbit of western culture and post-industrial civilization has no precedent. Their example is extremely striking, since they had been outside world trends and experiments in a living art, isolated for years, with no access to new concepts, new media or new works by leading western artists.

They are not, though, the only contemporary nomads who wander about the world, across frontiers, with their vision of art. Migrating, changing residence, moving in and out, is now for artists a normal way of life. But the lack of freedom, social upheavals, ideological crises, disillusionments, doubts are what make this present wave of immigration special and not normal.

THE FIRST WAVE . . . In the beginning there was Munich

At the turn of the century and precisely during its first decade, for the first time in history, Russian art entered into dialogue with Europe, thus breaking the bonds of academicism and conservative ideologies that supported the myth of an everlasting, ever unchanging holy Russia. New trends from Germany and France swept into Moscow and St. Petersburg fertilizing a ready soil. It is just then, on the spur of modernism, that contacts and joint undertakings were initiated by native Russian artists with the European avant-garde.

Munich was the first place they visited in search of an esthetic ideal that might meet world standards. In that city, where a colony of Polish painters had already settled, a Russian community moved in next. The Russians' moving spirit was Igor Grabar, a widely educated painter and teacher. He was aware of the fact that it would not be possible to overcome the provincialism of Russian art without fully grasping the latest achievements in world painting. Already highly respected when in Russia, Grabar succeeded in stimulating his young friends with his cry: "abroad, abroad!"

Dmitry Kardovsky, Alexei Yavlensky, Vladimir Izdebsky, Marianna Verefkin, Kogan, and Bekhteiev arrived in Munich together with him. Vasilii Kandinsky enjoyed a special position among them. His connection with the town of Munich played a significant role in the avant-garde movement of both the countries, dating back to his first visit in 1897. Friendly contacts flourished after the New Artists Association and the *Blaue Reiter* group (1911) were formed. The Russians quickly became part of the bohemian international whose esthetic radicalism, lifestyle and vocal opinions on middle-class values threatened the conservatively oriented public.

The first modernist exhibition held in 1909 was received unfavorably by the Munich press which demanded that the "anarchistic exhibition," as they called it, should be closed down because they maintained it was organized by a foreign, chiefly Russian, element which could lead to dangerous consequences for the old culture of Bavaria.

The Russian artists' inspiring impact was noted by the painter Franz Marc in the *Almanach Der Blaue Reiter*: "The first serious representatives of the new ideas in Munich, and the only ones, were two Russians (Kandinsky and Yavlensky) who have been living here for several years and whose activity went unnoticed till the Germans joined them."

Valentine Marcade in *Le Renouveau de l'art pictural Russe* also details how the Russians were making their way through Munich's Parnassus. He quotes Ludvik Cub, a Czechoslovakian modernist painter, who commented on the atmosphere of the private painting school run by Anton Azbe, which foreigners attended: "In Azbe's school the Russians represented the most dynamic ele-

Alexei Yavlensky, *Schokko Mit Tellerhut,* 1910, oil on board, 29½" x 25½", photo by Otto E. Nelson. Courtesy Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York.

ment, no matter whether they were many or few. Soon they dominated everything and, in consequence, Azbe himself. And there was nothing strange in that. They were mature people with strong wills, and unquestionably they

were gifted. Among them there were graduates from the Academy of Fine Arts, lawyers, doctors, philosophers and army officers."

The Munich chapter, so important for Russian art, could be continued thanks to Kandinsky's many-sided activity, his collaboration with art associations and magazines which propagated modernist art, as well as the numerous journeys, correspondence and theoretical essays on art events in Germany, which Kandinsky started sending as regular correspondence to such magazines in St. Petersburg as *Mir Iskusstva* (The World of Art) and *Apollon.*

In this way he built a bridge between East and West. There he developed his thesis on a spiritual element in art, which he presented at the All-Russian Convention in St. Petersburg in 1911. Intellectually, his perfect command of the German language helped the artist to master the new problems of form and ideas which required precise thinking and expression. Will Grohmann, author of the first monograph on Kandinsky, said that "Kandinsky was a Russian who wrote in German." Not many similar examples can be given; what matters is certainly not his bilinguality, but his ability to experience, simultaneously and profoundly, the eastern Greek-Byzantine and the western Latin civilizations. The Russians, who were in the very epicenter of changes in the sturm and drang period, preserved the authenticity of their native culture; they "discussed archaism and synthesis when speaking of old frescoes in Russian Orthodox Churches, icons and Scythian statues."

Paris for the First Time

Berlin was not yet on the route of migrations and journeys. This artistic Mecca would be reached by Russians at another time when they became refugees. Till the beginning of the century they were enthralled by Paris, the capital of France. Prince Sergei Scherbatov, a painter and aristocrat, writes about it in the memoirs of his European journeys: "We were young, children of our age. We believed in contemporary times which fascinated us; we trusted the deluding chant of a siren charming us away to Paris. Since the breeze from France swept Germany and caused a change in artistic orientations, isn't original better than its imperfect imitation? Shouldn't we prefer the authentic Paris rather than Paris as seen through Munich's glasses?"

While Kandinsky and his circle from the Munich's *Der Blaue Reiter* became involved in the German and Russian avant-garde, Diaghilev and his *Ballets Russes* offered Europe the Russian genius of dance, music and art. From that time on Russia, in the eyes of the civilized West, was no longer a synonym for a restricted society, the barbaric East with its provincial anecdotal art. Most of the authors writing on Diaghilev focused upon his enterprising activities, while his *compagnie d'exportation* of the Russian ballet became a unique success

in the history of twentieth-century art.

And that was a fact: dictatorial, charismatic Diaghilev was able to win the greatest talents of Russia for his plans. Another feature, probably decisive for his success, should be mentioned. A charcteristic trait of Diaghilev's personality was his "Europeanness" and not parochial "Russianness" which guards itself from change. Diaghilev had a rare feeling for the spirit of his time and an artistic instinct. Being open to the West while simultaneously exposing Europe to the wealth of the spiritual culture of Russia and the East to which it belongs geographically and culturally–this is what determined Diaghilev's activity. That is why the *Ballets Russes* survived the shock of World War I and the Russian Revolution.

The first exhibition of Russian art in Paris in 1906 preceded the *Ballets Russes* and served as Diaghilev's calling card, as Arsene Alexandre, a Parisian critic, recalled. His impressions of the opening day of the exhibition were: "Are we so incredibly ignorant? An average Frenchman at that time rather disdained geography, but not many of us wanted to know anything at all, even on the eve of a long journey to St. Petersburg or Moscow. Many are not allowed to admit that their knowledge of geography is not sufficient."

We know from numerous sources about the premiere of the first ballet performance in the Chatelet Theater in Paris in 1909. All agree that the audience was absolutely startled. Lady Anna de Noailles, a poet, wrote: "I saw things that had never existed before. Everything was dazzling, intoxicating, captivating and arresting, and appeared as if it had been swept onto the stage where it blossomed spontaneously as perfect as the green world which gets its magnificence from the climate in which it is nurtured."

Jules Bertrant, a French historian, provides an external, purely emotional impression: "Few people then suspected the extent and the force of the revolution which had been provoked by Diaghilev. It is only today that we can measure its dynamism. Fundamentally, it was the thousand-colored Orient bursting once more into our grey and monotonous life and flooding it. The *Ballets Russes* is a note in the history of French esthetics."

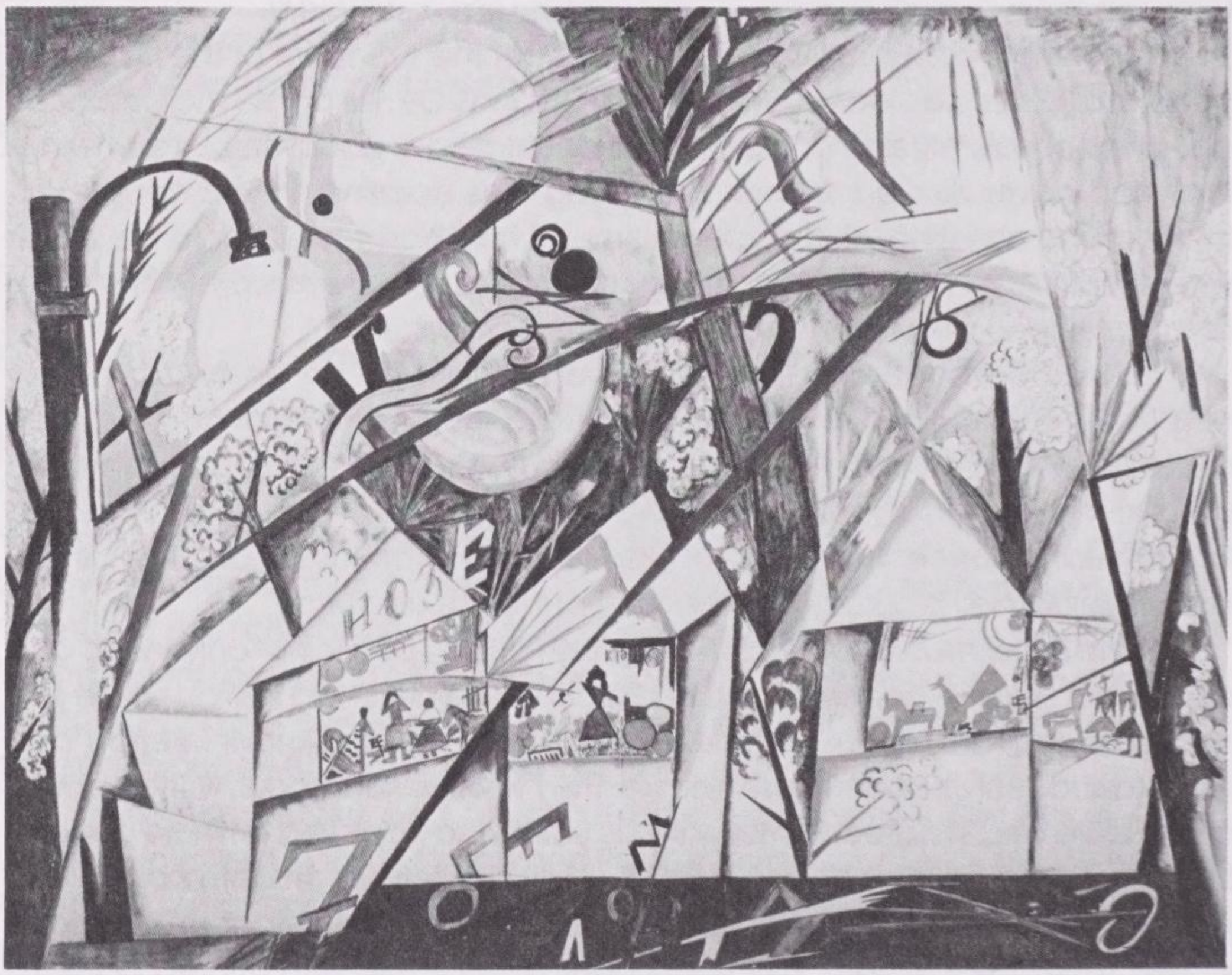
The *Ballets Russes* offered the choosy Parisian public not only music and dance, but also the achievements of a group of painters who designed the sets and costumes. Artists unknown till then, Roerich, Bakst, Golovin, Benois and Anisfeld suddenly became fashionable. They were talked about, written about, celebrated and imitated. Primarily it was Bakst who captured a whole generation's imagination, from cognoscenti to wide audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Katherine Gibson, an American journalist, noted that in American stores "there were velvets, satins, calicoes everywhere with printed patterns designed by Bakst."

After the spectacle of *Scheherazade,* the oriental style of dressing, especially with a headdress, became a prevailing fashion in Paris. Turbans

ousted hats. Oriental patterns and color combinations after Bakst were "in": canary, deep blue, cyclamen, burgundy, red and jasper. Bakst's impact upon everyday life was growing fast and wide from shoes to furniture and elements of interior decoration. New words–such as Bakstianlike–were coined to denote the line of the cut and the kind of pattern. Natty women wished to look like Persian odalisques, and they absolutely had to have their boudoirs turned into harems.

It became a custom in haute couture circles to organize *Soirees Orientales* or oriental balls, where formal gowns designed after Bakst's costumes were presented. At one of the balls given by Poiret and called the "Thousand and Second Nights," the "guests were required to wear Persian costumes. Half-naked black men carried torches and other oriental attractions."

The germ of this orientalism, sensuous, loaded with eroticism, was Bakst's designs for *Scheherazade, Le Carnaval, Cleopatra, The Afternoon of the Faun*



Natalia Goncharova, Decor *Rhapsodie Espagnole,* 1916, mixed media on paper, 25½" x 33", photo by John D. Schiff. Courtesy Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York.

and *Cleo.* Here Bakst let his virtually uncontrolled imagination go fully. The oriental perverse atmosphere was accentuated by the costumes made of soft filigree material that provokingly exposed naked dancers, male and female, as well as downy carpets and accessories. This tale of a thousand and one nights promised times of erotic freedom, when the senses and physical beauty are allowed to speak for themselves. Bakst, who left Russia together with Diaghilev, never returned home, yet he never in fact departed spiritually. He settled down in Paris and did not take advantage of an opportunity to move to the United States, although he visited it in 1923 to make a project for a stage design based upon Russian folk motifs.

While Bakst's lasting contribution to the advancement of artistic thought was his extension of the formula of "Russianness" and his conception of orientalism, Roerich's merit was his introduction to the West of the exoticism of Russian mythology. He immersed all his eyes and ears in Russia's fairy-like prehistory. Roerich tried to create a painterly portrait of the Varangian and Scythian country, with its unbounded spaces and nature yet untouched by the human hand, pagan rituals, secrets hidden in the earth and knights' heroic deeds. In the *Scenes et Danses Polovtsiennes* from Borodin's opera and in *Le Prince Igor,* Roerich revived the epos of old Russia, wild, barbarian and pagan, exciting his contemporaries with its savage and unruly character.

A still more overwhelming presence of archaic matter was felt when Stravinsky's ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps,* subtitled "Scenes from Pagan Russia," premiered. The orgiastic music, ritual dances, primitive rites performed on stage in Roerich's decor and costumes, were received controversially by artistic Paris: some people were spellbound, others outraged. According to contemporary statements, the ballet was derived from ancient sources of the Russian spirit. Roerich, though, in his later creations was not able to maintain the role he had envisaged for himself–as bard of prehistoric Slavic culture. However, in the United States he was considered an inspired painter. In 1923 the Nicholas Roerich Museum was founded in New York, where it still exists.

THE SECOND WAVE

The establishment of the Communist social system in Russia and its ideology that regulated all aspects of life including culture and art caused divisions and differences of opinion primarily among the intelligentsia and the artistic community. Some artists supported the revolution enthusiastically and with no objections. For others it was not acceptable. A conflict arose because it was impossible for the artist to claim independence while obeying ideological imperatives, even within the context of the revolutionary state's relatively liberal

policies. A decision to emigrate with no thought of return was ripening among many, and they did so as soon as an opportunity sprang up. For that reason their option was exile with all its consequences. Russian culture, which till then had been evolving in historical and spiritual unity, split along two lines: national and emigre.

The authorities tried to eliminate and depreciate the latter. Still the artist diaspora, although for Russia the loss was severe, rather built up Russia's cultural prestige abroad. The emigrants left their homeland at a time when for over a decade Russia enjoyed a strong position on the new art map of the world and had become a center, inferior in no respect to other cultural centers, neither from the point of view of the dynamism of its artistic life, the pluralism of its informal experiments and artistic milieu, nor of its theoretical thought.

Russkii Berlin

In Europe, the routes of emigrations led mainly to two places: Berlin and Paris, either directly or via Warsaw, Kovno, Tallin, Prague and Constantinople. Berlin, especially literary Berlin, was an ideal haven for emigrants for two reasons: there was a unique combination of art, literature and politics there, and it was on the lines of communication, across the Weimar Republic, with Russia.

Russkii Berlin 1921-23 is a title of a collection of documents recently published in Paris. It consists mostly of correspondence concerning the Russian emigres' intellectual life. The publication gives a clear picture of the complex material and psychological situations of writers, artists, ex-politicians and scholars forced to make a new start. The climate of Berlin in times of raging inflation, which promoted a desire to make the most of life and live in luxury, while poverty redoubled class antagonisms, and expressionism prevailed in art and promiscuity in social life, was recalled by Ilya Ehrenburg:

> I do not know how many Russians lived in Berlin at that time, I guess quite a large population, as everywhere one could hear the Russian language. Numerous Russian restaurants opened with balalaikas, Gypsies, blinis, shashlics, and, of course, singing, which is impossible to do without, while it tears the soul apart. There was an artistic cabaret, three newspapers, five weeklies. Within one year 17 Russian publishing offices became active; Fonvizin's and Pilniak's books, cookery books, works by fathers of the Russian Orthodox Church, technical information books, memoirs and lampoons appeared in print . . . In Berlin there was a place resembling Noah's Ark where the clean and the unclean gathered, which was called 'A House of Art.' In an ordinary German cafeteria Russian writers met every Friday. Alexei Tolstoi, Remizov, Lidin, Pilniak, Sokolov-Mikitov read their stories aloud. Mayakovsky performed his texts. Yesenin, Marina

> Tsvetayeva, Andrei Bely, Pasternak, Khodasevich read poetry. Once I caught sight of Igor Severyanin who arrived from Estonia; he admired himself as usual and read the same *poezy.* A speech by Pougny, a painter, caused a real storm; Arkhipenko, Altman, Shklovsky, Mayakovsky, Shterenberg, Gabo, Lissitzky and myself argued fiercely with one another.

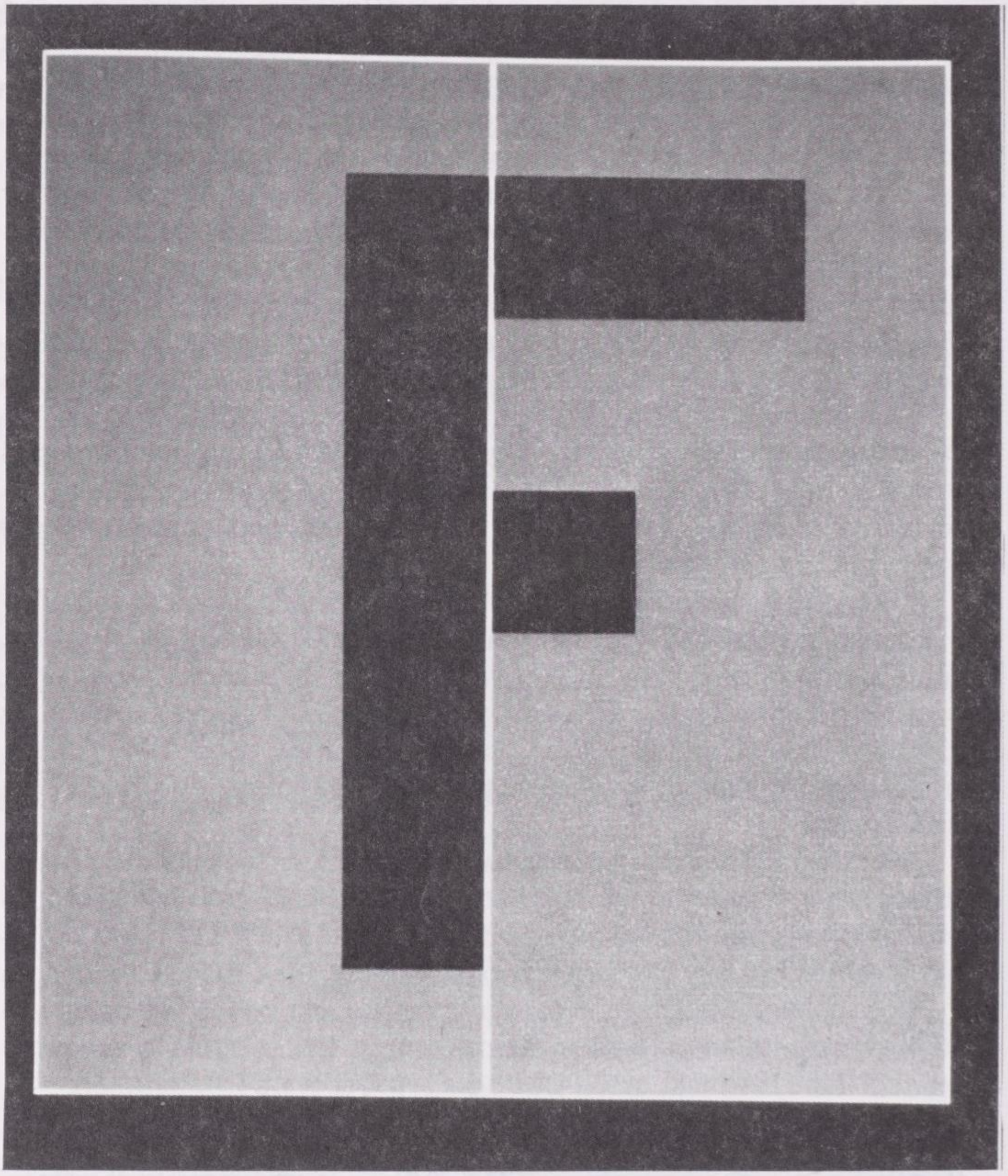
Ehrenburg exactly pointed out the unusual relationship between the "clean" and the "unclean," i.e. between the Russian emigrants and the Soviet citizens staying in Berlin as delegates or on cultural missions. Both sides avoided social ostracism, since their conviction that they belonged to one tradition and language was still stronger than ideological divisions. The unique common interest of those "from over there" and those "behind the cordons" sometimes took the form of osmosis, which never occurred again in later times. Very few critics have noticed a detail concerning the printing of *Mayakovsky for Reading Out Loud*–a well-known book with Lissitzky's typographic design. Its official publisher was *Gosizdat RSFSR,* Berlin 1923. However, on the title page of the book there is the additional information that it was printed by Lutze & Vogt GMBH. Another example: the masterpiece of Lissitzky's modern typography–*A Suprematist Story About Two Squares*–was published by Scythen Verlag in Berlin, a private publisher with a Slavophile orientation, which also financed the multi-language magazine *Veshch-Objet-Object* edited by Ehrenburg and Lissitzky. One must not underestimate the fact that post-war Germany was the first capitalistic country to recognize the Soviet Union and establish mutual diplomatic and trade relations.

The fluctuation of prices and the German mark was favorable and quite important for the publishing business and export-import initiatives, including traffic in products of culture. In the beginning, goods and services were cheaper in comparison with other countries of western Europe. It was simply profitable to publish in Berlin. Soon however the crisis, rising cost of living, unemployment, the atmosphere of panic totally transformed the landscape of *Russkii Berlin.*

The chief and perhaps most popular personality of the publishing boom and generally in Russian literary life in Berlin in 1921-23 was Yaschenko, the publisher of the magazine *Russkaya Kniga* and co-founder of the House of Art, located over the Cafe Leon. Collaborating with various opposing camps and on both sidces of the ideological barricade, Yaschenko provided his readers with continued information on Russian literary output. Once again let us quote Ehrenburg, the eyewitness and participant in this strange hybridization:

> There was another patch of 'no-man's land' in Berlin where Soviet writers met writers in exile; it was the magazine *Novaya Russkaya Kniga,* edited by Prof. Alexander Yaschenko, a lawyer and lover of literature who left Russia with a Soviet passport and, like Minsky, tried to unite everybody. Who would not collaborate with his magazine?!

In a book published in Berlin, *A vsie taki ona vertitsya* (Helikon, 1922), Ehrenburg recalls suggesting the publication of a monograph devoted to new Russian art with his introduction. He intended to cover achievements in art, sculpture and theater and include Tatlin, Yakulov, Exter, Udaltzova, Malevich,



El Lissitzky, "Figurinenmappe" for the portfolio *The Victory Over The Sun*, Hannover, 1923.

Popova, Mashkov, Konchalovsky and others, as well as theater sets and costumes designed for the Kamernyi Theater.

An exhibition organized by the *IZO* (Fine Art) Department of the People's Commissariat for Education and called *I Russische Kunst Ausstellung* was held at the Van Diemen Gallery on the *Unter den Linden* in Berlin in 1922. It was the first art exhibition staged abroad after the break caused by the war and revolution. As was customary then, works by futurists, suprematists and constructivists were shown as well as traditionalists, Cezannists and cubists. The catalogue's graphic layout was given as a commission to Lissitzky who was also the curator of the exhibition. I. Puni, a critic who had arrived from Petrograd, delivered a lecture on contemporary Russian art in the House of Art. The fact that such exile artists as Ivan Pougny could take part in the exhibition which anyway was a calling card of the new regime was not yet inconceivable. The time was in fact exceptional. The discussion that followed Puni's lecture in the Russian Club at the House of Art involved both sides: artists in exile and artists from the Soviet Union: Arkhipenko, Altman, Shklovsky, Mayakovsky, Shterenberg, Lissitzky, Gabo and Ehrenburg.

Among the artists who stayed in Berlin in the Twenties while enjoying an emigrant's uncertain status, Alexei Remizov deserves a special note, an author and fable writer who with the greatest perseverance and in the least favorable financial situation, practiced the art of calligraphy. This original artist, living his own inner life, was heavily influenced by ancient Russian folklore and mythology. Like William Blake, he designed visual books which were experimental records of his dream visions. His works did not stimulate interest in the critics. In Paris where he moved with his wife, he wrote with bitterness: "The Russians do not notice my books, so I had to be imposing . . . it is good that the French have accepted me. What I hear from the Russians is only that I am second-rate." The fact is Picasso and Andre Breton did appreciate those handwritten and illustrated books of his.

Russkaya Prague

Prague, an old city on the Moldau River, then the capital of one of the most prosperous and democratic European countries, attracted refugees. There, scholars expected to find new career opportunities and artists new contacts with the avant-garde. The Czechoslovakian government founded something like a Russian University which survived till the mid-193Os. Institutes of learning with Russian orientation were active at that time. Roman Jacobson, founder of the Prague Linguistic Circle which influenced all European philology, worked in Prague. He did not give up his studies, formerly pursued in Russia, of avant-garde Russian poetry and he kept in touch with writers in Russia.

Another outstanding personality among the Russian immigrants in Prague was Pavel Struve, a historian, editor of the magazine *Russkaya Mysl*, published there since 1922 and before that in Sophia. As its program Struve stated: "Culture as a whole, international and Russian, considered from the complex and deep Russian point of view, which has now become available and obliging to us, this will be the chief interest of *Russkaya Mysl*." The subject of artists' emigration to Prague in the Twenties had not yet been covered by any publication. One can only speculate about the number and frequency of mutual contacts. From Remizov's correspondence one fact is known, for instance: that there was a Russian Museum in Prague, whose director was Zaretzky, a painter.

Paris for the Second Time

The life the artists and the white Russian emigre colony led in Paris was different from that in post-war Berlin. Apparently more stabilized due to the prosperity of *les annees folles*, in fact it was much more difficult, since it was harder to defend one's identity and be spiritually independent. Although the majority of newcomers at home and abroad displayed notable achievements, and good social standing, they were quite soon confronted with the Ecole de Paris' predominant esthetic, which subdued all individuality, turning all into its integral and inseparable parts.

The mood prevalent among the intelligentsia is perhaps best conveyed in a letter from the poet Zinaida Gippius to Berdiaev, written after her short and unsuccessful visit ot Warsaw: "I can see clearly now that I am not wanted anywhere, and I can nowhere use my remaining energy. Nothing can be done with nobody. A strange state, not typical of my very nature . . ." In another letter, also written in 1923, she says: "And now I am in Paris. For a Russian it is a desert; there is nothing here, no possibility of creating anything. Emigrants, uncivilized individuals or old reserved coteries live here."

Gippius' grievous confessions sound like the credible testimony provided in prose paragraphs and visual miniatures by Teffi, a writer. In a way her chronicle of Russian emigres in Paris is gay and serious by turns, after the manner of Schedrin's prose: a Parisian version of Zoschenko's humor. "Laughter mixed with tears" is how it was termed by Valentine Marcade, Teffi's friend. Witty sayings from her mini-stories, which she published in the emigre newspapers *Peslodniye Novosti* and *Vozrozhdenie*, were instantly absorbed into the colloquial language. She won incredible popularity with her feuilleton *Kefer*? (in French: *Que faire*, in English: What to do?) based upon an untranslatable pun revealing the whole bitterness of the emigrant's fate.

Material troubles, banal yet real and distressing, sometimes sheer pov-

erty and frustration resulting from her inability to become adjusted to a different situation, to accept other than Russia's "rules of the game," with no more excitement derived from her contacts with the public and the press, as well as loneliness and adverse relations with the social milieu–all that was experienced by Marina Tsvetayeva and ultimately led, the fact is well known, to her tragic death.

Less drastic, though also permeated by sadness, was the final Parisian chapter of Olga Glebova-Soudeikina's life, a leading artist in Petrograd's literary cabarets. She was colorful as a butterfly, an actress and the poet's muse. During the era of the New Economic Policy she found herself on a Parisian street with a suitcase full of porcelain figurines and dolls which she designed after she left the stage. For her a difficult and unilluminated life began. Eliane Moch-Bickert, author of an unpublished monograph devoted to the actress, writes: "The first months of her stay in Paris were very hard for her. She felt lonesome, rejected, separated from her homeland and her dear ones from whom she had departed. Her only source of income was the occasional selling of figures, textile dolls and pictures with applications she made herself." Later on, she made her living by translating and was occupied with embroidery. At the beginning after her arrival, she continued socializing in artistic circles and gave parties in her apartment like Petrograd's literary salons.

In her later days, however, she became reserved and solitary. Called the Lady of the Birds, she kept about a hundred colorful birds, that she looked after and never parted from. And yet, Olga wrote her chapter in the history of Russian culture in the first decades of the century. She remained forever in Anna Akhmatova's poetry as her *dvoinik,* her second self, and she addressed numerous epigraphs to her. In "A Poem Without a Hero," Olga appears as a bright vision of the glorious world which passed away and only lives on in memories.

Other examples of the struggle for survival and to create art can be listed almost endlessly, along with the names of those artists who left Russia, Ukraine and Georgia as emigrants or escaped because of the war but who decided to stay in Paris. (See Appendix at end of chapter.)

The artists who had settled down there earlier and won substantial recognition in reputable French art circles sometimes failed to avoid misfortune. Mikhail Larionov and his wife Natalia Goncharova, although at the peak of their popularity, also suffered destitution. Nevertheless, they did not consider the option of returning home. However, Konnienkov, Serebriakova and Schukhaev went back to Russia at various times. It is quite probable that Lunacharsky and the group of artists associated with him such as David Shterenberg, then director of the IZO Department, expected hopefully a change in official attitudes. Some light is shed on this matter within the context of the official exhibition of French art staged with great care in Moscow in 1928. The artists selected to exhibit their works were rather unusual; however, the overwhelm-

ing majority were Russian artists who officially represented the Ecole de Paris.

This was emphasized in the text of the catalogue published in Moscow, whose author was Abram Efros, an influential art critic. Entitled *The Russian Group*, it makes a bizarre impression. Full of veiled pretensions and sarcastic remarks addressed to artists who left their country and landed, as the author says, on the outskirts of the art world in Paris where their talents were being squandered, Efros wrote: "During the last decade a phenomenon has arisen which I would call a *cultural expatriation.* Our compatriots do not leave now for Paris to live and study there according to our long tradition. Rather, they obstinately and even obsessively enter a reality which is thoroughly French. They are not Russian artists in Paris; they are French artists of Russian origin."

A lengthy argument follows in which warm compliments paid to Larionov, Goncharova and Chagall mingle with complaints addressed to such artists as Barthe, Pougny, Mane-Katz, Hosyasson, Rybak, Zak, Boberman and Annenkov, trapped in the iron corset of the Parisian art world. Although they made huge efforts to express themselves in the language of French forms, the author concludes:

> The Russian Group associated with the *Ecole de Paris* is a tribute paid to history. It testifies that in the climate of artistic tension and strict requirements of the day, Russian artists have been able to elevate Western art to its highest peaks. And how many times, quite recently, have we been accused, at the same time of depression, of the inborn provincialism of Russian painting and sculpture? What nonsense! How much more important is knowing that from now on it is we who are transforming the history of Russia, and transforming it radically. It is entirely up to us whether we will stop counting losses and moaning over them or not. People are not rabbits; they cannot be placed into cages and transported back.

Lunacharsky's text also appeared in that catalogue, in which he expresses a slight pity that such good artists as Annenkov, Exter, Larionov, Goncharova or Yakovlev are living abroad: "Would it not be interesting to watch the evolution of works by Larionov and Goncharova who have been staying in France for perhaps too long?"

Efros' opinions, evaluations and predictions deny reality. Paris did not sterilize and provoke artistic repression but on the contrary, it enriched it. It is true that the Ecole de Paris suppressed some of the artists' identity and totally absorbed them, which also happened to Poles, Czechs, Italians and Spaniards. The levelling, though, was somehow an automatic process which continued not in connection with individual artists but within the whole system of art.

The critics' fears were groundless, that those uprooted people would become disconnected from their native sources and, sooner or later, from their specific vision of the world. In fact their Russianness denoted the presence of mystical, religious and metaphysical elements in artistic thought and creation,

Alexandra Exter, *Architectonic Landscape (Design for a Decor),* 1924, oil on canvas, 24⅜" x 28¾", photo by Otto E. Nelson. Courtesy Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York.

as Rilke experienced during his journey to Russia before 1900: "I feel as if I were watching an act of creation, with a few words a new Being is brought into existence, things as great as God the Creator does." This Russian eschatology was not annihilated by the rationalism and materialistic philosophy of Western life.

While the transcendental reality of Goncharova's creations, Larionov's and Grigoryiev's peasant ethos, Chagall's sacral symbolism came directly as intended out of the iconic, in other artists' consciousness the religious reflection was coded somehow, in spite of the esthetic ideal they represented. De Stael and Lanskoy who pursued abstractions are the best examples of this.

The philosophy and theology of the Russian Orthodox Church, with Vladimir Solovev, called the Russian Plato, and Pavel Florensky as leading intellectuals, had a great impact upon Russian cultural identity. The Communist

Revolution and the subsequent emigration did not weaken this influence. Historical and theological thought made further advances. In France, due to Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolai Berdiaev, it evolved to new heights. Berdiavev's intellectual penetration ranged from studies on Russian messianism to reflections on problems which several generations of Russian intelligentsia had tackled: Russia and Europe, Eastern and Western cultures.

Following Dostoevsky, Berdiaev perceived the quality of the Russian spirit: two souls; one European and the other oriented toward the East. Writing about the duality of Russia's destiny, and the supposition that the Russian nation is truly convinced of its mission to on the one hand, save and create the New Jerusalem, on the other hand according to him it "may yield to temptation and, having lost faith, accept in error the kingdom of Antichrist as the kingdom of Christ."

Profound, unquestionable and unique, most fruitful and inspiring for artistic creation was the spirit of communion with Russian popular tradition, in the sense of values and not ornamental patterns. As a subject of study investigated by such French art historians as Valentine Marcade and Jean-Claude Marcade, these problems merge into a broader intellectual reflection upon what is universal and what is specific and national in contemporary art.

Presenting Lanskoy's creations, one of the outstanding representatives of Ecole de Paris, J. C. Marcade emphasizes just these existential links with Russia's spiritual realm, from which the artist descends. In an essay entitled "Lanskoy's Mystical Light" we read: "He is surely the only one among the pleiad of Russian masters who has remade the inner world into the dimension of the universe, the only one who has discarded restricting this world to narrow frames. He has done that in order to set energetic powers free in all their complexity inherent in man's inner self." In the same publication in an essay entitled "The Bottomless Deepness of N. de Stael's Painting," V. Marcade gives the most accurate characterization of de Stael the painter whose life and creations are a measure for many young painters in Russia and elsewhere: "There are geniuses who conclude the cycle of investigations pursued by their precedents; Vermeer was one of them, and Mozart, and in Russia Pushkin. De Stael was also one."

So much has been written about Larionov and Goncharova in Paris, about their assimilation into French civilization, that everything I say here will be mere repetition. However, some details noted by their contemporaries should be stressed, which attest how much the artists loved Paris, the capital of France, and to what extent it overlapped with their *Russkii Paris* where they had brought their old traditions and lifestyle. Waldemar George, author of the first monograph on Larionov, quotes Apollinaire's anecdote about his acquaintance with the Russian painter from 1916: "His knowledge of French was limited to two short phrases: *c'est bon et c'est mauvais.* He pronounced them, however, with such nuances of meaning and so much to the point that they helped him

not only in arranging affairs but also expressing reasonable judgement, sometimes quite unexpectedly."

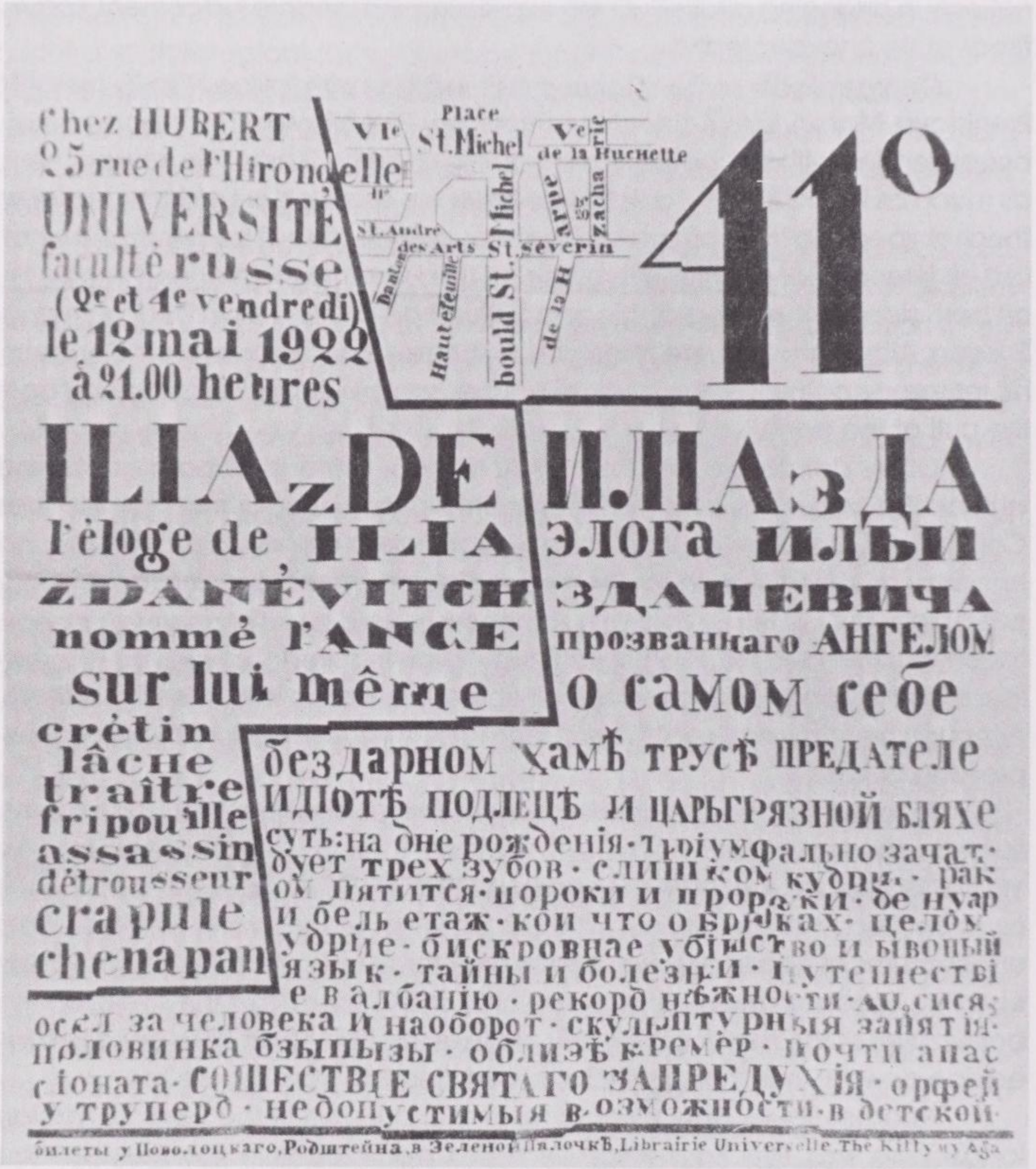
George recalls some of Larionov's friendships with Fokine, Nijinsky, his sister Bronislava, Massin, Lifar, Balanchine, Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Picasso. Larionov corresponded with his companions in artistic circles in Russia. "He helped them as much as he could . . . a witty tale-teller, he sparkled with ideas and new theories speaking in an offhanded manner, and he did not bother about what use his interlocutor might make of them." The French critic places the painter on both sides of the geographic and cultural area: "He is both European and Russian. Although his guide through the sphere of consciousness is Cezanne, his reference points are the ancient mother sources of Slavic mythology and the cult of the earth."

Other details are recalled by Annenkov, a friend of both artists and author of memoirs devoted to his compatriots. "In their apartment on Jacques Callot Street, there was an incredible though poetic mess . . . moving around in there was difficult, as on tables and chairs documents concerning art were piled high up . . . But all that was somehow behind a veil of musing. Larionov, Larionych, Misha–a tall, slightly rural type even in tuxedo, always full of crazy ideas, a philosopher with cunning half open eyes, no malice or hostility in them. Although he had been speaking French for fifty years, he had difficulties in expressing himself."

To make Larionov's portrait more vivid let us quote an anonymous person who remembered the artist as a regular at the Cafe Flora, day after day, year after year, in Goncharova's company: "Larionov always sat on a front chair and endlessly drew various things, among which were two hundred charicatures of Apollinaire. He used to offer them to Apollinaire or somebody else . . . Larionov always drew something; in the theatre, in the street, on the back cover of the menu, on the bills, on toilet paper. Apart from pencil he used rice powder, eyeliners, lipsticks, coffee and ash from cigarettes . . ."

Another figure, equally colorful and impressive in the Russian-Parisian landscape was Ilya Zdanevich Ilyazd, a participant in the Russian and Georgian futurist movement, who settled down in Paris after 1921. He was a mechanic, a parquet cleaner, finally a hatter, and he almost always starved. Lucien Schler recollects meeting the artist in 1922, when Ilya and Vladimir Pozner walked across Paris from one end to the other in order to have a meal, probably the only one that day, at his friends' place. Zdanevich was to a degree more spectacular perhaps than Larionov, and he joined himself to Paris and its cosmopolitan elite, but his links with *Russkii Paris* were vital and uninterrupted.

He was appointed the secretary of the *Union des Artistes Russes*, participated in organizing the charity *Travesti Transmental Ball* sponsored by the Union, designed the advertising poster for it and its programme, and gave lec-



Ilya Zdanevich (Paris), Affiche for his conference "L'Eloge De Ilya Zdanevitch" (1922).

tures on avant-garde theories in Russian poetry, the influence of French art on new trends in Russian art, the activity of the Kamernyi Theater in Moscow, among others. The Russian threads were interwoven in all of Ilyazd's undertakings. Refusing to collaborate with the white emigres, boycotted by commer-

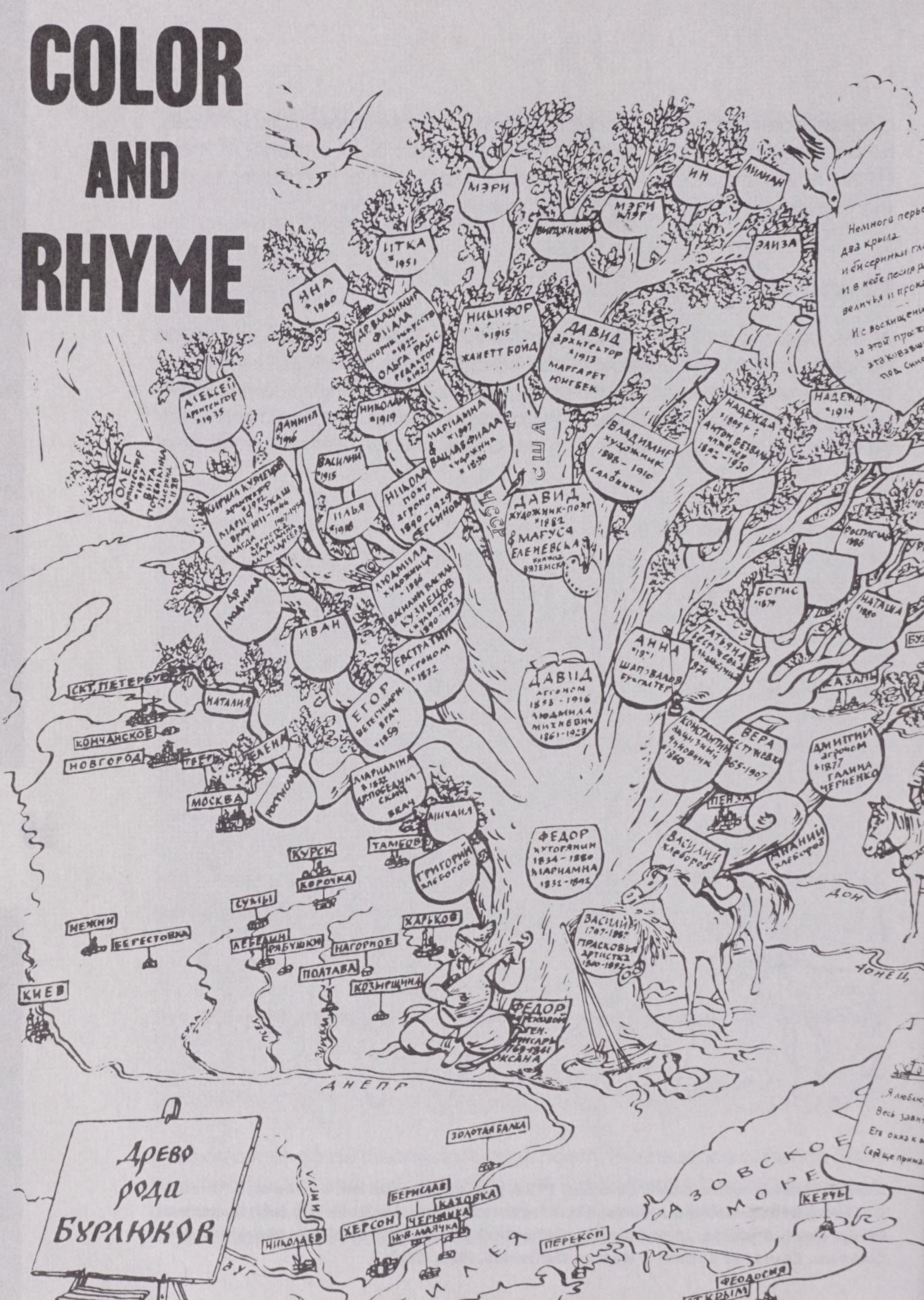
cial bookstores belonging to Russians, with no contact with the futurists in Russia, he designed and published on his own a futuristic book, *Ledentu le Phare* (1923), now a unique example of the visual explication of the assumptions of the transmental language (*zaum*) in futuristic typography.

Russkii New York?

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian and Jewish-Russian people became very numerous in the United States, especially in New York, but they had no intellectual and artistic backing of their own. The Russian Jews arrived in the 1970s. A few emigrants from Soviet Russia had managed to settle down there earlier, sometimes after a stay in Paris. The small number of

Michael Larionov, *La Ronde Celebre,* 1924, pen and Indian ink on paper, 8" x 10½", photo by Otto E. Nelson. A sheet of caricatures. Clockwise from top left: Ansermet, Misia Sert, Picasso, Apollinaire, Stravinsky, Lifar, Diaghilev, Massine, Jean Cocteau. Courtesy Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York.

COLOR AND RHYME


Древо рода Бурлюков
МЭРИ
ЛИЛИАН
ЭЛИЗА
ЛІТКА *1951
ЯНА *1960
ДАВИД архитектор *1913 МАРГАРЕТ ЮНГБЕК
НИЦИФОР *1915 ЖАНЕТТ БОЙД
ОЛЬГА РАЙС *1927
ВЛАДИМИР художник 1898 - 1916 САЛЬНИКИ
НАДЕЖДА *1914
ДАВИД художник-поэт *1882 МАГУСА ЕЛЕНЕВСЬКА
ЛЮДМИЛА художница *1886 ВАЖНИЙ ВАСИЛЬ КУЗНЕЦОВ скульптор 1890-1923
ЕВСТРАТИЙ агроном *1872
ДАВИД агроном 1858 - 1916 ЛЮДМИЛА МИХНЕВИЧ 1861-1923
АННА *1871 ШАПОВАЛОВ бухгалтер
ТАТЬЯНА *1874
БОГИС *1879
НАТАША *1880
ВЕРА *1869-1907
ДМИТРИЙ агроном *1877 ГАЛИНА ЧЕРНЕНКО
ФЕДОР художник 1834 - 1880 ЛІАРІАМНА 1832 - 1842
ВАСИЛИЙ хлебороб
ДАНИИЛ хлебороб
ГРИГОРИЙ хлебороб
ФЕДОР *1879 ГЕН. ГУСАРЫ 1879-1941 ОКСАНА
ВАСИЛИЙ 1787-1853 ПРАСКОВЬЯ АРТИСТКА 1840-1897
ЕГОР ветеринарный врач *1859
ЛІАРІАЛІНА *1872 АРТ-ПОСЕДЛАЧ-СКИЙ ВРАЧ
НИКОЛАЙ *1919
ВАСИЛИЙ *1915
ДАНИИЛ *1916
ІЛЬЯ *1918
ОЛЕГ архитектор *1935
АЛЕКСЕЙ архитектор *1935
ВІТА ГОЛЕВАЛИНА ДЗЕРИНА *1938
ЛІАРІЛІЯ врач МАГДА 1911-1944
ЛІАРІЛІЯ 1907-1954
ДР ЛЮДМИЛА
ИВАН
НАТАЛИЯ
ЕЛЕНА
ЛІАРІАЛІНА *1872 АРТ-ПОСЕДЛАЧ-СКИЙ ВРАЧ
МИХАИЛ
ГРИГОРИЙ ХЛЕБОГОВ
ЗАСИЛИЙ ХЛЕБОГОВ
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emigrants was the result of America's restrictive visa policy. Alexander Arkhipenko, Boris Anisfeld, David Burliuk, Mstislav Dobujinsky, Eugene Dunkel, John Graham (Jan-Ivan Dabrowsky, a russianized Pole), Jacques Lipchitz, Simone Lissim and Boris Margo are known to have lived there.

Burliuk arrived in New York with his wife and two children in the summer of 1922 by land via Vladivostok, Japan and Montreal for the glory of the father of Russian futurists. He was respected by such artists as Arshile Gorky, Graham, Raphael Soyer and Joseph Stella. Admiration from American artists did not improve, though, Burliuk's and his family's financial situation. He never had any regular income to pay the rent, which made them frequently change address.

Nevertheless, in 1930 the magazine *Color and Rhyme* was published in English. Burliuk appeared as its editor and Maria Burliuk the publisher. An extraordinary author's magazine, it consisted solely of information and historical references about the Russian futurist movement. Its contents and photographs had one thing in common: Burliuk in person. The credibility of the published materials was not much his concern, as if accuracy was not compatible with the character of a futurist. That is why the magazine obviously must be treated with caution.

He continued publishing this unusual journal for a number of years. The 61st and last issue appeared in 1966/67, the year of the artist's death. Ingenious and unfailing in building a monument to himself while alive, Burliuk for the twentieth anniversary of futurism in Russia edited a publication entitled *Entelekhim,* not forgetting to have the following words printed on the title page: "Father of proletarian futurism." On the back cover of its 57th issue he drew *The Burliuk Family Tree.*

THE THIRD WAVE

The exodus to which we are nearly eyewitnesses nowadays will only be briefly treated here as the process of emigration still continues. For that reason it is difficult to grasp the whole phenomenon. Even a statistical attempt to gather accurate data would not be possible. Thus, we may cover the problem only partially, drawing information from magazines devoted to Russian art in exile, exhibition catalogues, press cuttings and a few books on the subject. Additional sources are conversations I held with several artists during my stay in

◀ **Back cover of the 57th issue of *Color and Rhym* with a drawing "The Burliuk Family Tree" by David Burliuk.**

New York in 1982 and 1984, and in Paris in 1985.

It is not my intention to describe here the events and facts which have determined their decision to leave Russia. In short, the exile has been a side effect of non-conformism. The reader who is interested in the history of this phenomenon in the sphere of the visual arts should consult competent writers, emigrants themselves, and chroniclers, art historians and art critics, among them Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer.

The inevitable consequence of the impossible reconciliation of the artist with the State was expatriation. Because of the specific criteria which the authorities adopted concerning Jewish descent, only some of the artists who rejected the doctrine of social realism left. Some, though not many, of the migrant artists managed to make a name abroad. Those people with crystallized outlooks and esthetic inclinations who had identified themselves with unofficial culture, for that very reason were persecuted and discriminated against as artists. They mostly belonged to the generation of those forty years old or younger who are artistically active founders of independent ventures and who enjoy prestige in their millieu.

The first emigrations took place at the beginning of the 1970s. The mid-1970s marked a slow but gradually increasing traffic that peaked by the end of the decade. The geography of emigration by no means resembled the one many years ago and provides material for reflection. It shows not only how much the world had changed, but also to what extent the world of art has become polycentric. In western Europe, Paris takes pride of place as the traditional destination point for Russian emigrants. The French capital still has its power to attract. It is surrounded by a legend that it is the world's center of art, verified by the unique collection of French paintings by Schukin and Morozov in the permanent exhibition at the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and the Leningrad Hermitage.

In the second place and with much fewer artist emigrants are Italy, Great Britain and West Germany. In some particular cases emigrants settle down in Eastern European countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. More distant places on the map of the world where artists from Russia arrived perhaps for the first time were Israel, Australia and Canada. It is a noticeable fact that emigration to the United States has increased, often via Israel, Paris and other places in Western Europe. Some artists avoid big urban conglomerations and prefer less exposed centers. (In Philadelphia, I met a newly arrived young graphic artist.)

However, the mainstream flows to New York, where according to some reliable data, about a hundred artists of Russian descent live and pursue artistic careers. The same number is said to stay in Paris. New York, a city which promises an artist that his vision will be realized or shattered with equal probability, glory or oblivion, a city both civilized and barbarous, pragmatic and

Olga Glebova-Soudeikina, 1921. Photo by Nappelbaum.

practical, does appreciate artists. Thanks to having absorbed several waves of emigrants, before and after the First World War, after Hitler's rise to power in Germany, during and after the Second World War, New York has had the historic opportunity to encounter the European Parnassus of art. A new chance to keep and strengthen this position is represented, in my deepest belief, by the latest injection of creative potential provided by these immigrant-Russian-born artists attached to Russian culture.

An injection like this, in the first decade of this century which proved beneficial for American art, in effect, has consisted of such artists from across the ocean as de Kooning, Gross, Nadelman, Pascin, Arkhipenko, Graham, Neutra, Kiesler, Hofmann and Rothko, not to meniton younger emigrants who made artistic careers on American soil: Tworkov, Gorky, Roszak, Ben Shahn, Soyer, Lassav and many others.

For those who remained in Russia they still embody the idea of being "one of us," fashioned in the same mold, sharing the same lot as their generation. The psychological situation of earlier emigrants who left Russia right after the establishment of the Soviet system was different. To the world they arrived in they appeared as aliens bearing the stigma of exile. These emigrants were remote, sometimes absolutely, with a language barrier added, from their new reality. They were far more remote than those of the second wave of emigration for whom Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna or London were not just mere geographical names. Many used to visit those places, and they all became perfectly familiar with the trends and facts of French, German art, and so on. In the 1920s, they had a background in the avant-garde which was shared by the whole of Europe, and of the common experiment in creating the twentieth-century language of art.

The background of the third wave was a closed system resulting from isolation. The space of the world shrank and was minimized. Nevertheless, the outer world penetrated some cracks, projecting usually a distorted image, as if dismembered, in separate pieces, rarely in synthesis and from first-hand sources. The view of cultural pluralism was blurred. Only very strong individuals were able to reason independently within their own system of truth and managed to defend themselves against the seclusion and provincialism, against third and fourth-rate importations from abroad. Their physical displacement caused no shock. They continued to realize their esthetic ideals and remained faithful to the values to which they had always referred. For others, the West was a leap from the realm of constraint into a glittering pluralistic abyss. Bewildered, lost in the multitude of honest ways and appearances, confused about the different criteria of evaluation and motivation for artistic labor, they experienced frustration and states of indecision.

Looking through the available bibliography, I have not come across any attempt to analyze this process. The adaptation, assimilation and acculturа-

tion of Russian artist emigrants, which is in fact rather a subject for a cultural sociologist than an art critic, is extremely topical. Published interviews with artists contain no element of self-knowledge and thus consign this aspect of their life to silence. The truth must be drawn and deduced from various secondary, indirect sources and primarily from private conversations with the artists. The attitudes I observe may be reduced to several typical patterns:

1. "We are emigres, but we hold ourselves aloof from our new environment and do not assimilate risking that our status as Russian artists will be permanent. For that reason we support all forms of activity whose purpose is the integration of the entire diaspora, no matter what trends artists follow. We consider our purpose is to found museums, centers, galleries and public collections of Russian art in exile, to promote exhibitions and shows, publications, magazines and professional criticism of our own."

2. "As emigrants we maintain our ethnic identity. At the same time we enter the western system of art, contributing to it our own problems and the spiritual world to which we are still attached. We reject all folk, local and external elements in our tradition and refer to the Russian avant-garde of the 191Os and 192Os, during its flourishing period."

3. "Having left our homeland, we are getting free from all national, ethnic and denominational burdens. We treat contemporary art as an open system which is not confined to geographical regions, frontiers that divide countries, and to cultural structures. In today's art we see a humanistic alternative, a way to arrive at the truth independently of national schools and tendencies in art."

4. "The sooner we are integrated into the external world into the culture of the country in which we settled down: French, German, American, the better chance we have to level the differences and become artists with a universal outlook. We do not wish to create art in a Russian ghetto, to exhibit only, or nearly only, with our compatriots, to be presented in magazines addressed to our Russian circles and a narrow audience."

I must admit that none of these patterns occurs in a pure form. Mixed models along with extreme ones may exist. All of them subcutaneously determine the actual situation, sympathies and animosities, relationships and connections among particular groups. Divisions are not usually perceptible to those outside; thus, one can be easily mistaken.

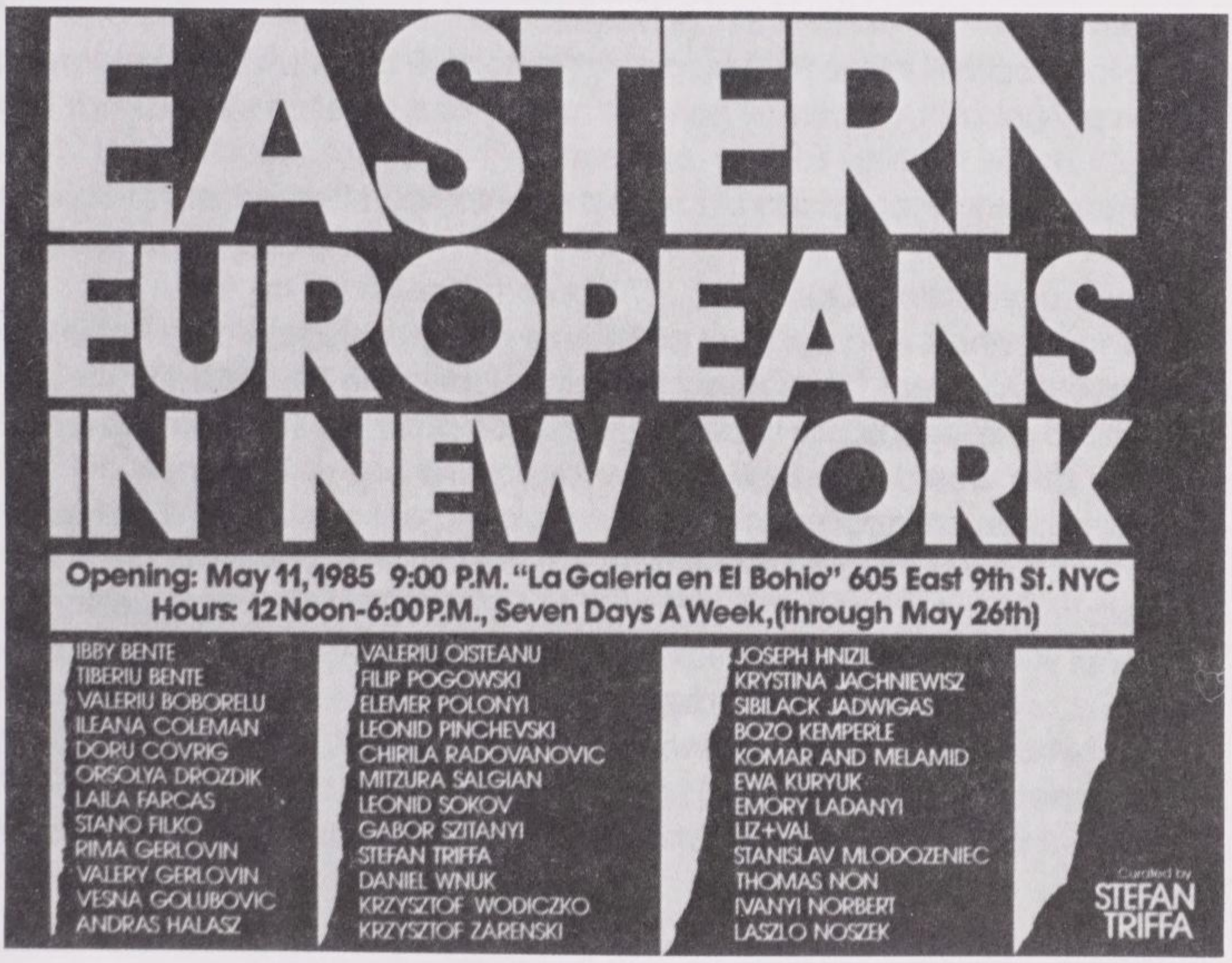
The western press did not at first distinguish the nuances of outlook and behavior among the newcomers. For many journalists and art critics the emigre Russian nonconformists, painters, sculptors, graphic artists, book designers, authors of performance, proponents of new figuration or abstraction approaching surrealistic or neo-expressionistic esthetics who sought solutions in minimal stylistics or critical realism were all primarily the subject of political dispute.

Philosophical questions, problems concerning their viewpoint or

Poster for the exhibition *20 Years of Independent Art from the Soviet Union*, Bochum Museum, Germany, 1979. Design by Lev Nussberg, collage by Vagrich Bakhchanyan.

ideology of art were given a secondary meaning. I suppoe it is just then that they felt a need to defend their identity. Institutions promoting Russian art were founded, with collections, exhibitions and other media. Also, the emigres formed their own inner public opinion and scale of evaluation. After some time though, it turned out that their autarchy was failing. When the reduced rate of criticism towards them due to their political aura no longer protected them and even became embarrassing, a second period started at the beginning of the 1980s. The first noteworthy criticism appeared concerning one-man exhibitions, but there is still an atmosphere of caution around the global situation of this immigrant community among professional art critics.

As an observer for many years of the movement of unofficial artists, I certainly have my own preferences concerning the trends and forms of expression that I favor most. This, however, is a subject for a separate publication. Since I respect many valuable ways and experiments, I do not hide my sympathy towards some of them, towards the authenticity of the metaphysical and sym-



Poster for the exhibition *Eastern Europeans in New York*, 1985.

bolistic orientation and the intellectual rapacity of the grotesque, dramatic and tragic, irony, parody and pastiche, trends so Russian rooted in Russia's literary culture especially in drama, and yet so universal. This tendency also includes the art of unconventional books, the art of absurd objects, as practiced by many emigre artists in Europe and in the USA. Some of them are presented in this publication.

SAMIZDAT ART

Rimma and Valery Gerlovin

INTRODUCTION

As Russian artists, we are often asked to compare Russian art and life with American. One instance of this occurred in 1982, when we were invited to assemble an exhibition of Russian artists' books for Franklin Furnace gallery in New York City. We called this exhibition "Russian Samizdat Art," using the name of the independent movement in literature, politics and art which, literally translated, means "self-publishing." It is an ironic paraphrase of such terms as *Gosizdat*: state publishing.*

Samizdat art represents the original, unrestricted impulse to engage moral and ideological problems, extending the idea of the artist's book into new territories. While the Russian Futurists first 'desecrated' the book, they nonetheless preserved its form and economy. *Samizdat* art proceeds in a different manner, transforming the book into various unusual objects with intense messages. Emphasizing the principle rather than the form in new conditions, there arise official and unofficial strata of culture. In this sense, *samizdat* is substantially different from the artist's book in America, which tends to estheticize the book, emphasizing elements of craft and preserving the commodity function. This inversion of book as an object to artistic practice marks, we think, an important aspect of the contemporary art movement in the USSR: a symbolic *samizdat* spirit, which implies a non-conformist effort to circumvent official censorship. In this sense, then, the *samizdat* influence–its cultural and ideological message–

* This exhibition, held at the Franklin Furnace in 1982, has subsequently travelled throughout the United States and Canada, attracting a good deal of attention.

can hardly be compared to the artist's book movement in the West.

The book, a portable object of mass reproduction, nevertheless intimately communicates with the reader and becomes an exemplary instance of the relationship between introversion and extroversion in the history of the Russian Avant-Garde.

Russian Samizdat Art exhibition, installation view, Franklin Furnace Gallery, NY, 1982. Photo by Francis Hauert.

After the early heroic period of the Revolution, the contradiction between ideal and reality destroyed the initially positive significance of the external, propagandistic elements of this production form. However, the introverted aspects never died; they intensified and survived even during the coldest period of Stalinism. A useful analogy might be to compare the destinies of the two great Russian poets, Mayakovsky and Pasternak: the vivid, intensely creative life and sudden death of Mayakovsky with the half-underground survival and creation of Pasternak's philosophical and speculative lyrical poetry.

From the thirties onward, the making of original book objects was gradually abandoned as a form of creation that was becoming increasingly dangerous. Instead, the tendency was to produce a much simpler manuscript of poetry or artwork.

With the Khrushchev thaw at the end of the fifties, the book as an art-form re-emerged. Poets began to type carbon copies of their works, often accompanied by their own drawings and collages, bound them, and circulated their editions among friends. In this way, the art of Russian *samizdat* ("self-published books," as the poet Nikolai Glaskov called them for the first time in a manuscript-book at the end of the fifties) came into being. Later, this movement was taken up in other socialist countries.

Samizdat, as a cultural phenomenon, is distinct from Western practices and was shaped by several factors, e.g., the strict control under Russia's iron-curtain isolation, national and spiritual traditions, and the supportive role of the Russian intelligentsia.

A distinction should always be drawn between political *samizdat,* which analyzes and criticizes the Soviet system, and literary and artistic *samizdat,* which first aims not at criticism but at reflecting creative problems and values. Unlike multiple poetic manuscripts, *samizdat* art is represented by visually and textually elaborated pieces of art, book-objects done by multimedia artists and poets. *Samizdat* art is not an institution, but a strategy. In the social and cultural climate of contemporary Russia, literary and artistic *samizdat* nonetheless took on a political flavor by virtue of its unofficial status and non-conformist position.

There is no censorship per se in *samizdat* in either a political or an editorial sense. Early *samizdat* works usually consisted of typed or handwritten carbon copies. Printing equipment of any kind (including photo-copiers) is illegal and almost inaccessible, so one and the same copy is passed from hand to hand accompanied by discussion and commentary.

This negative environment for modern art has at least one positive side: forbidden fruit is sweet. This difficult and problematic social situation unites the community of artists and poets within itself, influencing and initiating a serious, profound art.

ENVIRONMENT

A commonly acknowledged phenomenon of contemporary Russian culture is the coexistence of two strata: official and unofficial.

The Artists' Union is the most prominent institution which shapes Soviet artistic ideology and style in a framework of socialist realism. Most art produc-

ed by members of the Artists' Union is purchased by the Ministry of Culture by means of special commissions. The Art Fund distributes orders among artists in the Union. The works commissioned are usually paintings or sculptures, or environmental sets for factories, collective farms, pioneer camps, and the like. The range of prices is quite wide: the most expensive commissions are for figures of leaders like Lenin; the least expensive, for ordinary citizens or animals.

Our concern, however, resides with those works which exceed, or at the very least, operate on the margins of the framework of socialist realism: the unofficial stratum, where *samizdat* art is one of the most controversial practices, since it involves texts, and therefore invites censorship.

The independent community consists of different groups of artists, poets and writers, composers and other creative people united, not by a commonality of style, but by their oppositional and heretical stance with regard to the official culture. The intelligentsia, both technical and humanistic, plays a participatory and supportive role as a cultural force. Quite unlike the milieu of official openings, receptions or parties, communicative exchange flows freely within this unofficial community. Artists gather to passionately discuss politics and artistic matters, the destiny of Mother Russia, as they sit around the table

Members of the Artists' Union. They worked on the governmental project to paint the workers and the metallurgical plant *Uralmash*, 1981.

sipping tea or vodka in their studios or private apartments.

Within this general oppositional stance, the independent artistic community is nonetheless divided on specific issues or trends, and distinctive groups can be recognized. One of the first of these was the Lionozovo Group, named after the barrack settlement near Moscow, wnere many artists gathered and lived around the poet Evgeny Kropivnitsky in the early fifties. There are a number of artists affiliated with this group, including Oscar Rabin, Lev and Valentina Kropivnitsky (children of Evgeny), Vladimir Nemukhin, Nikolai Vechtomov, Lidiya Masterkova, and others. Perhaps the figures who most represent the authentic spirit of this group were the poets Genrikh Sapgir and Igor Kholin and the painter Oscar Rabin, who later (in 1974) organized two politically important exhibitions: one in Belyaevo (which was subsequently removed with bulldozers), and another in the Izmailovo Park, named The Four Hours of Freedom.

In the sixties another Moscow group called Sretensky Boulevard, gathered around the Estonian artist Ulo Sooster, who died in 1968. Such artists as Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Victor Pivovarov, Eric Bulatov, Oleg Vasiliev and Yuri Sobolev shared similar ideological and esthetic values. Many of these artists' studios were located in the heart of Moscow, adding a tint of the sym-

Left to right: Lidiya Masterkova, Oskar Rabin, Alexander Rabin, Henry Khudyakov, Moscow, 1971. Photo by Igor Palmin.

bolic disposition of the sixties when people started to show work out of their cellars. A lot of people congregated around the bohemian atmosphere of the Blue Bird Cafe, where regular exhibitions and jazz concerts were arranged. The artists of this group were intellectuals and well informed with regard to the history of contemporary art. Using an international art language, they expressed the hopes of the Russian creative intelligentsia during the Khrushchev thaw. It is not by chance that almost all of them have since become prominent individual artists.

There were other groups or unions that operated more like workshops and were organized around energetic persons like Elii Belyutin or Lev Nussberg. Belyutin's large dacha (country house) near Moscow became a kind of center primarily for unknown artists engaged in esthetic research and exploration. The most unusual and flexible of these groups was Dvizheniye (Movement), organized by Lev Nussberg, which produced futurological kinetic environments often accompanied or supplemented by colorful and romantic performances. Lev Nussberg, Ernst Neizvestny and Elii Belyutin were the outstanding examples of a new phenomenon in the Russian art world: artists who were sitting simultaneously in two chairs, official and unofficial.

Neizvestny created his large governmental project, a sculpture for the Aswan Dam in Egypt, and the bust on the tomb of Khrushchev; Nussberg designed the decoration of Leningrad for the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution. Now both artists live in the United States. Twenty years later Lev Nussberg comments: "It was a social and public chess game . . . it required a great deal of adventurism and dodgy resourcefulness." *

The sixties were marked by the resurgence of public interest in poetry, more so even than in art. Hundreds of young people gathered near the Mayakovsky Monument in the center of Moscow to hear young poets read, with an intensity similar to that with which young peole gathered to listen to rock music concerts in the United States. Subsequently, as a result of increasing pressure from the authorities, this movement was compelled to retreat to artists' studios and homes. It was around this time that the first books as art-objects began to appear.

Older and more established poets, such as E. Kropivnitsky, I. Kholin, G. Sapgir, G. Aygi, Y. Satunovsky, V. Nekrasov, whose works were well known in Moscovite circles, gave further impetus to the development of *samizdat*. Genrikh Sapgir's sonnets on shirts represented an unexpected and fresh approach to the traditional style of poetry. *Samizdat* editions of poetry spread widely. In

* Quoted from an interview in *Russian Discussions*, 1986, a video production by Rimma and Valery Gerlovin.

Leningrad, Boris Taigin, in the early sixties, published Josef Brodsky, Gleb Garbovsky, Nikolai Rubtsov and Victor Sosnora on his typewriter. In 1962 he put together the poetic almanac *Prisma* (Prisms). According to the Leningrad poet Konstantin Kuzminsky, Taigin spent some time in prison for his illegal production of the recorded songs of Leshchenko (a singer of Russian petit-bourgeois romances), prior to his publishing activities. The poet Vladimir Erl published in

At the loft of artist Ilya Kabakov. From left to right: Rimma Gerlovina, Elena Yelagina, Valery Gerlovin, Ilya Kabakov, Igor Makarevich, Moscow, 1979. Photo by Igor Makarevich.

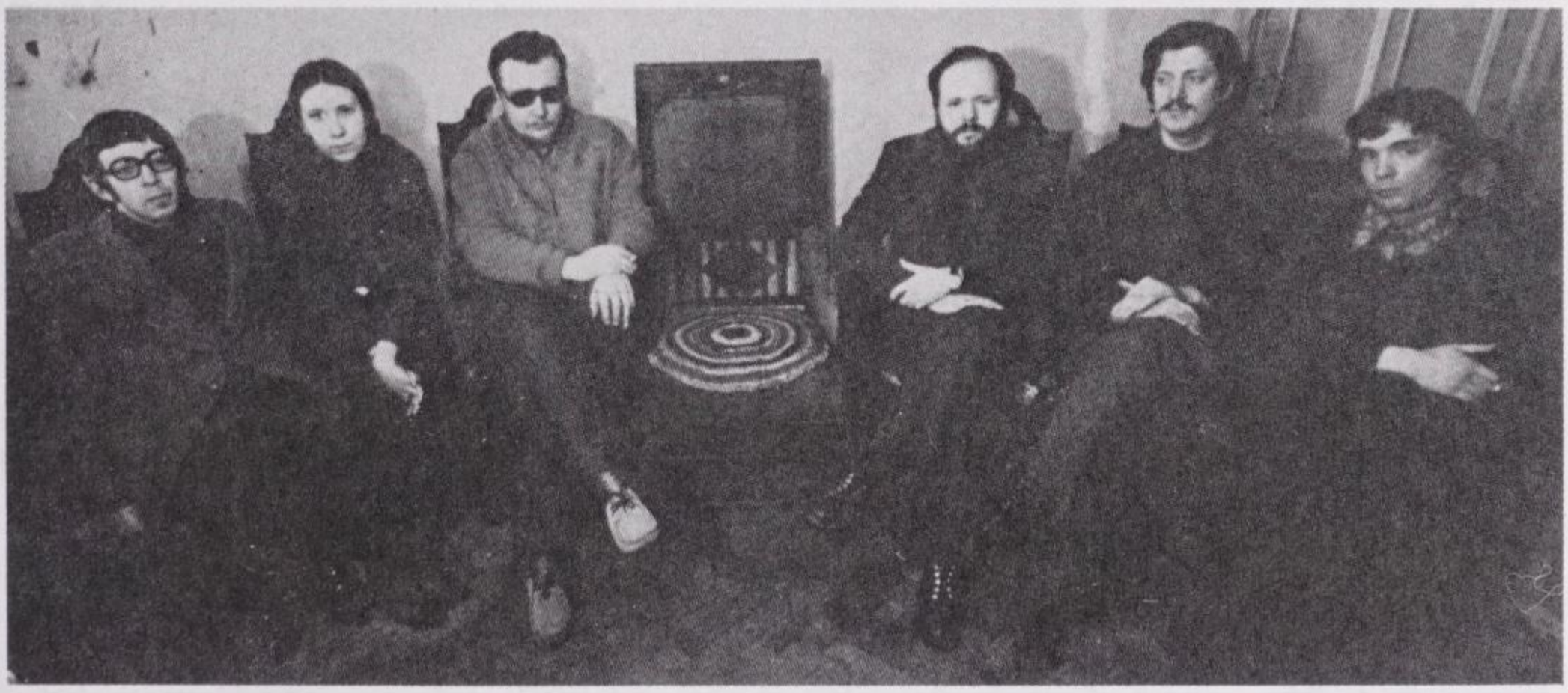
samizdat several books of his visual poetry as well as those of his friends Alexey Khvostenko and Yuri Galetsky. He called his publishing *Poljza Delu* (Common Weal).

The energetic group of Moscow poets–SMOG (an abbreviation for Union

of Young Geniuses–best known for reading their work in public, included among their members L. Gubanov, A. Basilova, V. Oleinikov, Yu. Vishnevskaya and V. Len. They were very active from 1964 to 1967, as the underground parallel to Evtushenko's group, which had already become an official lever for shaping the minds of Soviet youth. In 1978 Andrey Voznesensky was appointed as a state poet laureate of the USSR. Both Evtushenko and Voznesensky have been chosen by their government to play the role of cultural buffers between our countries and to serve as creative propagandists for Soviet life in the West.

The purpose of our article is not a chronology of events and names, but to present tableaux vivants of the general mood of the last decade or so.

The seventies brought a new spirit of public skepticism and activism to art. The wave of exhibitions in private apartments began to arouse great public interest. For the moment, it was a sort of underground institution constantly in conflict with the authorities. Almost all such apartment exhibitions were busted by the police at the beginning of the eighties. The new generation of artists was more independent and emancipated: without fear and hatred, full of social mocking energy. The political environment has always been alien and perhaps even hostile to most Russian artists in the post-WW II period. Propaganda patterns started to appear in the art language of the seventies as an ironic anti-



At the group show in Sergei Bordachyov's apartment. Left to right: Lev Rubinshtein, Natalya Shibanova, Andrei Demykin, Valery Gerlovin, Sergei Bordachyov, Andrei Monastyrsky, Moscow, 1971. Photo by Andrei Abramov.

◀ **Sitting from left to right: Vagrich Bakhchanyan, Eduard Limonov, Vyacheslav Len; standing: Igor Kholin, Genrikh Sapgir, Moscow, 1974.**

dote. Art became more popular than poetry. The number of artists and the variety of genres grew. Along with individual art, collective work now became regular collaboration. *Samizdat* art flourished in its diversity of form and expression.

Our personal experience allows us to describe the tendencies and the spirit of this time in detail, so that we can present a factual picture of this world.

Our first studio was on Stoleshnikov Street, across from the Moscow Council House, which is something like Gracie Mansion in New York City. We had no toilet or telephone. It was a space shaped like and almost the size of the lid of a concert piano. Such unrentable apartments often were written off to the artists for minimum rent. We moved into several studios like this, where we held many readings by such poets as Andrei Monastyrsky, Genrykh Sapgir, Eduard Limonov, Igor Dudinsky, Lev Rubinshtein, and many others.

As a result of such gatherings in 1973, we put together an original collective assembling titled *Aeronautic.* The cut-out letters of the title seemed to glide on the rope attached to the cover. Later, it was smuggled along with some other book-objects of our collection to the West.

There were many examples of this sort of collective work, not necessarily confined to art alone. For example, multimedia works by poet-director Evgeny Kharitonov and his musical group *Last Chance,* or the spontaneous experimental theater of independent film director Alex Kiselyov. Kiselyov, a former actor from the Taganka Theater, worked as a gravedigger to make enough money for his films, shooting in the meantime an intriguing documentary about his new colleagues who worked in the Vaganjkovo Cemetery.

Many musical events were done in collaboration among artists, composers and musicians. Contemporary music in the Soviet Union is among the most elite of all art disciplines and has little contact with the general population. We recall one incident that occurred in 1976 in one of the auditoriums in the Moscow Conservatory, where John Cage's composition, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the United States, was being presented. The local administration that permitted this concert had no idea what kind of music to expect. During the intermission they sent a fireman in to stop the concert because of so-called dangerous instruments. The American cultural attache began to protest, and the concert was subsequently resumed.

Another sound/action/performance indirectly connected with John Cage happened in 1970, when with the poet Lev Rubinshtein and Dr. Alex Chachko, we recorded an improvised performance using accidental instruments like combs, scissors, pliers and a violin. Then we distributed the tape in *samizdat* fashion, person-to-person, as if it were a very rare work by John Cage's son. It immediately became known in left-wing musical circles because of its association with the name of and respect for the composer's supposed father.

Sometimes unofficial art-works and performances contain latent tensions which are seized upon as actualities because of a hidden ideological significance. This is always a risk in such activities. One of Rimma Gerlovina's early cubic poems from 1974 produced just such a controversy. The work was done on the faces of children's blocks, using a layout derived from the faces of six members of the Politburo, so that the spectator could by moving the blocks combine, for example, Brezhnev's eyebrows with Gromyko's eyes and Andropov's nose. For some time we had in our studio a *jour fix*, a one-day-a-week open studio for friends that also functioned as a gallery by appointment. The loaded content of our archetypical portrait images of Soviet leaders attracted a lively interest on the part of our visitors.

At the Gerlovins' performance "Quiz." From left to right: Ivan Chuikov, Evgeniya Chuikova, Vyacheslav Sokhransky, his son, Rimma Gerlovina, Oleg Yakovlev, Galina Malik, Valery Gerlovin, Mariza Torchia, Alexander Urusov. All these participating artists and poets were asked the same question—in what sequence they will die. The winner will receive a prize, probably posthumously. From the book-object *Zerkaljnaya Igra* (Mirror Game), Moscow, 1977.

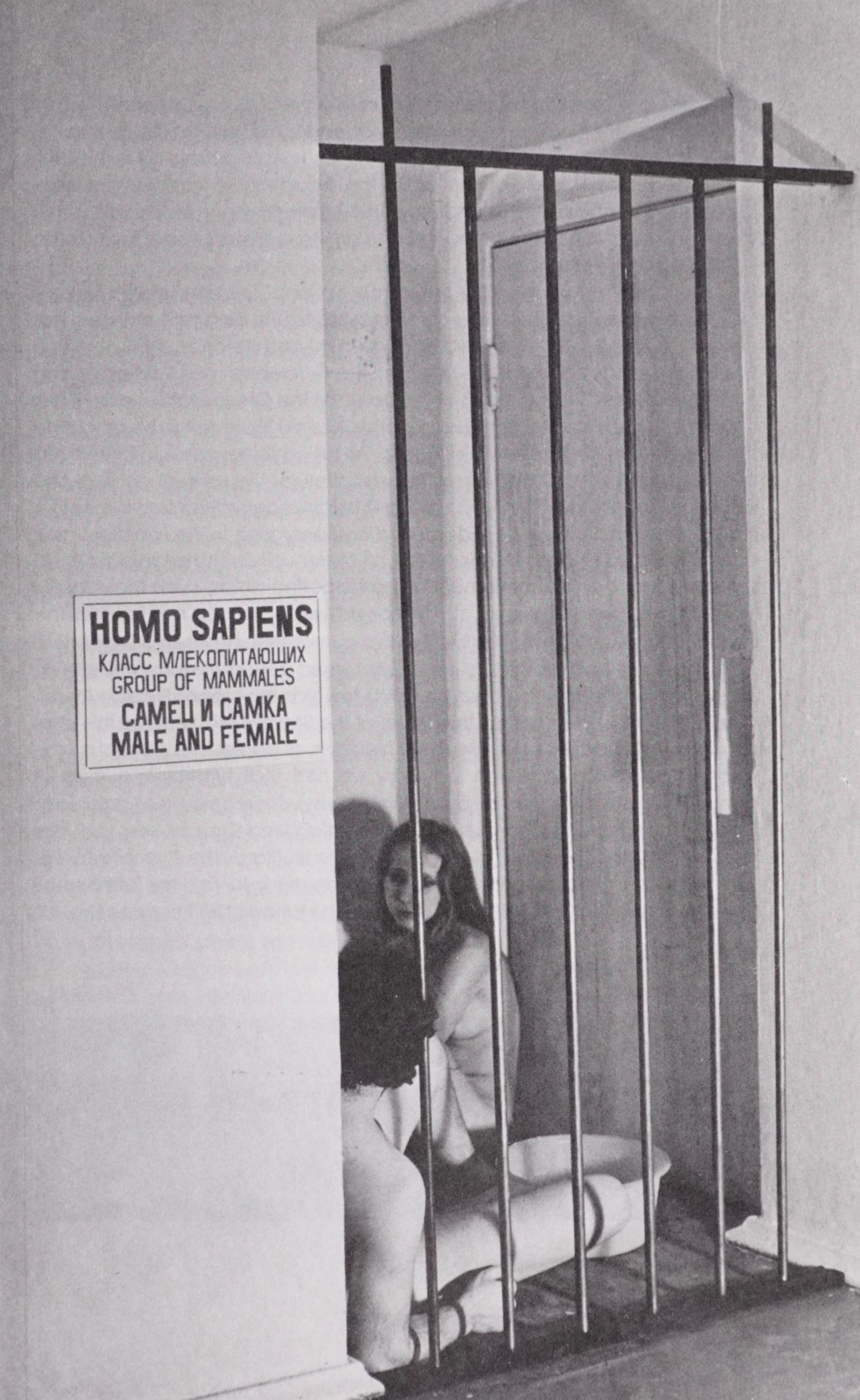
While similarities in the visual elements, illusionistic style, and esthetic impertinence between the Russian Futurists and the art of *samizdat* artists have often been pointed out, there are, we think, significant differences. The crucial difference between the Russian Futurists, who flourished in a time of political innovation and emotional upsurge by provoking the prerevolutionary establishment, and contemporary *samizdat* artists resides in the radically different contexts and atmosphere within which each respectively worked. The spirit of *samizdat* art is perhaps more closely related to the generation of the Russian Absurdists, rather than to the Futurists. Many contemporary Russian multimedia artists have been significantly influenced by the *Oberiu* group (an abbreviation for The Association of the Real Arts) of poets active in Leningrad in the twenties and thirties.

This group included, among others, Daniil Kharms, Alexander Vvedensky, and Nikolai Zabolotsky. Their ideas of total irrationality and irony in the world of literature, theater and real life anticipated the European Theater of the Absurd and influenced contemporary Russian artists as well. Unfortunately, the work of the *Oberiu* is not widely known in the West. In comparison with the French Theater of the Absurd, the Russian school, with the possible exception of Kharms, is more lyrical and never excludes the possibility of salvation and deliverance. Perhaps this is because one can always blame reactionary circumstances.

The changes inherent in the transformation of Russian social and mental life were particularly irrational and cruel for the intelligentsia, who perceived the romantic ideals of the revolution as having been replaced by an increasingly static and mechanical social life which promoted lower-middle class values. The grotesque violates everyday life, yet out of this a general balance is maintained. There is a liberation from historical notions of necessity and prophesy: Russians are not a nation of rationalists, even less a reasonable people– passing through the prism of politics, such absurdist language can enrich its depth and dialectical force. *Absurde canere* in Latin means "to sing out of tune"; in the Soviet situation it means to sing out of the conventional tune.

Our own work has always contained such a language of lyrical ambiguity. In the performance "Zoo" (1977), we spent a day, naked, in a cage labelled "Homo Sapiens. Mammals. Male and Female." The documentation of this event was interpreted by the Western press as a symbolic image of Russian artists during the Eastern European Biennale in Venice in 1977. This non-conventional metaphoric incongruity permits escape from or at least suspends, the law-like

The Gerlovins' performance "Zoo," photo by Victor Novatsky. From the book ▶ *Zerkaljnaya Igra* (Mirror Game), Moscow, 1977.


HOMO SAPIENS
КЛАСС МЛЕКОПИТАЮЩИХ
GROUP OF MAMMALES
САМЕЦ И САМКА
MALE AND FEMALE

character and meaninglessness of the world's order. Our cage protected us not only in our motherland of vapid propaganda, but here too, in the capital of the monetarist hegemony. The world is not so large, as people have thought.

The homelessness of the artist, the adoption of traditions of non-conformism, symbolize the emergence and the preservation of freedom within a world of necessity. It is incumbent on the artist to use this freedom to test the limits of his own marginality.

It is worthwhile pointing out some national features that have undoubtedly influenced all forms of creation in Russia. The ideological aspect has always prevailed over the esthetic in Russian art and literature, through which writers and artists have sought, often intuitively, to solve moral, religious and social problems. "The madness of the poet," as the Greeks said, is one of the chief characteristics of many Russian artists. Kazimir Malevich, in his article "To the Innovator of the Whole World," wrote: "All art exhibitions should be exhibits of projects for the transformation of the world picture." The spiritual, political and esthetic innovations seized upon by the Russian imagination, sometimes in a state of near wildness, were widespread and energetic in the twenties; later, artists became self-analytical, and the art community withdrew into itself. In the early avant-garde movement all participating artists, even the middle-ranking ones, were visible and later became heroes. It was an easy period. The challenge now is to be highly creative in a monotonous conservative period.

If we are to characterize the current world view in Moscow society, we must mention the attitude of some artists towards the classic Russian Avant-Garde. The older generation, the flower of the Stalinist era, regards this phenomenon with hostility, considering it a hierarchy of bosses in a spiritual space whose stock is falling. Often in history we find that tyranny has roots in democracy, but art based on oppression always overcomes itself gradually. Once upon a time Art Commissar Malevich dismissed Chagall from a similar position in Vitebsk because of his conservatism. But later, the Stalinist wave of social realism in its turn silenced all avant-garde artists. In Vladimir Tatlin's small retrospective exhibition in 1977 in Moscow at the House of Writers one of his last

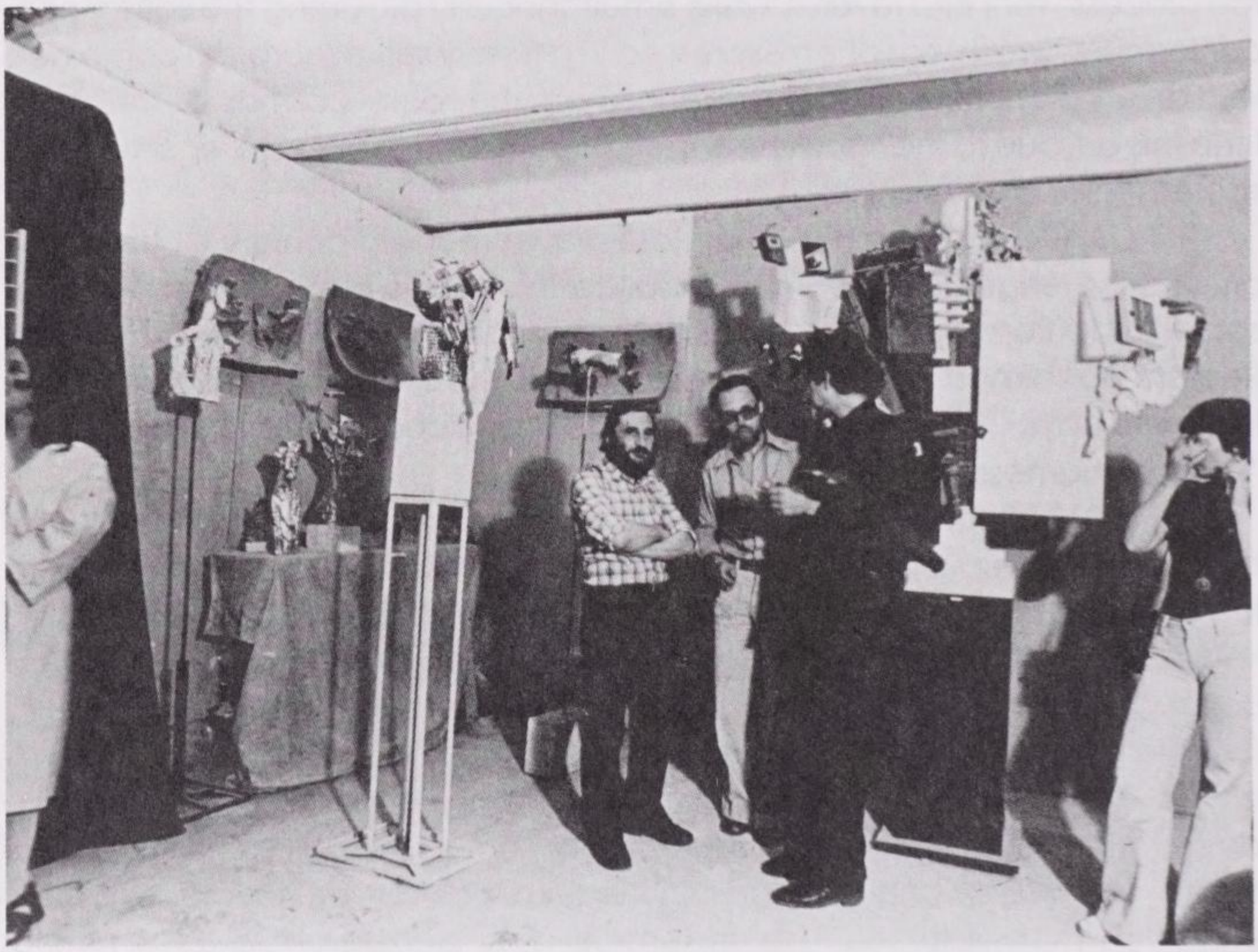
letters to the authorities (1953) was shown. It was written in pencil. The artist asked to have his beggar's pension increased, enumerating his great services in the past to the motherland. This letter was removed from the exhibition several days later.

In an atmosphere of obligatory public activities it is hard to overcome a feeling of antagonism towards the one-time creative energy of Russian artists. There is nothing antihistorical in this, either: it is sufficient merely to glance at a comparative description of the culture of, for example, the Roman Empire and Byzantium, both of which ended in academic art and decadence. During the formation of a new society, creative individuals have always found themselves in harmony with it, while at the moment of disintegration the most talented individuals come out in opposition. The same is happening now, too, in the present period of dissolution of Russia, the Third Rome: the next generation looks upon its predecessors from the conservative viewpoint of post-modernism. But, as time passes, phenomena are once again re-evaluated; yet we still prefer the Renaissance to Mannerism. However paradoxical it may seem, socialist society has, apart from state kitsch (official art), a wide-ranging, non-conventional mannerism of its own: from slick surrealist to souvenir religious paintings.

In the beginning of this century Russian artists finally liberated themselves from a home-grown philosophy (see the Peredvizhniki movement). Under Stalin the process went into reverse, while simultaneously providing the soil for non-conformism, which was often expressed in a heavy self-absorption combined with an utopian idea of independence from the social cosmos. At the same time this art, due to the sacrifice and stronger beliefs required, became more sacramental and altruistic.

In Russia the leap from the medieval to the 19th century Golden Age omitted the lengthy European Renaissance. This equals, in some sense, the later social jump from slavery to socialism, which also took place in art. Critical Realism was almost immediately replaced by the splash of the avant-garde. In the old days, Chancellor Bismarck used to say about the Russian character: "Russians harness slowly, but ride fast."

In 1913 Michael Larionov and Natalia Goncharova wrote: "The future is behind us" in their *Rayonists and Futurists: A Manifesto.* "Who will be taken into the future?" (yet another global problem for the Russian consciousness), Ilya Kabakov asks readers of the magazine *A-Ya* with camouflaged frankness. The concept of genetic selection, assessment of their merits in the advancing future–that is what constantly concerns artists, whether non-conformists, semi-official figures or the countless servants of the state muse. For this reason a declaration by an anonymous sculptor, also in *A-Ya*, goes like this: "I am conscious of myself as one of the last in the line of nearly extinct classics in our vanishing millenium." Such a statement may be regarded as a typical



manifestation of his accumulated thoughts and feelings. However, life in complete isolation renders this redeeming idea thoroughly justified and legitimate.

The middle seventies was a period of growing discussions about the international destiny of art. Our circle of friends narrowed to the people who shared identical interests in art. There were many evenings when artist Ivan Chuikov fluently translated articles from *Flash Art, Studio International* and *Art Forum*. In 1976 these friendly evenings took the form of an unofficial group exhibition in the loft of Leonid Sokov, a member of the Artists' Union, who had already decided to emigrate. We shall dwell at length on this exhibition as a typical example of an apartment show in the broad sense. There were six other parallel exhibitions in different places in Moscow. Our branch was represented by seven artists: Ivan Chuikov, Alexander Yulikov, Igor Shelkovsky, Sergei Shablavin, Leonid Sokov and ourselves.

This event attracted thousands of people, without any advertising, of course. The news spread by word of mouth. One day during this eleven-day exhibition, about 400 people attended. Once there was an incident when a group of young secret service agents dressed in American jeans tried to provoke a scandal in order to close the exhibition. But there was no reaction except the puzzled looks of the artists and the spectators. During the exhibition Alex Kiselyov shot a movie about this event. Right after this exhibition we took our friend, a European art historian who accidentally was in Moscow, through the studios of our friends. As a result in 1977 *Flash Art* gave big coverage to all these new artists in its special issue "Documenta 6 and the USSR." * The same group of artists was shown in the first issue of *A-Ya*, a Russian art review published in Paris. In Moscow, the editor Alexei Alexeyev, with the assistance of one artist (whose name we shall avoid for security reasons) and our help, collected materials that were processed and published by artist Igor Shelkovsky, who had already emigrated to Paris.

This was also a time of growing connections with Europe. We personally did several collaborative works with the visiting Austrian artist Renate Bertlmann. The Eastern European Biennale in Venice, that travelled later in Europe, and the Bochum Museum show in West Germany attracted a good deal of European attention to contemporary Russian art.

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* *Flash Art*, # 76/77, 1977.

Above: at an unofficial group exhibition, Moscow, 1976. Photo by Valentin Serov. Below: at the studio of sculptor Boris Orlov, Moscow, 1978. From left to right: Natalia Abalakova, Michael Odnoralov, Dmitry Prigov. Photo by the Gerlovins.

1977 was the turning-point. All loyal artists were accepted into the reorganized Gorkom of Graphics (City Committee of Graphics). Membership gives artists not only the possibility to exhibit, but also the right not to work and to get a studio. Under the slogan "Who does not work, does not eat," many artists were accused of parasitism, which is illegal in Russia. Now it was easier to squeeze the radical part of the art scene. Oscar Rabin was deprived of citizenship; many artist-troublemakers emigrated.

The paragraph devoted to freedom of speech in the Soviet Constitution has always been profoundly ambiguous, while censorship has served as the main weapon of ideological control. The basic human right to hold one's own opinions and practice them by any legal means is possible only when and where it does not contradict the state's point of view. To this day it is very difficult in the USSR to show textual objects in public exhibition spaces. In 1978 the administration removed our works before the opening of our first and only official show, which was held at the House of Scientists. Three different commissions called these works provocative and harmful. The poster designed for this group show was withdrawn, and our names were scratched out of all the printed invitations with razor blades. In 1978, we applied for emigration, left our part-time jobs, and lived for one year supporting ourselves by selling our library. After a year's wait, we got our visas and left Russia in the Summer of 1979.

На 2 лица

УВАЖАЕМЫЙ ТОВАРИЩ!

Московский Дом ученых Академии наук СССР
Союз художников СССР

приглашают Вас

26 мая 1978 г.

на открытие выставки «НАУКА И ИСКУССТВО»
Участвуют: **В. Герловин, Р. Герловина; М. Дорохов, Ф. Инфантэ, В. Колейчук, Ю. Котов, И. Чуйков.**

Начало в 17 час.

Наш адрес: Кропоткинская ул., д. 16
(метро «Кропоткинская», троллейбусы 11, 15)

Зак. 498

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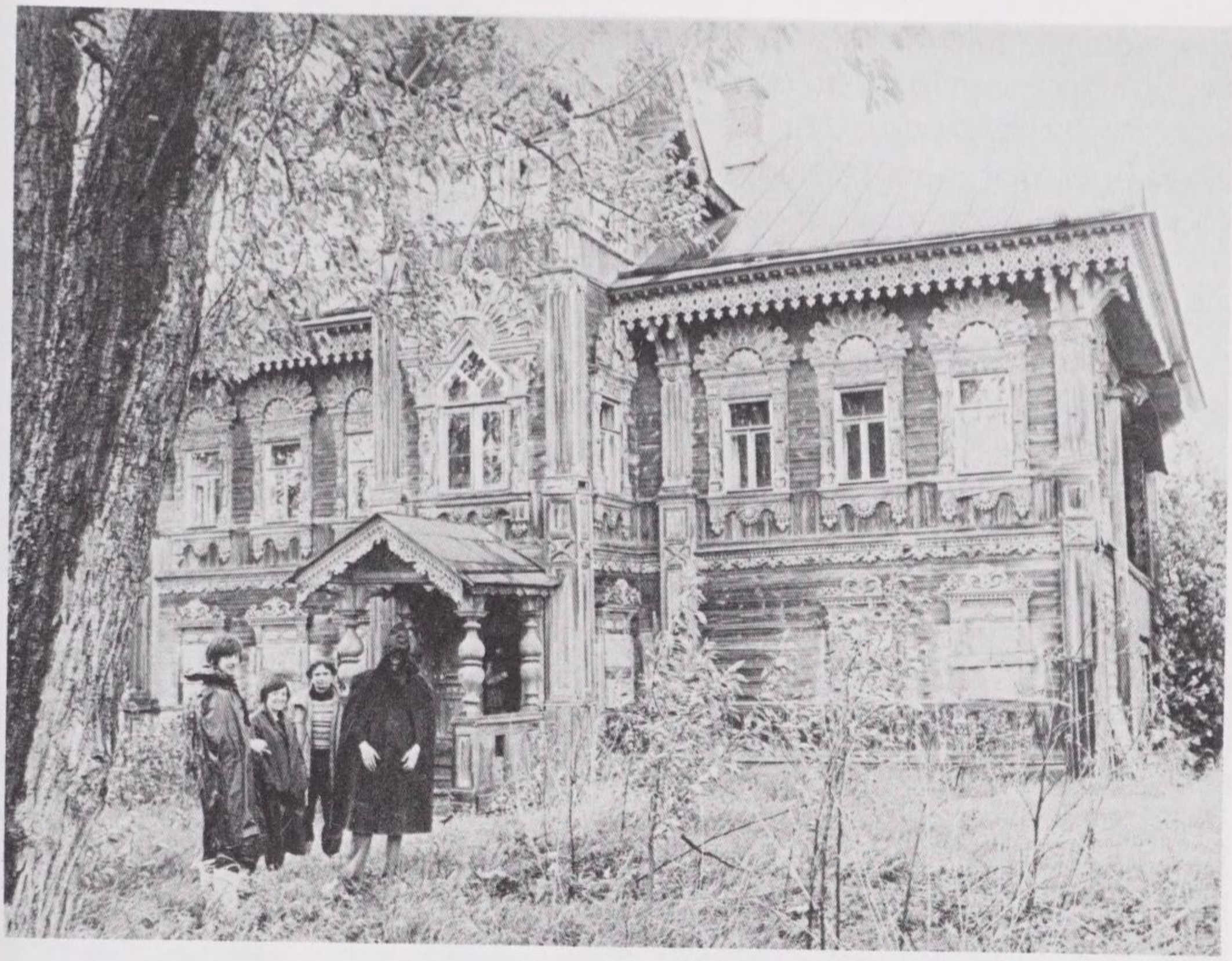
Зак. 498

Two invitations for the group show at the House of Scientists. In the second variant the names of Rimma and Valery Gerlovin have been scratched out with razor blades. Moscow, 1978.

Above: at the country house of artists Anatoly Zhigalov, where a series of performances took place. From left to right: Sven Gundlakh, Elena Yelagina, Andrei Monastyrsky, Nikolai Panitkov, Pogorelovo, 1981. Photo by Igor Makarevich. Below: at Collective Actions Group performance near Moscow. From left to right: Nikita Alekseyev, Elena Yelagina, Igor Makarevich, 1981. ▶



As we wrote earlier, repression that traditionally comes in waves has a long history in our land, going back to the medieval era of Ivan the Terrible. Many Decembrist poets died in Siberia; Alexander Pushkin was never allowed to go abroad; Fyodor Dostoevsky was condemned to penal servitude for 4 years, etc. Russia is too vast and has no need to count her heroes.

Soviet socialism developed in two opposite directions: towards emancipation and simultaneously towards the destruction of human rights, as Dostoevsky predicted in his "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in his *Brothers Karamazov.* "In the name of freedom, the most horrible crimes against freedom were committed." Russia contains enormous contrasts of beauty and barrenness, linked with a dramatically violent history. Wild imagination, humor, sadness, irony and fatalism all live closely together. Our national philosophy has never been fully developed as a pure discipline, but it saturates our literature, poetry and art. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Goncharov, Pasternak, Platonov, Malevich, Kandinsky, Tatlin tried to treat eternal enigmas. In our time the language of Russian art has shifted into an involuntary ambiguous mode. As pointed out in Nietzsche's famous aphorism: "We have art in order not to die from truth."

ARTISTS AND CHARACTERS

Different forms of self-publishing preceded *samizdat* art. Literary, political, musical, scholastic and even folk variations found their reflection in this syncretic art form.

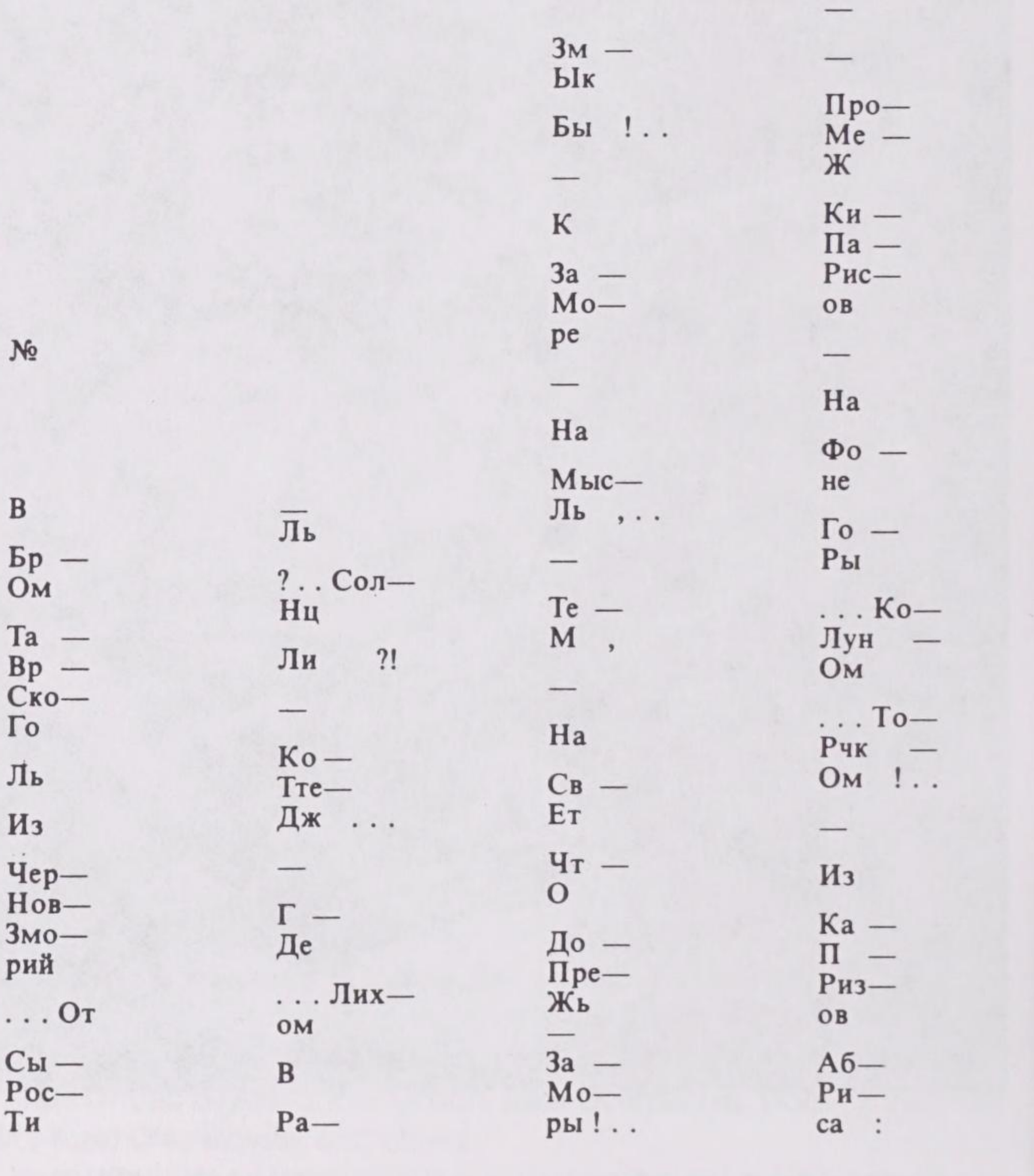
We discussed the influence and patterns of literary and political self-publishing in the previous section. Many hand-tinted postcards and booklets about discredited heroes were sold in the markets and trains, usually by deaf-mutes. Musical *samizdat* found its beginning in homemade records termed "records on ribs." They were made from the clever conversion of used x-ray film for recording Western music and/or Russian romances. In the sixties the songs of contemporary Russian bards were spread far and wide on countless tapes; this includes music by Alexander Galich, Bulat Okudzhava, Vladimir Vysotsky, Yulii Kim, Yuzef Oleshkovsky and others.

Henry Khudyakov (born 1930) was among the first in the beginning of the sixties to hold exhibitions of his book objects in the studios of Moscow artists. With his visually innovative poetry Khudyakov, as early as the middle fifties, was a forerunner of *samizdat* art, although a lone wolf. He was not connected to any groups or trends. He states: "The reason for the poetry was the meeting of the young organism (himself) with the problems of life, that could be dissolved in the harmony of the rhythm." *

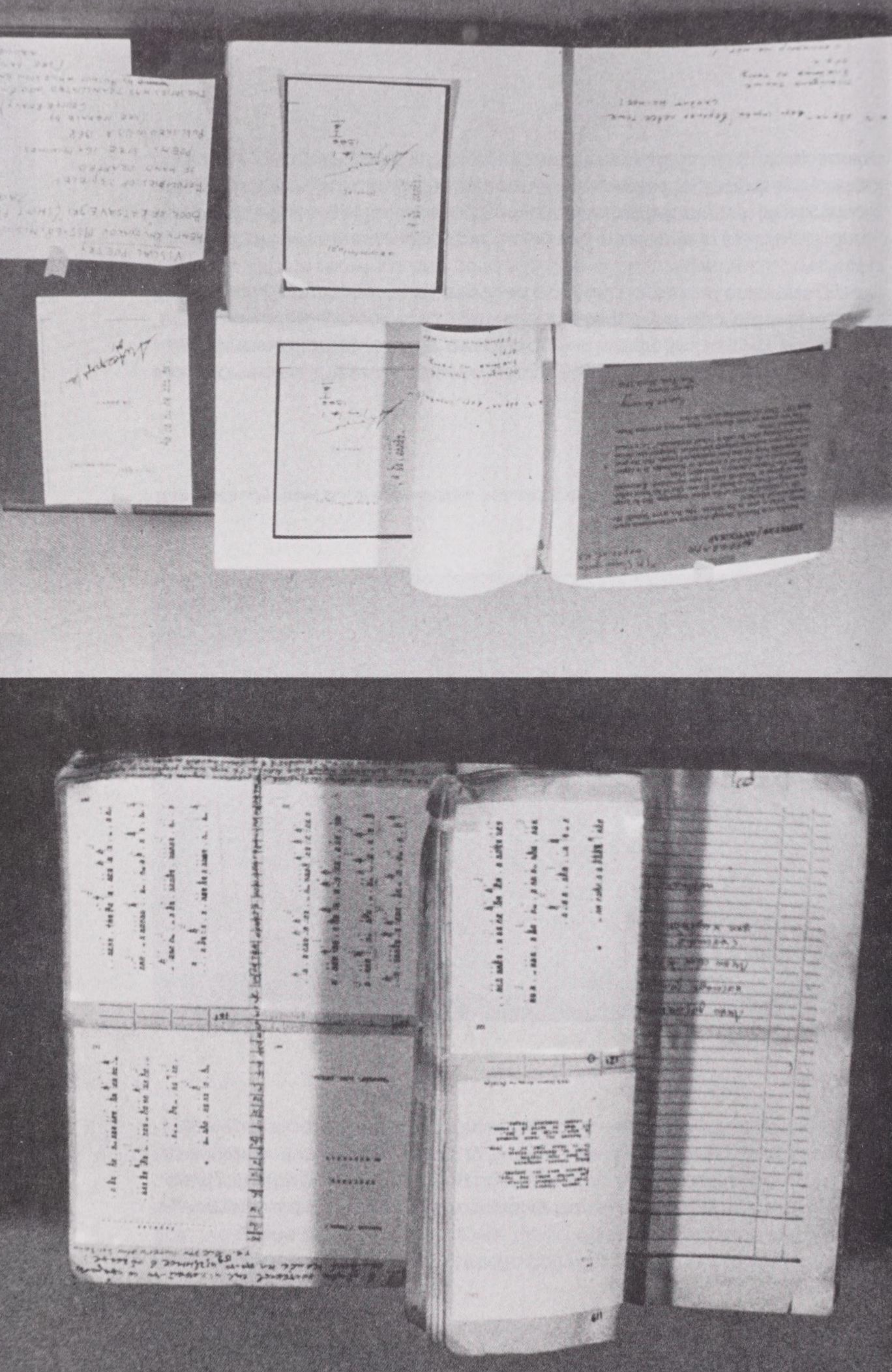
Henry Khudyakov and his wife Vera, Moscow 1960.

*All quotations of Henry Khudyakov are from the video film *Russian Discussions* produced by the Gerlovins, 1986.

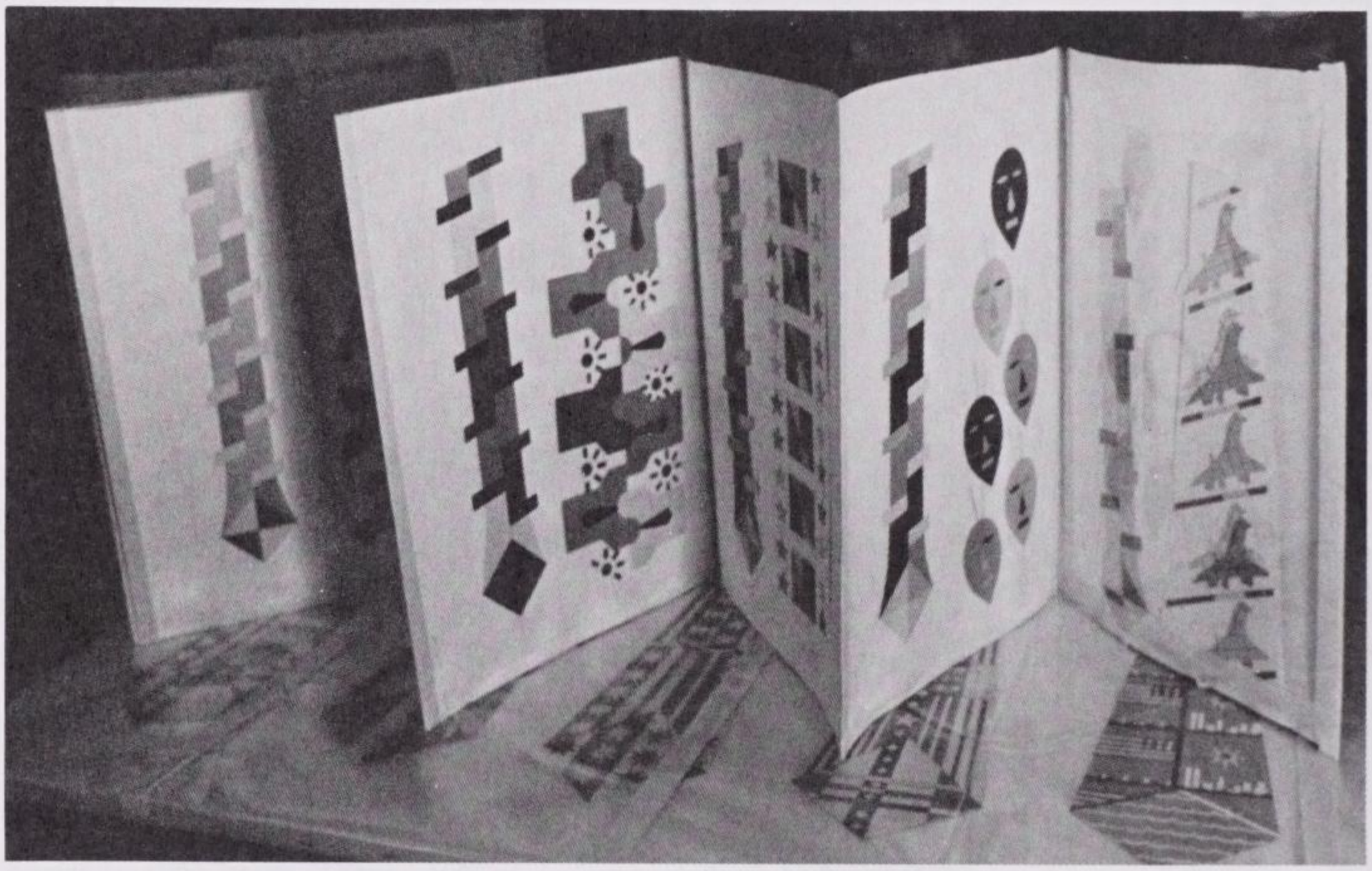
Above: Henry Khudyakov, *Koshki-Mishki ili Tretii k Lishnim* (Kitty-Candies or the Third to the Odd Ball), Moscow, 1963, 223 pp. 8" x 11"; 20.5 cm x 28 cm, photographs assembled in an account book with handwritten commentary. Below: *Katsaveiki* (Shot Fur-trimmed Jackets), Moscow, 1967, 8" x 5½"; 20.5 cm x 14 cm; original book and reprinted facsimile in the SMS, #3, 1968, USA.



Henry Khudyakov, poem *Right by the Black Sea*, 1955 - 1962, translated by Gerald Janecek: Into the bromide of Tauris from the Black Sea coast . . . from dampness / Is it? Sun?! / A cottage . . . / Where . . a misery shakeoff! . . / To Worn out [me]/ Came the thought . . . / Similarly/ Into the world that was here before/ Worn-out [me]! . . // Through the cypresses / On the background of a mountain . . . an axe wedged! . . / From caprices of outline . . .



Koshki-Mishki ili zhe Tretii K Lishnim (Kitty-Candies or the Third to the Odd Ball, 1963), one of his early books was typed on carbon paper in ten copies, accompanied by a manifesto and a handwritten commentary, and copyrighted by his own publishing company. Khudyakov did not have his own typewriter at that time and had to type out the book at his job at a secret Moscow aviation institute, where he worked as a translator, until he was caught

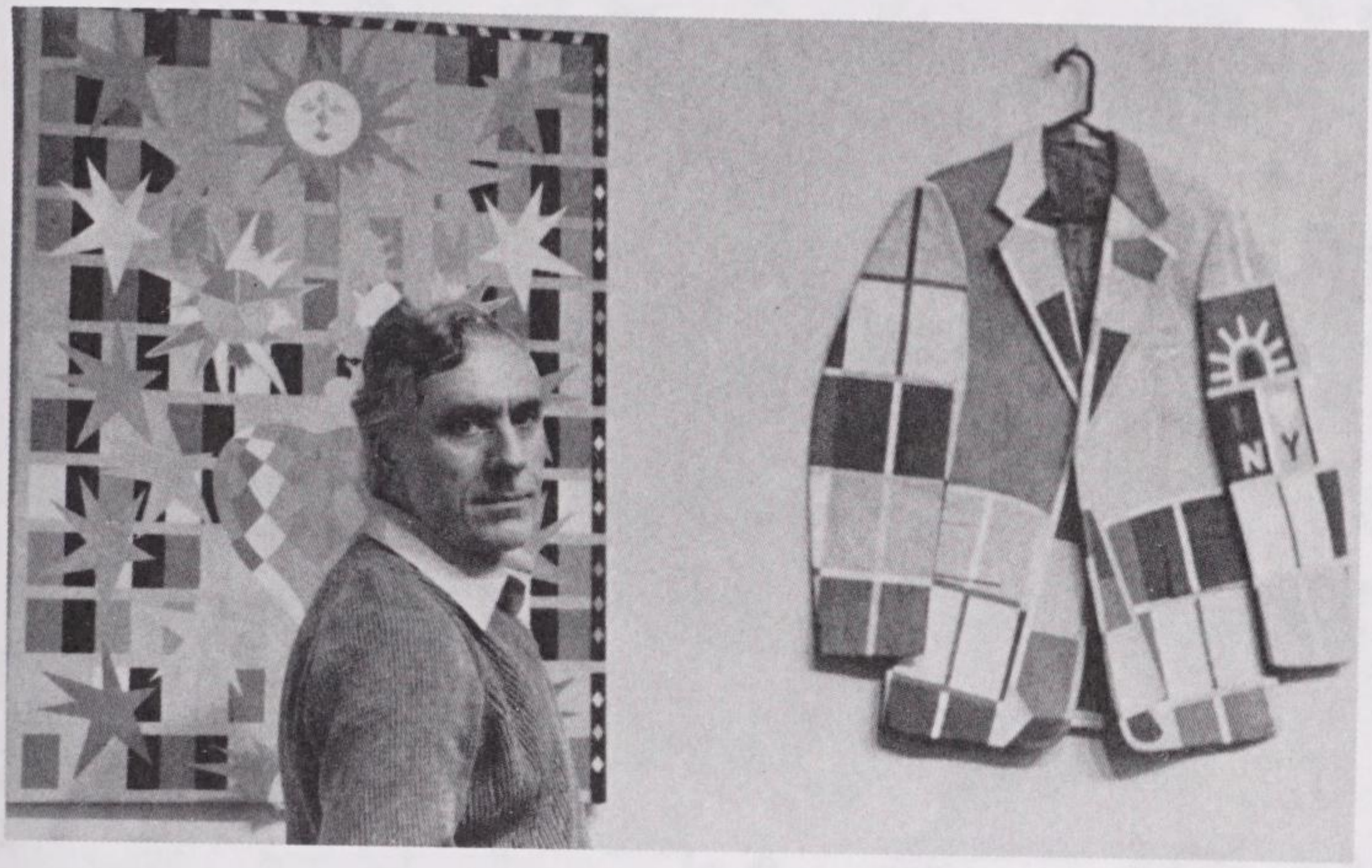


Henry Khudyakov, *Book of Neckties,* NY, 1977, 12" x 19"; 30.5 cm x 48 cm, collages.

typing and fired. This book consists mainly of his visual poems, representing a new interpretation of Russian morphology, in which, in his own words, he "elevated various graphical solutions into a system, like that of musical notes." Khudyakov has written poems and filled account books and children's drawing pads with his drawings and collages. One of his handwritten books, *Katsaveiki* (Shot Fur-trimmed Jackets), was reprinted in facsimile in the international edition of *SMS,* No. 3, in 1968. Henry Khudyakov became famous in Moscow not only for his poetry, but also for the somewhat unexpected logic of his interpretation of his own work, a new "morphological" translation of Shakespeare's

"Hamlet" and his highly eccentric behavior. "That's a boy, Khudyakov!" as the poet is fond of saying of himself.

Henry Khudyakov is a typical example of the Russian creative personality, whose madness is deeply mixed with great talent, whose reactionary sensibility is expressed in experimental art language. "I would stop art history at the Post-Impressionists. There is only roguery after it . . . Picasso and Mayakov-



Henry Khudyakov with his works, NY, 1982.

sky are major swindlers," Henry said right after his highly respectful comments on the early poetry of Boris Pasternak. He sees art "as a birth of vibration between soul and color." Like Don Quixote, he responds with hostility to the commercial breed of American artists "obsessed with the idea to get a show and a gallery by any means . . ."

The poetic arsenal, from the beginning, was not enough for him. Upon moving to New York in 1974 Khudyakov made a series of fold-out books of collages of ties and shopping bags with the aid of paper, fabric and glass. Subsequently he began carefully to embroider glass, stones, tapes, bandages and

curad
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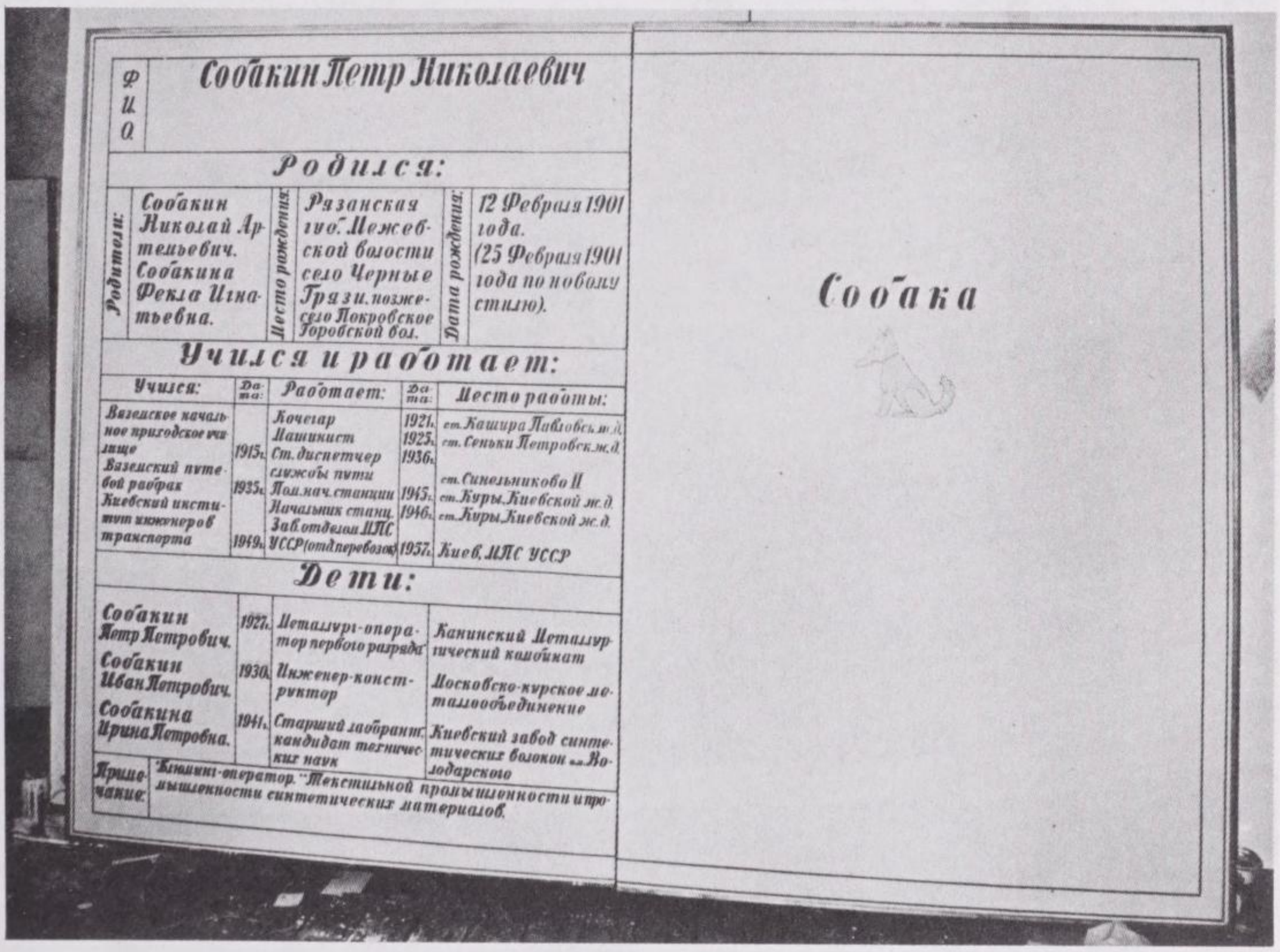
other fleamarket treasures on jackets, shirts, t-shirts and shoes in the same fashion. In the *Village Voice*, Peter Schjeldahl called his works a "mad boutique." He creates elaborate theories about his flourescent colors and shining labyrinthine patterns in his works. Dozens of shirts with false painted ties, stationary stuffed coats, real mannequins in wild outfits, hundreds of paintings and drawings gather around last year's Christmas tree, which he keeps as a pet. A visitor's eyes are sunblinded by all these art wonders which Henry calls The Museum of Khudyakov.

Ilya Kabakov (born 1933) was already a well-known artist when, during the 1970s, he became an ideological leader among his artist friends. While he himself is a strong and prudent person, Kabakov, like a queen bee, attracts disciples to himself, nourishing and at the same time nourished by them.



Ilya Kabakov, painting *Sobakin*, Moscow, 1980, 82⅜ x 118"; 210 cm x 300 cm, enamel on masonite.

◀ **Henry Khudyakov, *Letter from Heaven NY Jacket (Strawberry Patch)*, NY, 1981.**

Ilya Kabakov and Andrei Monastyrsky, *ZHEK #18* (Public Housing #18), first page of the book, Moscow, 1980, 12⅜" x 9¼";31.5 cm x 23.5 cm, 12 pp., photographs, collages, handwritten text assembled in a typical Soviet folder.

In 1973 he began his series of philosophic-encyclopedic albums, quite large book-boxes with drawings in Indian ink and colored pencils, accompanied by handwritten commentaries, often from the mouths of his naively shrewd mask heroes. The series includes more than 25 albums, among them: *Lev Glebovich's Jokes, Shower-Comedy, They are Flying, Anna Petrovna is Seeing a Dream, Arkhipov-looking-through-the-window, Coincidences of Lev Lvovitch* and *Vases.* *

In his works Kabakov touches upon the virtually universal problems of modern Russia, interpreting social and religious features through the refined ambiguity characteristic of him. Ilya Kabakov's personality seems to combine the all but incompatible: he is a man of the world and a cunning politician, surrounded by all the comforts of Soviet life and respected in the Moscow Union of Artists, while at the same time he is also a subtle artist devoted to his craft who preaches spiritual values.

The same is true of his art. The visual and verbal language of the albums is reminiscent of the style of wall newspapers posted in public housing offices and simultaneously of the children's book illustrations the artist does for money. At the same time suffering and defenseless images roam his works, which are imbued with the theme of faceless reality opposed to the cosmic freedom of the spirit. Each page is a kind of metaphysical picture of time and space. The topographical style with which the albums are constructed, the fantastic mingling of different times and physical scales (a garderobe as the universe) and the introduction of absurd texts appear on the surface as a continuation of Daniil Kharms' traditions of logic and of the text works of the early Magritte. Often the style of his work reveals a flash of affectation, both in the drawing and in the obscure philosophical subtexts. However, the powerful epic approach, seriousness and the depth of Kabakov's albums place them among the best examples of contemporary Russian culture.

The manner in which these albums are presented, resembling the first experimental shows of the Lumiere brothers, is characteristic. After placing the book on a lectern, the author himself turns the pages and reads the text to the

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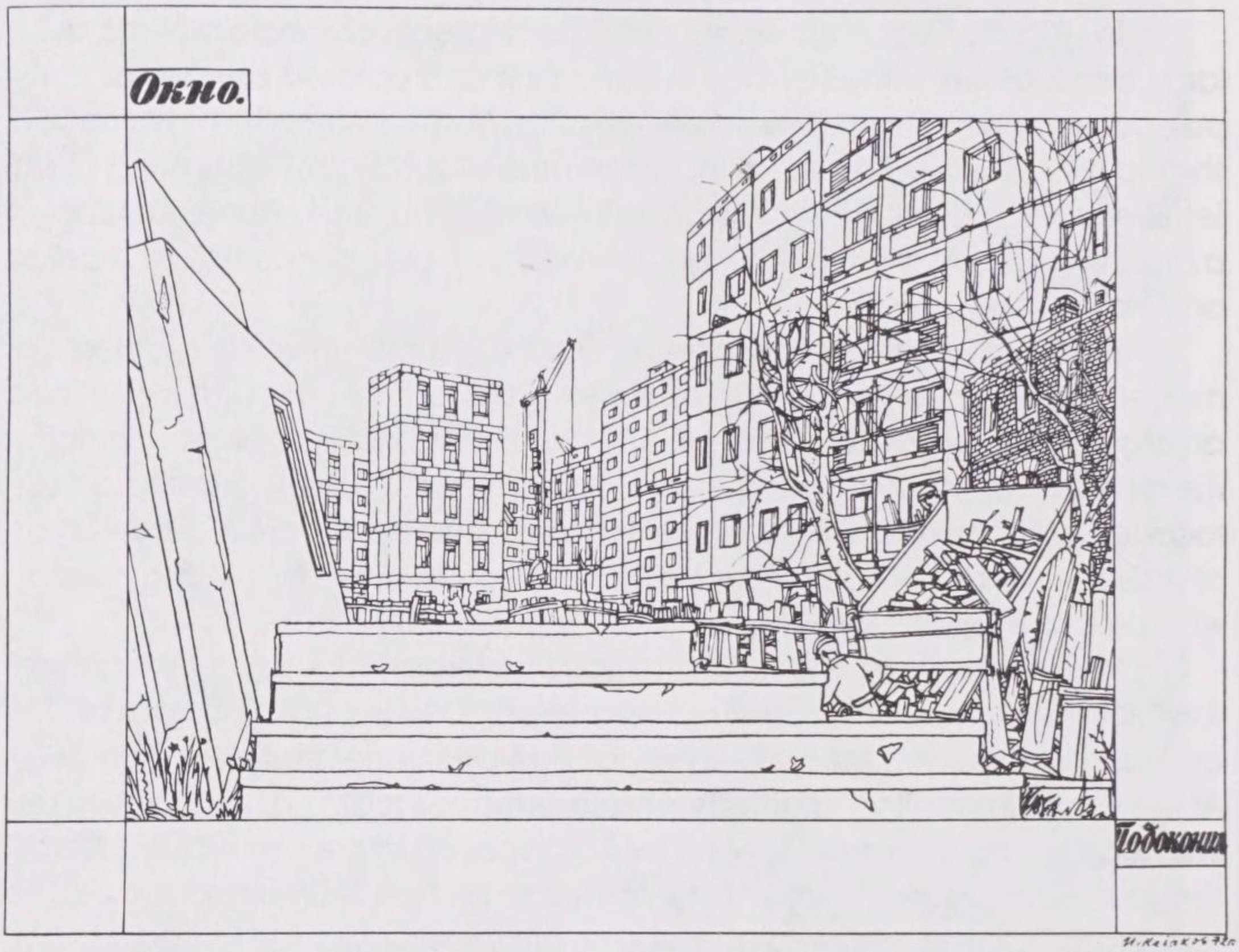
* Russian titles: "Shutki Lva Glebovicha," "Dush-comediya," Ljetayjut," "Anna Petrovna Vidit Son," "Voknoglyadyashchii Arkhipov," "Sovpageniya Lva Lvovicha," and "Vazy."

Ilya Kabakov, albums, Moscow, 1973, 20¼" x 13¾"; 51 cm x 35 cm; ink and color pencil on paper, fabric covered box with loose pages. Above: two pages from *Voknoglyadyashchii Arkhipov* (Arkhipov-looking-through-the-window). Below from left to right: *Shutki Lva Glebovicha* (Lev Glebovich's Jokes) and *Igra Arkadiya Lvovicha* (Game of Arkadii Lvovich). ▶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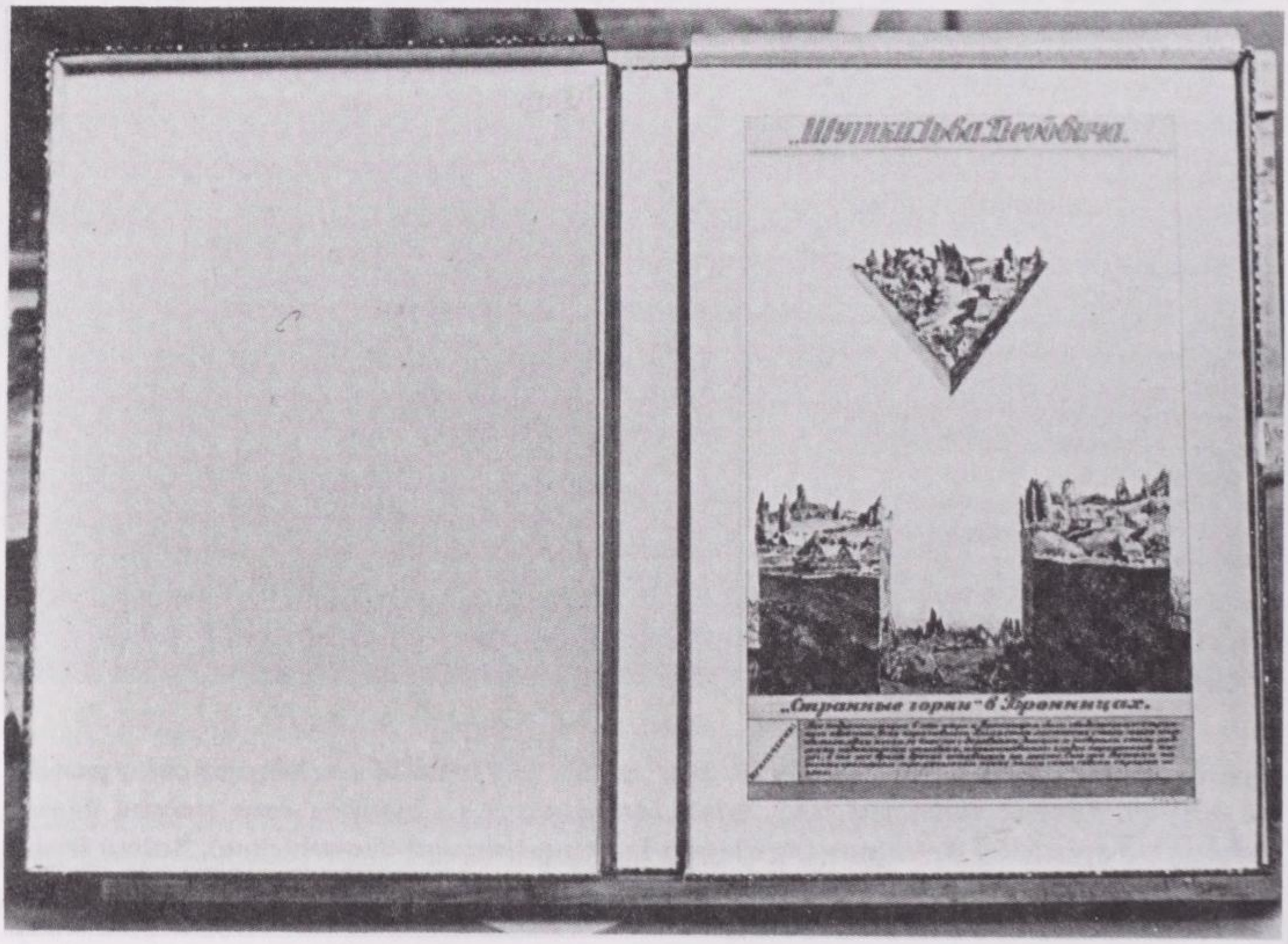
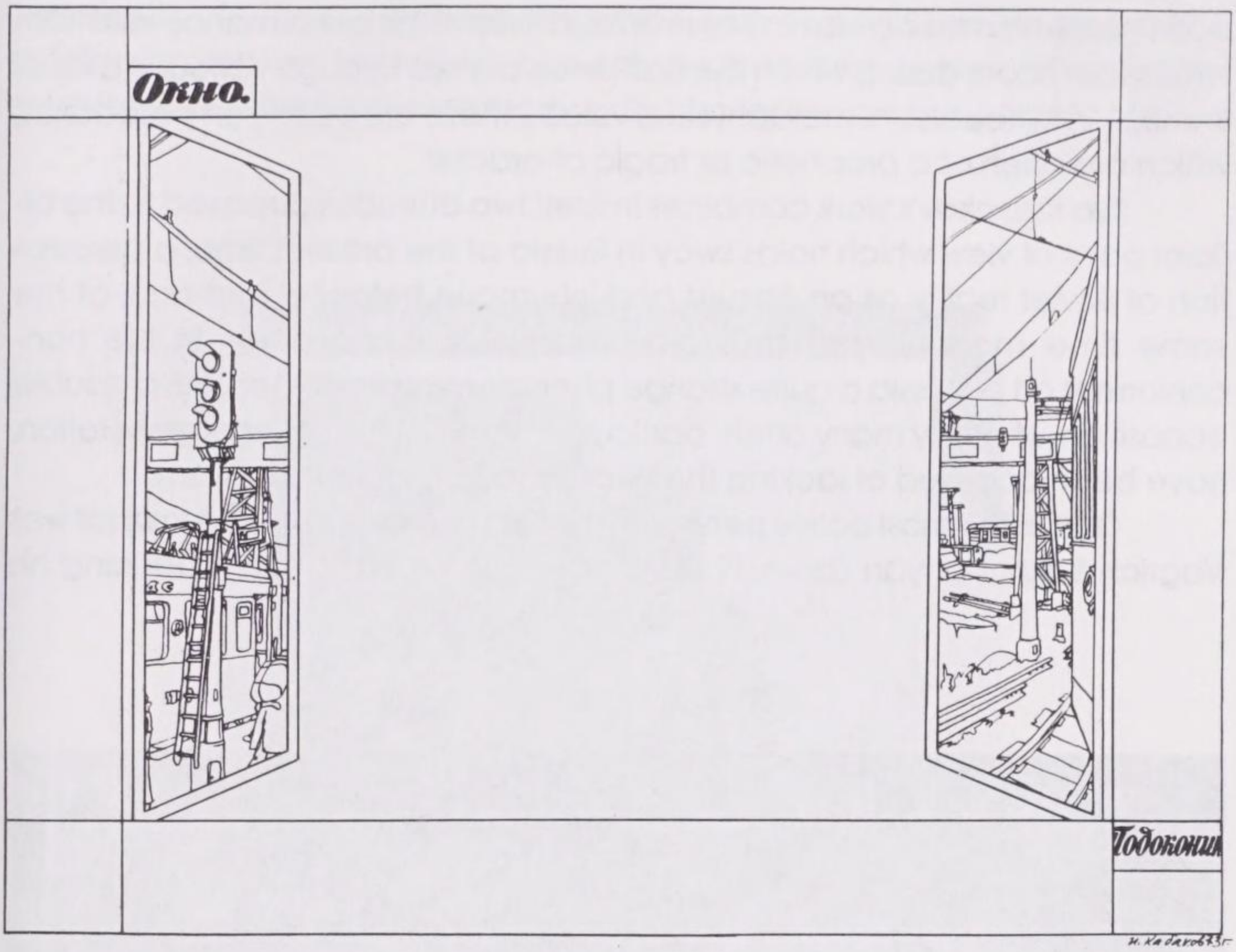

„Шутки Льва Деобовича.
„Странные горки" в Бронницах.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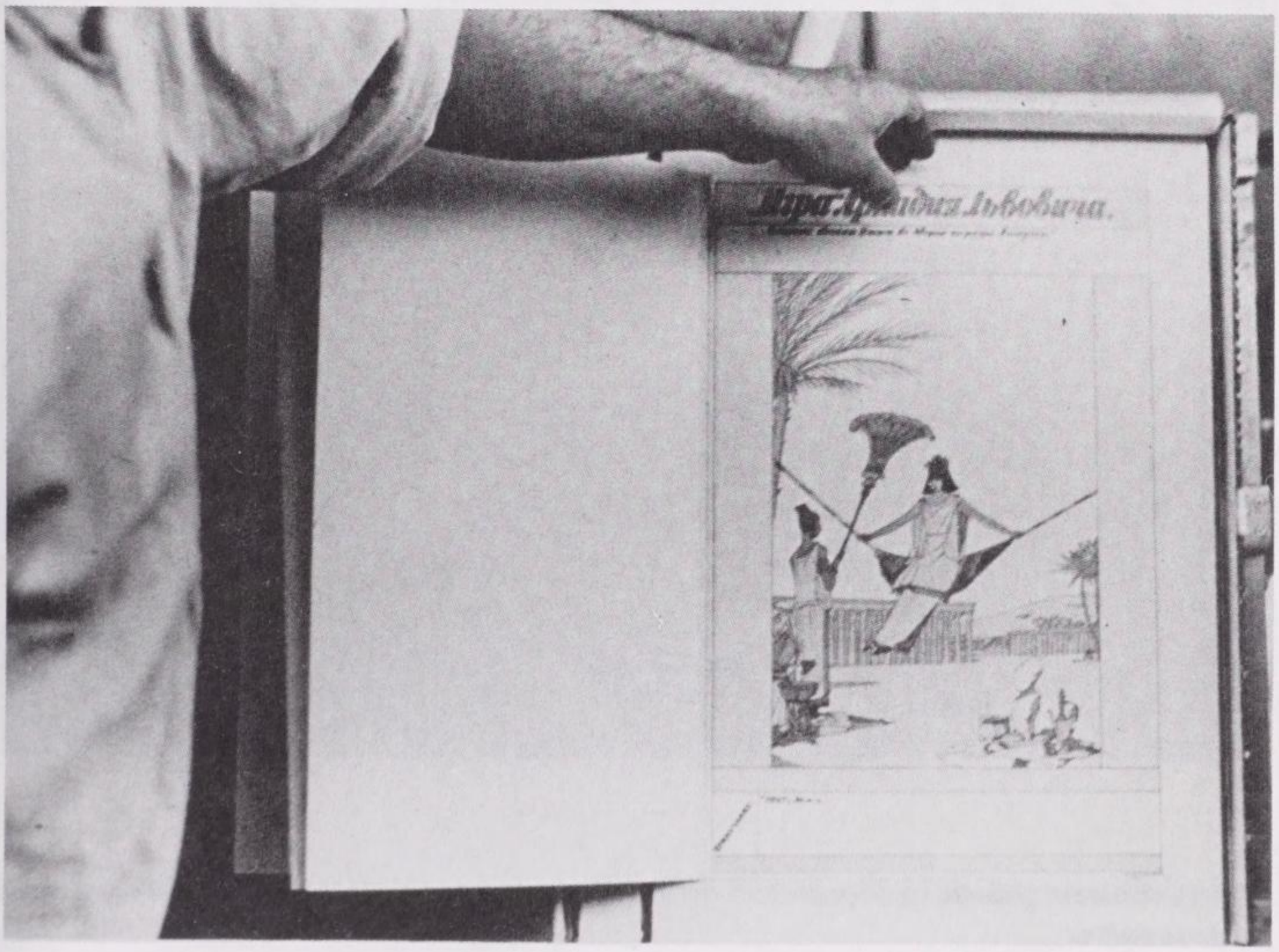

Мура Аркадия Львовича.

audience, which sits before him, as in an auditorium. This performance lasts from two to four hours, during which the audience passes through various states of immersion in Kabakov's metaphysical values; these are based on paradoxes, which are often of a prophetic or tragic character.

Ilya Kabakov's work combines in itself two attitudes opposed to the official point of view which holds sway in Russia at the present time: a perception of Soviet reality as an absurd and inhumane historical fact and, at the same time, moralizing of a religio-philosophical character. In the nonconformist art of Russia a quite strange phenomenon has emerged: a double opposition, whereby many artists, particularly those of the younger generation, have been accused of lacking the necessary spiritual didacticism.

One of the most active persons in the field of ironic political *samizdat* was Vagrich Bakhchanyan (born 1938). Since 1963 he has been producing his

Ilya Kabakov, painting *Stend Gotov* (The Stand is Ready), Moscow, 1981, enamel on masonite.

systematic pieces of nonsense. Examples such as a large number of mirror-books with frottage texts which can only be read through the mirror accompanying them; Bakh, as everybody calls him, consciously and methodically

Vagrich Bakhchanyan, cover of report on his performance at the Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1978.

Въ удостовѣреніе вышеизложеннаго и выдано ей за надлежащею подписью и приложеніемъ печати сіе свидѣтельство, по которому она, Кириллова, имѣетъ право получить отъ г. Попечителя Харьковскаго Учебнаго Округа безъ новаго испытанія свидѣтельство на званіе домашней наставницы.

Г. Харьковъ, іюня 11 дня 1913 года

Председатель Педагогическаго Совѣта

Начальница гимназіи

Члены Педагогическаго Совѣта:

Секретарь Совѣта

developed the genre of the *samizdat* book as an art object. From the very beginning he used ready-made techniques. Vagrich is fond of saying "How you choose, not what you do, is the important thing." In Moscow he worked as an artist-caricaturist for the newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, where he introduced collage media. He was however restricted by the administration of the *Gazeta* to a maximum of two elements per collage in order to make them clear to the censors.

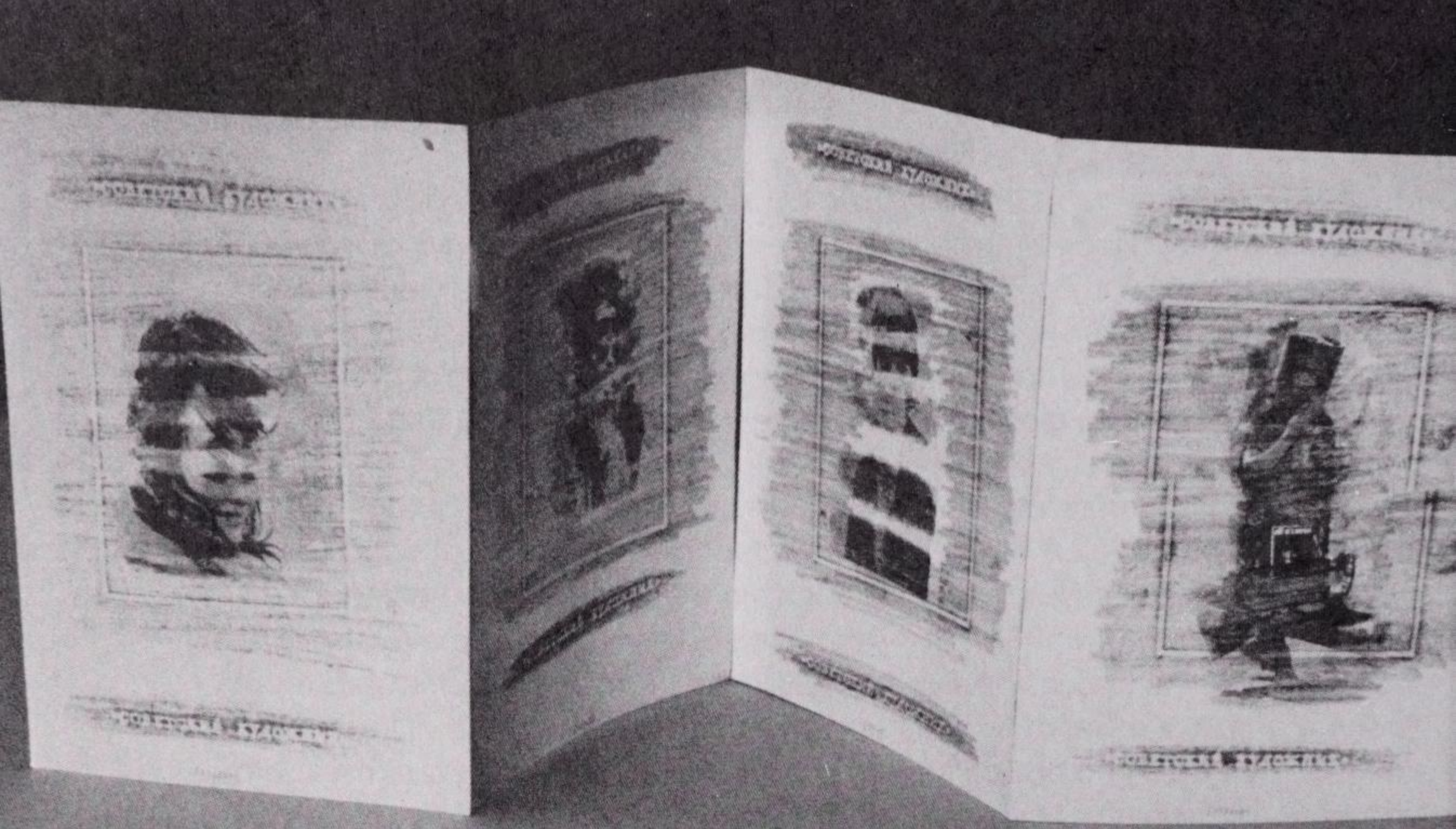
Bakhchanyan's short books reflect the character of the author and his desire to realize as quickly as possible the ideas and projects that occur to him with lightning suddenness, many of which have never come to fruition: for example, a tailored fur-coat of lard, which would have been put over the naked body, with the lard inside. During 1968-69 he made and distributed to his friends a large number of his texts and books of rubbings. Many of them were unique since Bakh, no ball of fire, was not in a position to occupy himself with the tedious business of copying; so almost all his texts had to be retyped in Moscow by his friends. Among the large number of his works one can find some raw, unfinished pieces.

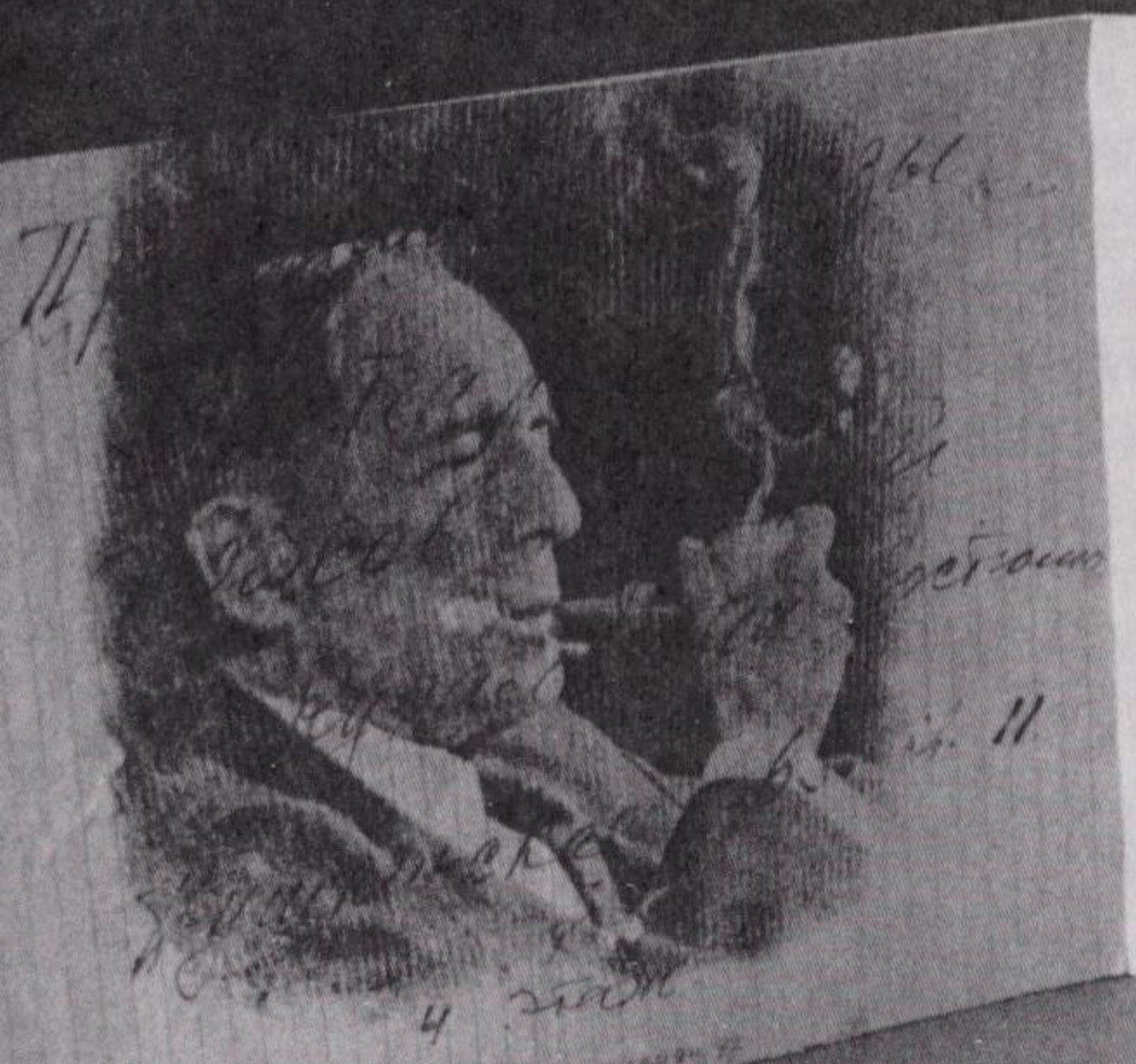
In New York, where he moved in 1974, he has continued to produce art in the same manner, like the book on the back of a jeans jacket. In 1979, dressed as a walking *agitpunkt* (propaganda center), covered from head to foot with slogans like "Stalin is Lenin today," "Beware, savage dog" and "Why is there no vodka on the moon?", he strolled about the Russian Avant-Garde room in New York's Museum of Modern Art, arousing the acute irritation of the authorities. On his letters he always sticks a stamp, "Vagrich Bakhchanyan, President Reagan's Advisor on Mail Art." He does not write poems, he writes menus, casualty notices, dreams, and he still does not speak English.

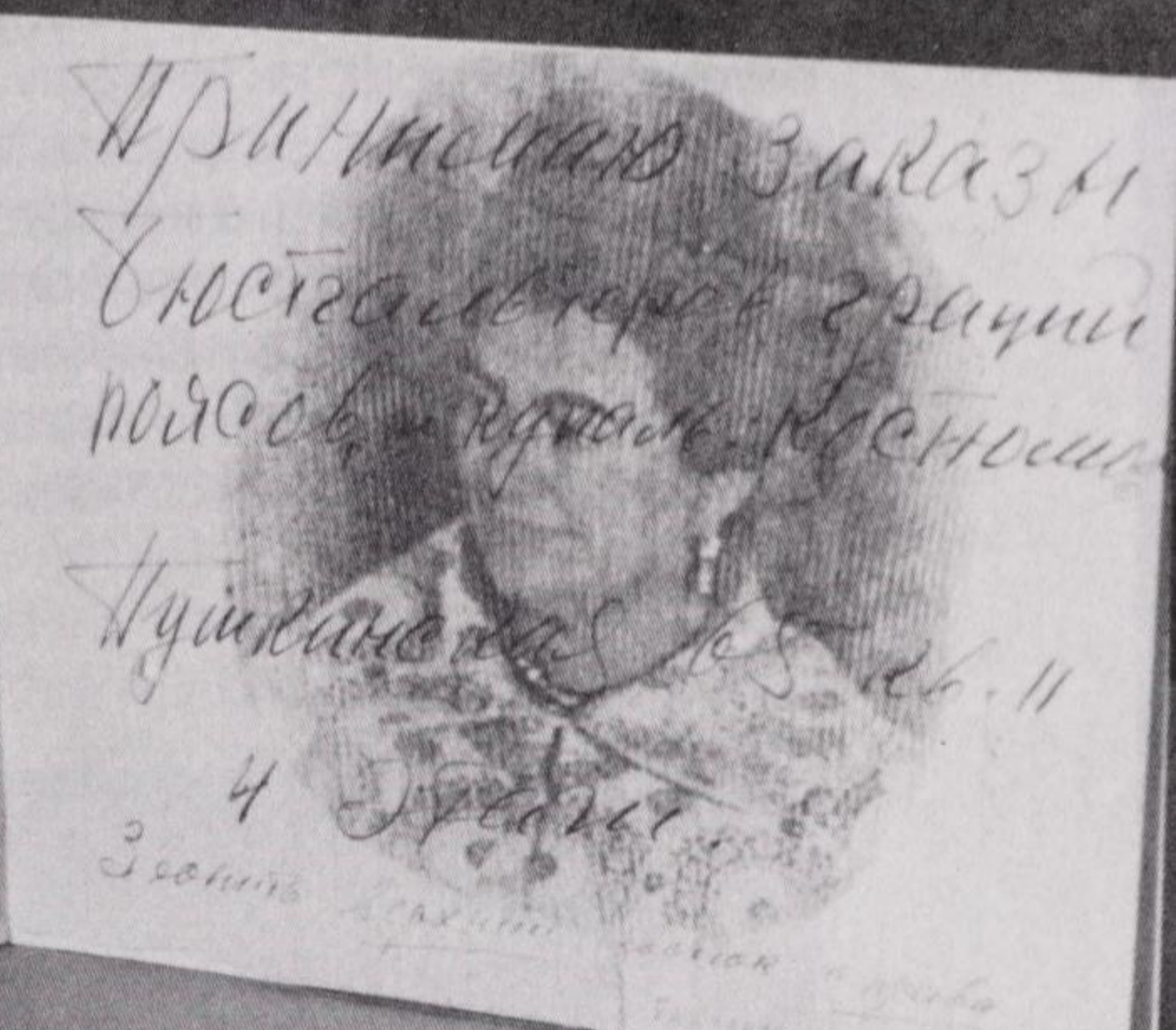
Many Russian artists use very ironic political images and language, usually witty and ambiguous although very serious at the core. It contrasts with the often dry didacticism that informs so much political art in America. Bakhchanyan was probably one of the first people involved in *samizdat* art who

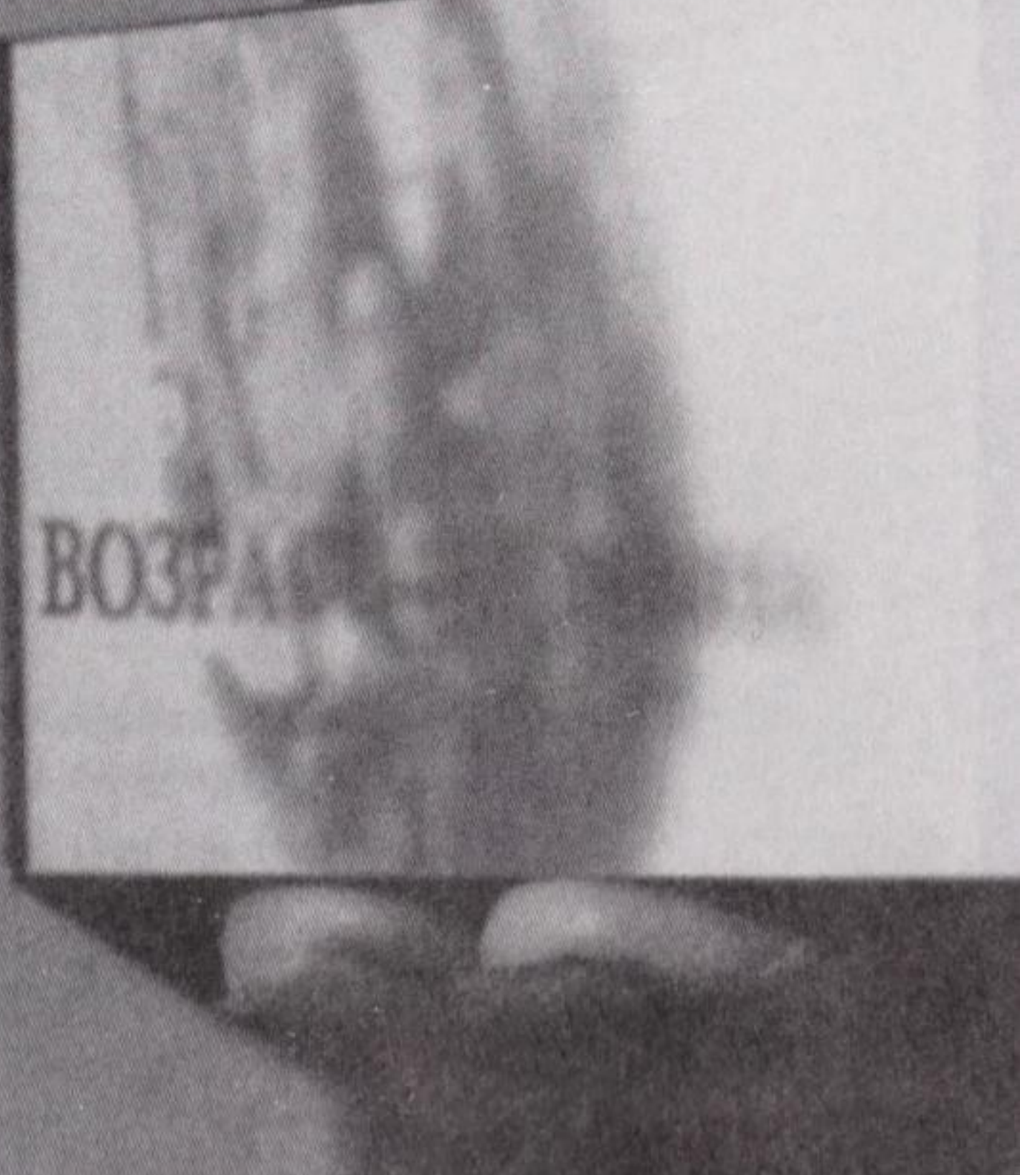
◀ **Vagrich Bakhchanyan, from the series *Frottazhi na Naidennykh Dokumentakh* (Rubbings on Found Documents), Kharkov, 1962, 9" x 14"; 23 cm x 30.5 cm, rubbing on a tutor's certificate, dated 1913.**

Vagrich Bakhchanyan, rubbings, Kharkov, 1965. On the left above: *Sovetskii Khudozhnik* (Soviet Artist), 7¼" x 5⅛"; 18 cm x 13 cm, below: from the series *Frottazhi na Naidennykh Dokumentakh* (Rubbings on Found Documents), "Pisjma" (Letters dated 1909), 4⅛₆" x 5³⁄₁₆"; 4.5 cm x 13.5 cm. On the right above: "Obyavleniya" (Ads), rubbing on the advertisement from Petrovka Street, Moscow, 1972, 8⅛" x 6¾"; 20.5 cm x 17 cm. Below: from the series *Zerkaljnye Knigi* (Mirror Books), rubbings, mirrors, Moscow, 1971, 11¾" x 8¼", 30 cm x 20.5 cm. ▶

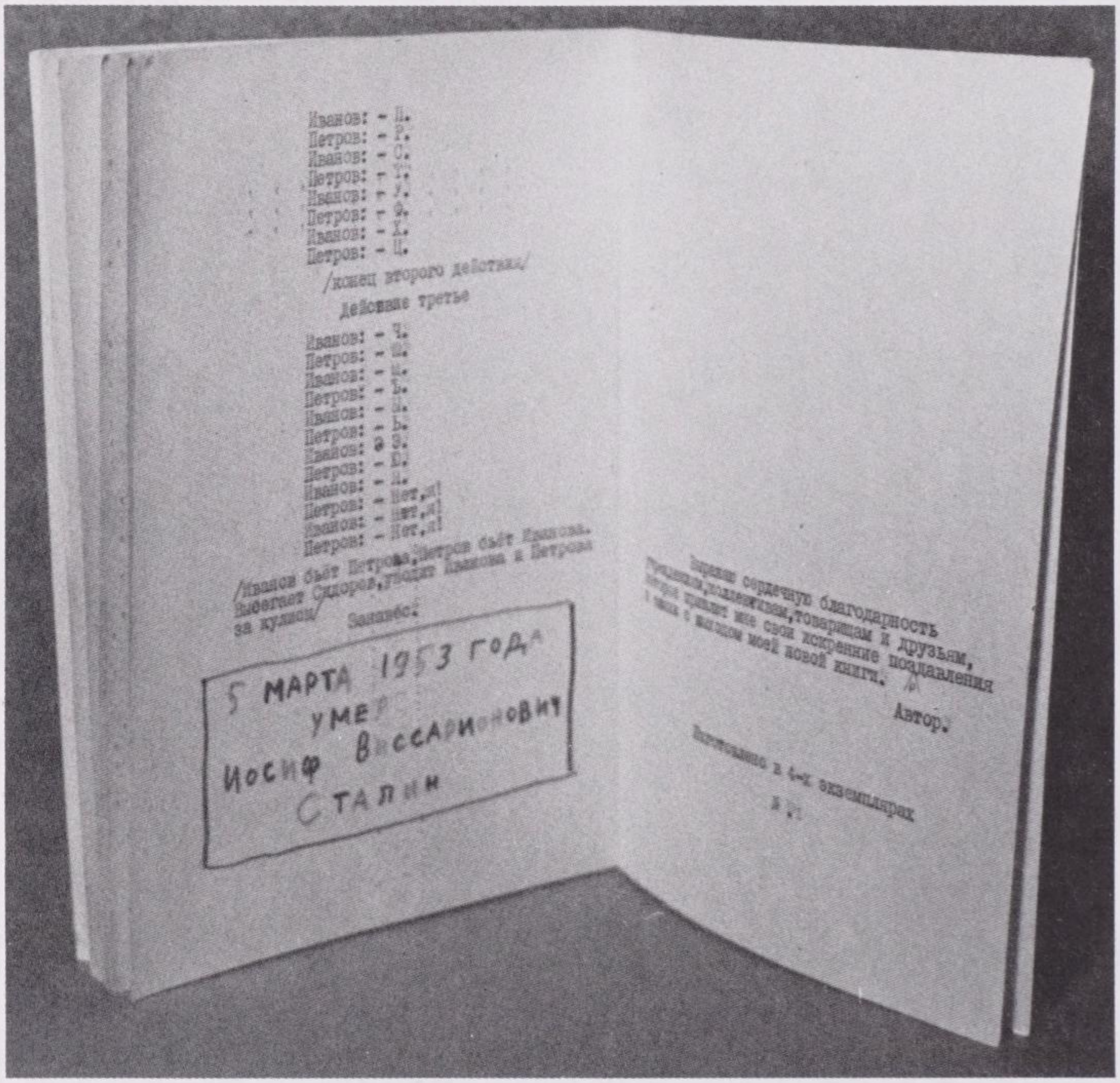








started the "misfunctional" modifications of the Soviet leaders. He says: "I was never a landscapist." His mini-play in 1970, for the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth, became a popular joke: "A big crowd gathers in front of the Lenin Mausoleum, from which a surgeon issues and proclaims, rubbing his hands: 'He will live!' Everybody applauds." Bakhchanyan summarized two symbols of Russia and America in his poem *Brezhnev and Pepsi-Cola* in 1974. He likes to tell the story about his proposal to make a Russian group exhibition in New York in 1979 for the 100th anniversary of Stalin, and how another Russian artist Vitaly Komar



Vagrich Bakhchanyan, *Mukh Uima* (Heaps of Flies), Moscow, 1973, typewritten texts and markers, 8¼" x 5¾"; 21 cm x 14. 7 cm. The last letter of the first word of the title (*kh*) and first two letters of the next word (*ui*) form the taboo word *"khui"* (cock).

objected, saying that "nobody will be interested in the image of Stalin today in the USA."

In 1982 he made a collage newspaper *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* (New Russian Word), a parody on the emigre newspaper of the same name. Bakh's version consisted solely of obituaries from this Russian-language newspaper. Later it was published under the title *Myortvye Dushechki* (Dead Sweethearts) after Gogol's *Dead Souls.* Only his famous personal charm and wit prevented his name from becoming anathema in emigre circles.*

Bakhchanyan admits that the time is not right to make paintings. Long ago, at the beginning of our century, Russian Futurists called artists to go out in the streets. Mayakovsky wrote: "Streets are our brushes; squares are our palettes." Vagrich sees the future of his works not on the walls, but in book form. "How many people can see the exhibition, but the audience of a book is unlimited," he says, pinning his hopes on Russians' traditional love for books.

Alexander M. was Bakhchanyan's first publisher. In 1971 he typed on the typewriter his friend's book *Butylka Supa* (The Bottle of Soup) in seven copies with imprint and hardcover calico binding. The painter Peter Belenok made Vagrich's one portrait using carbon paper for all copies. Belenok's own paintings, mixed with collages and splashes of paint, were artistically opposed to his sculptures of national heroes like Chapayev or Kirov, which he did for money. All these heavy casts of bodies in uniforms used to soak in Peter's personal bathtub.

Alexander M. introduced another sort of *samizdat* activity: the publishing of folk geniuses. Once, he found a pile of letters in the garbage. He combined and elaborated them under the title *Pisjma Adama* (Letters of Adam). It was a sort of epistolary tragicomedy about postwar morals and manners among the lower-middle class. As an experiment he sent this manuscript to several publishing houses and got one and the same answer: "It is too artificial, bizarre and unreal."

He collected and edited several similar books, based on letters to the editor. All these pieces shared a Kafkaesque vision of life, like *Syostry*

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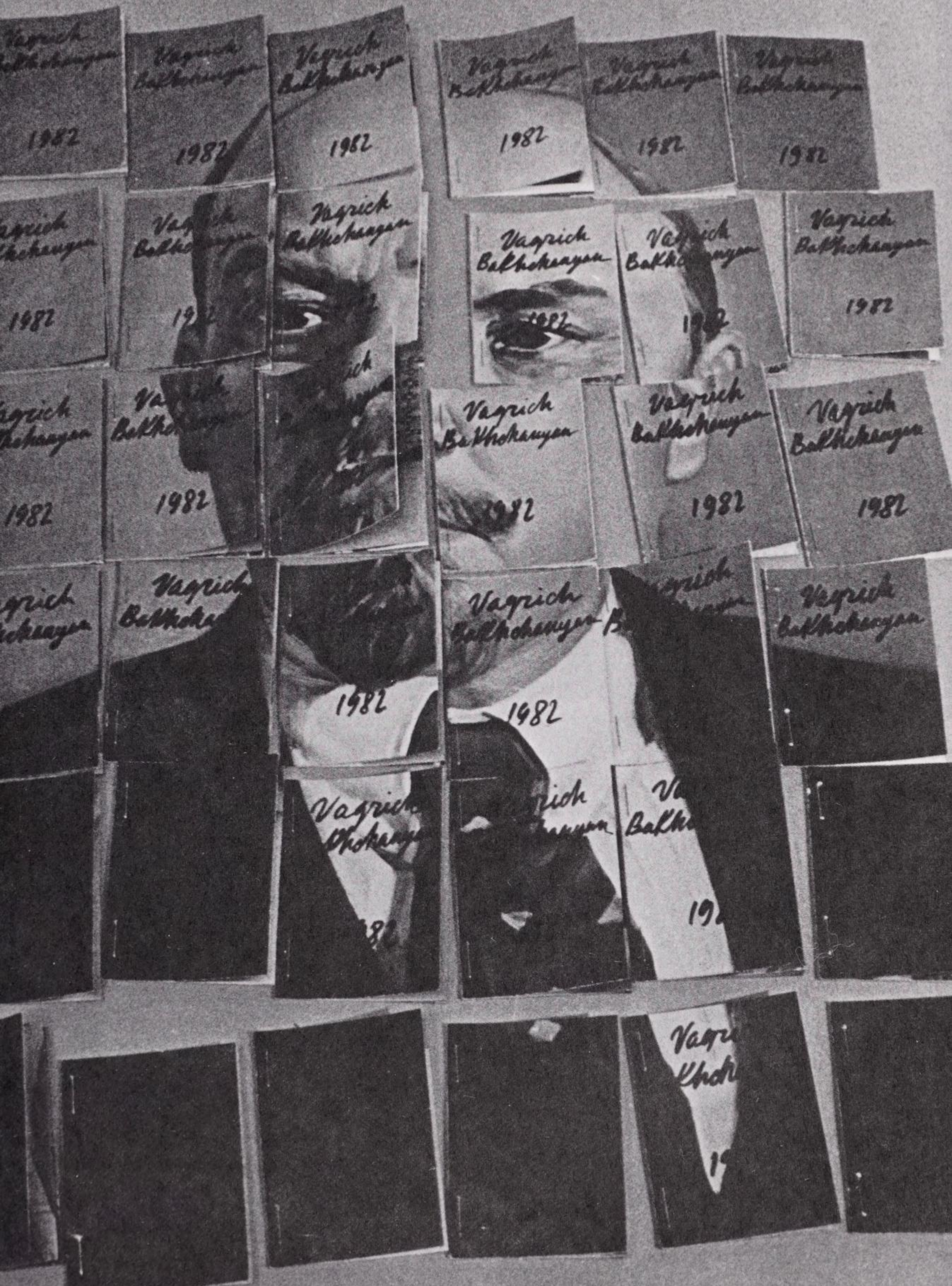
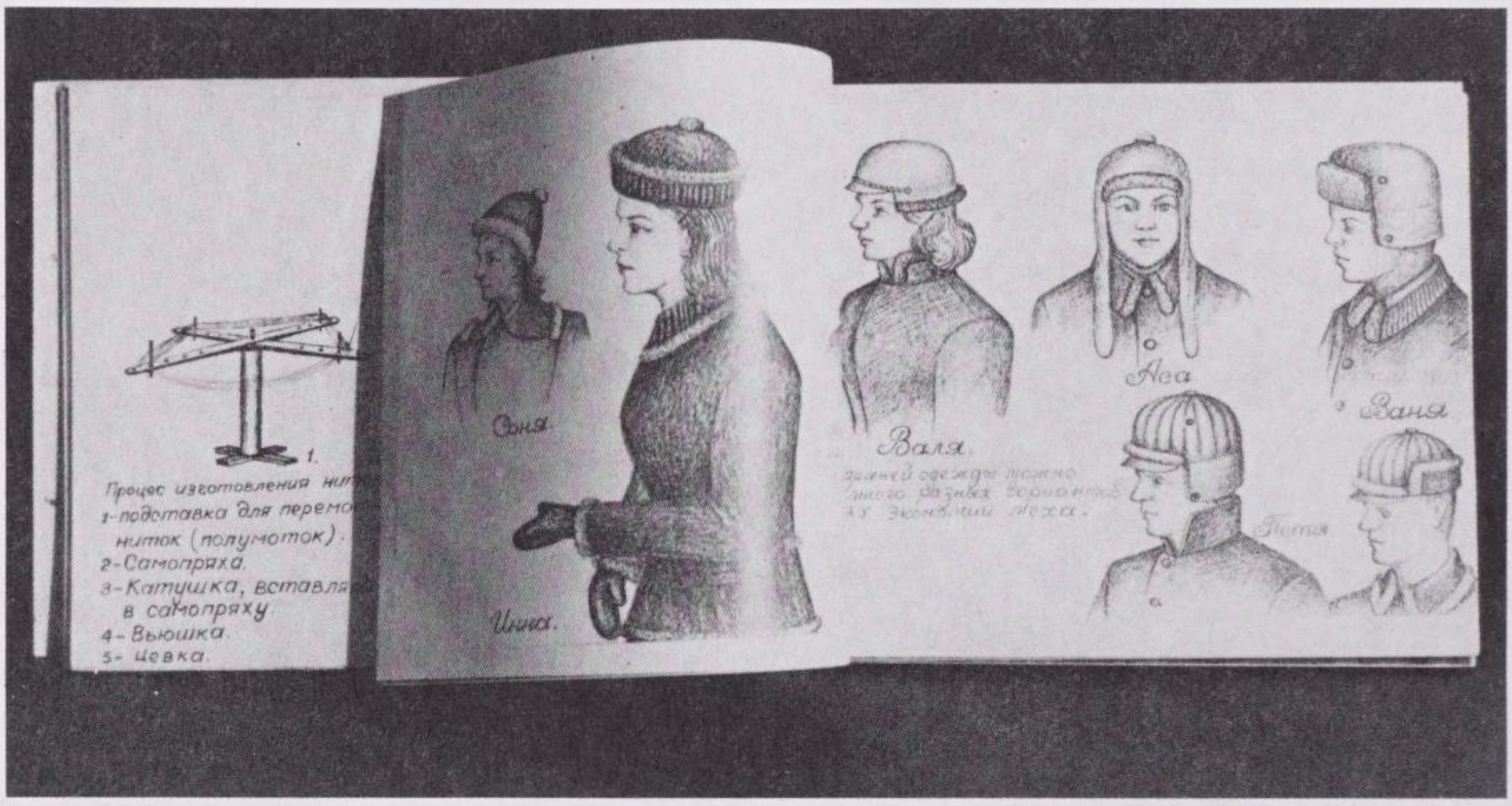
* *Dushechka* means "sweetheart" and at the same time is a diminutive of *dusha* (soul). Bakhchanyan chooses obituaries of and by emigres who tend to write all names in diminutive form or use antiquated feudal titles which in contemporary literary Russian often sound unintentionally humorous.

Vagrich Bakhchanyan, left to right: *Stalin with the Face of Lenin,* NY, 1976, collage, 18" x 15"; 45.7 cm x 38.1 cm. *Lenin,* NY, 1982, book-poster, consists of 36 books, each has 10 pp., 2¼" x 3¼"; 6 cm x 7.5 cm. ▶


Vagrich
Bakhchanyan
1982

Kazamazovy (Sisters Kazamazov) or the collection of *Philosoph Zherebilo* on the universal problems of life ranging from the pornographic significance of women in trousers to the methods of struggle against Chiang Kai-shek. Such pseudo models of the world, like Leonardo da Vinci's, run through many book-projects dreamed up by Russian provincial philosophers, who mail their work to various official publishers.



Nikiphor Zayats, *ABVGD* (ABCD), Omsk, 1969, 11" x 8½"; 8 cm x 22 cm. Photographs and original drawings of projects for automatic seed sowers, military uniforms, movie houses, color-photography inventions, etc.

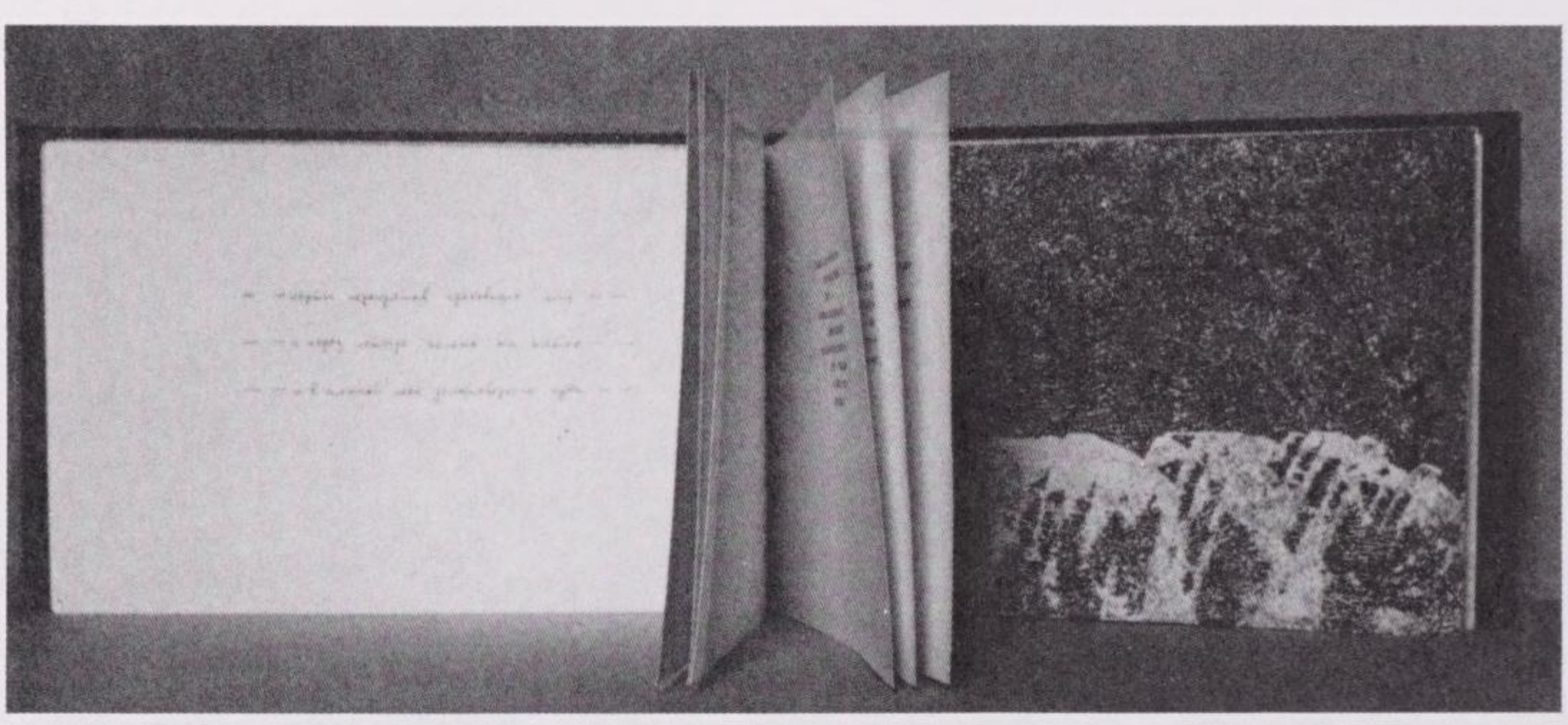
In the seventies, Alexander M. typed several books by different poets including Eduard Limonov with drawings by Vagrich Bakhchanyan, who many years later in New York did the cover design for the first edition of Limonov's *It's me, Edichka.* Eduard Limonov himself had a much bigger publishing business. He typed his poems (in the style of the *Oberiu),* using carbon paper, seven copies at a time: the last one usually came out almost blank. As he admits, he illegally sold about 500 copies, many of them to members of the Artists' Union. In a short time his public activity and talented garish poetry made him known in Moscow, where he, as well as Vagrich Bakhchanyan, had moved from Kharkov.

During this period, collaborative works between artists and poets became rather popular. In 1972-73 poet Lev Rubinshtein and Valery Gerlovin put together two books in two copies. The text was written partly in the poet's hand, partly typed. Valery did color carbon paper monoprints in his own elaborate technique. Many Moscow poets and writers have produced hand-made bindings for their own typewritten works. That was how Lev Rubinshtein

Standing from left to right: Peter Belenok and Vagrich Bakhchanyan with their friends, Moscow, 1972. Photo by V. Plotnikov.

(born 1947) began at the end of the 1960s. Later, he collaborated with the photographer Gosha Sandler to publish several original photobooks.

Many of Lev's advanced ideas remained in the area of fantasy for a long time because of the author's attachment to traditional structure. In his early works, a playful interpretation of lyrical verses could already be seen: in 1973, for example, he wrote a poem on small wood planks which could be shuffled,



Lev Rubinshtein, Valery Gerlovin, *Vtoraya Kniga* (The Second Book), Moscow, 1973, ed.2, 8" x 12¼"; 20 cm x 32 cm. Color carbon paper print, handwritten and typed text.

enabling the reader to vary the sequence of lines at will. At the present time he is, to quote his own words, "a total systematizer of poetry."

The content of his conceptual books always has a theoretical, almost sterile, character, which stands in sharp contrast to the man, a convivial and extremely lively person in private life.

However, from time to time, the author's personality breaks through in less ambitious and inventive works like *Kniga Odnogo Soneta* (Book of One Sonnet), 1973, which is tightly bound with a cord, within which are twelve carbon copies of the same sonnet, unreadable until one reaches the last page. Later

Dmitry Prigov, *Stikhogrammy* (Graphic Poetry), Moscow, 1979. ▶

ризрак бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Европе, оварищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Европе и, арищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Европ ый, арищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Евро ный, ч рищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Евр ьный, чт ищи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Ев льный, что щи, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по Е альный, что и, призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по чальный, что т , призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит по ечальный, что ты призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит п печальный, что ты призрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит печальный, что ты б ризрак коммунизма
ризрак бродит и печальный, что ты бр израк коммунизма
ризрак броди и печальный, что ты бро зрак коммунизма
ризрак брод й и печальный, что ты брод рак коммунизма
ризрак бро ый и печальный, что ты броди ак коммунизма
ризрак бр ный и печальный, что ты бродиш к коммунизма
ризрак б мный и печальный, что ты бродишь коммунизма
ризрак емный и печальный, что ты бродишь коммунизма
ризрак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь т оммунизма
ризра темный и печальный, что ты бродишь ту ммунизма
ризр к темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут мунизма
риз ак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут унизма
ри рак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут д низма
р зрак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут до изма
израк темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут до зма
ризрак темный и аечальный, что ты бродишь тут до у ма
ризрак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут до ут а
ризрак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут до утр
израк бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак коммуниз а
р зрак бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак коммуни ра
ри рак бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак коммун тра
риз ак бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак комму утра
ризр к бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак комм утра
ризра бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак ком о утра
ризрак бродит по Европе, товарищи, призрак ко до утра
ризрак родит по Европе, товарищи, призрак к до утра
ризрак т одит по Европе, товарищи, призрак т до утра
ризрак те дит по Европе, товарищи, призрак ут до утра
ризрак тем ит по Европе, товарищи, призра тут до утра
ризрак темн т по Европе, товарищи, призр тут до утра
ризрак темны по Европе, товарищи, приз ь тут до утра
ризрак темный по Европе, товарищи, при шь тут до утра
ризрак темный о Европе, товарищи, пр ишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и Европе, товарищи, п дишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и п вропе, товарищи, одишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и пе ропе, товарищи, родишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печ опе, товарищи бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печа пе, товарищ бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печал е, товари ы бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печаль , товар ты бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печальн това ты бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печальны тов о ты бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печальный о то ты бродишь тут до утра
ризрак темный и печальный, что ты бродишь тут до утра

БАНКА
МАЛЕНЬКОГО
ЧЕЛОВЕКА
В 1924 народ своего мужест во гла провер в лице Комите ческой славны традиц
В 1929 народ своего мужест во гл провер в лице Комите ческой славны традиц
В 1937 год народ под своего испы мужествен да во главе проверенным в лице Цент Комитета ческой парт славным ле традициям

works, like *Katalog Komediinykh Novshestv* (Catalog of Comedic Novelties) and *Programma Rabot* (Program of Works), represent his customary elaboration of linguistic points and reflect the boredom of life and bureaucracy.

The poet and sculptor Dmitry Prigov (born 1940) combines verbal and plastic techniques in his work. Many of his creations make use of the methods of visual and concrete poetry, and the precise proportions and cryptographic mastery of his work are particularly arresting. His terse telegrams, such as "student stop killed an old woman stop with an axe stop he suffers terrible torments stop dostoevsky," are stuck on the pages of an eponymous book in the form of telegram tapes. Prigov has published a whole series of booklets in carbon copies, written in the author's typical astringent language, which was once called the poetry of policemen and firemen.

Beginning with two-dimensional visual compositions, at the end of the seventies he moved on to three-dimensional compositions on cans: the poetry of labels, one might say. For example, *Prophetic Can*, 1978, is a meditative text printed on a cut-out spiral label strip that shrinks to a black dot. Piles of multicolored cans in his studio recall the windows of Russian provincial grocery shops. All his later three-dimensional compositions are ultimately rooted in his creative alter ego–the attitude of a sculptor. The majority of Dmitry Prigov's works are rich in social symbolism and bureaucratic cliches.

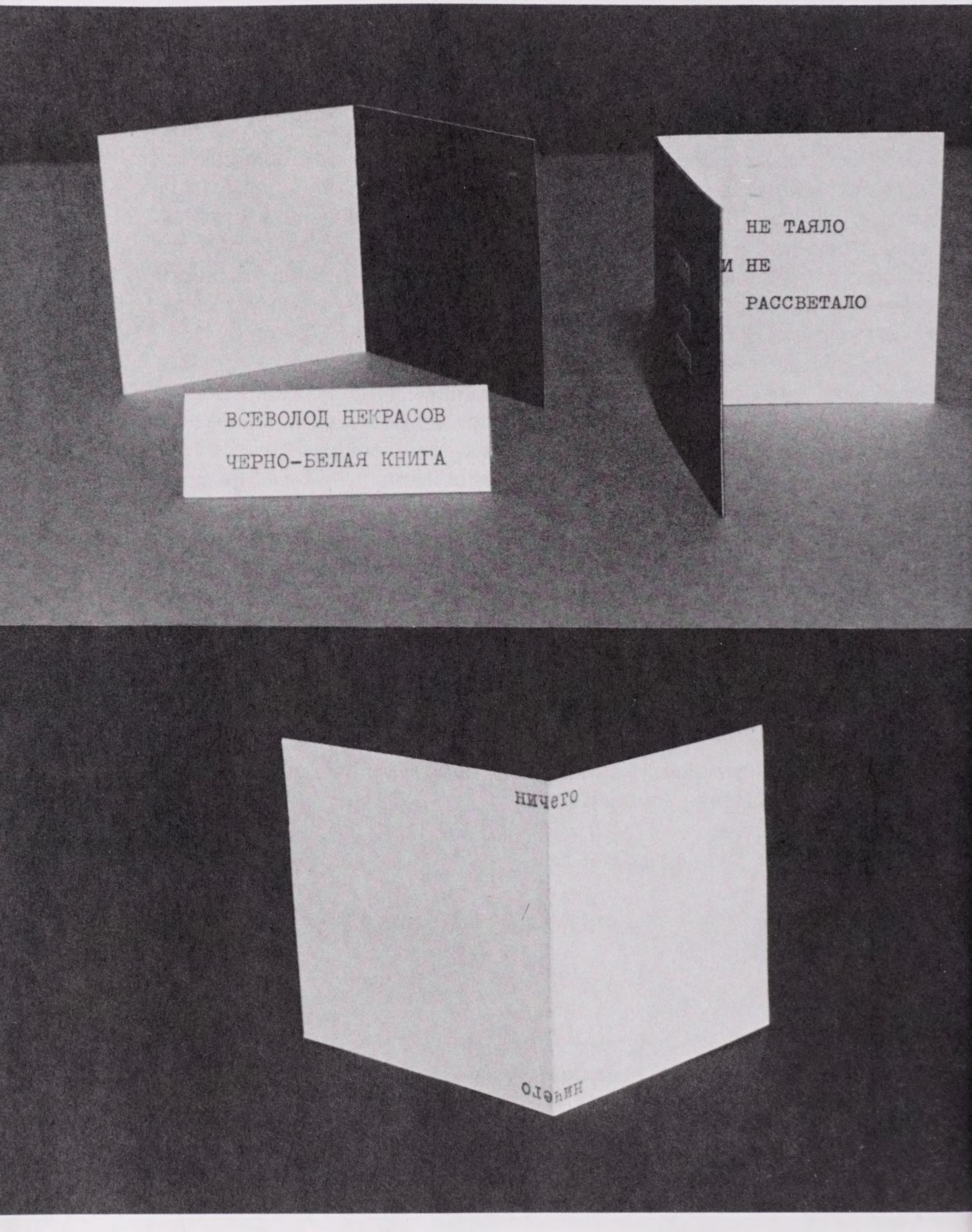
Vsevolod Nekrasov (born 1934) is one of Russia's best contemporary poets, the creator of an original lyrical and administrative syntax and of a touchingly noble versification that draws on the barbarous language of abbreviations. His paradigmatic devices combine clarity and purposefulnes of thought with the precision of metaphorical mini-forms.

Vsevolod Nekrasov is a virtuoso reader of his sound-representational works, of which he has perfect recall, although all his notes are in unbelievable disorder. Here is one of his shorter pieces:

Freedom is
Freedom is
Freedom is
Freedom is freedom (1962)

◀ Above: Dmitry Prigov at his studio; below: his poems on cans, Moscow, 1978, photo by the Gerlovins.

Vsevolod Nekrasov, series of minibooks, Moscow, 1981; each page 2⅜" x 2⅜"; 6 cm x 6 cm. ▶

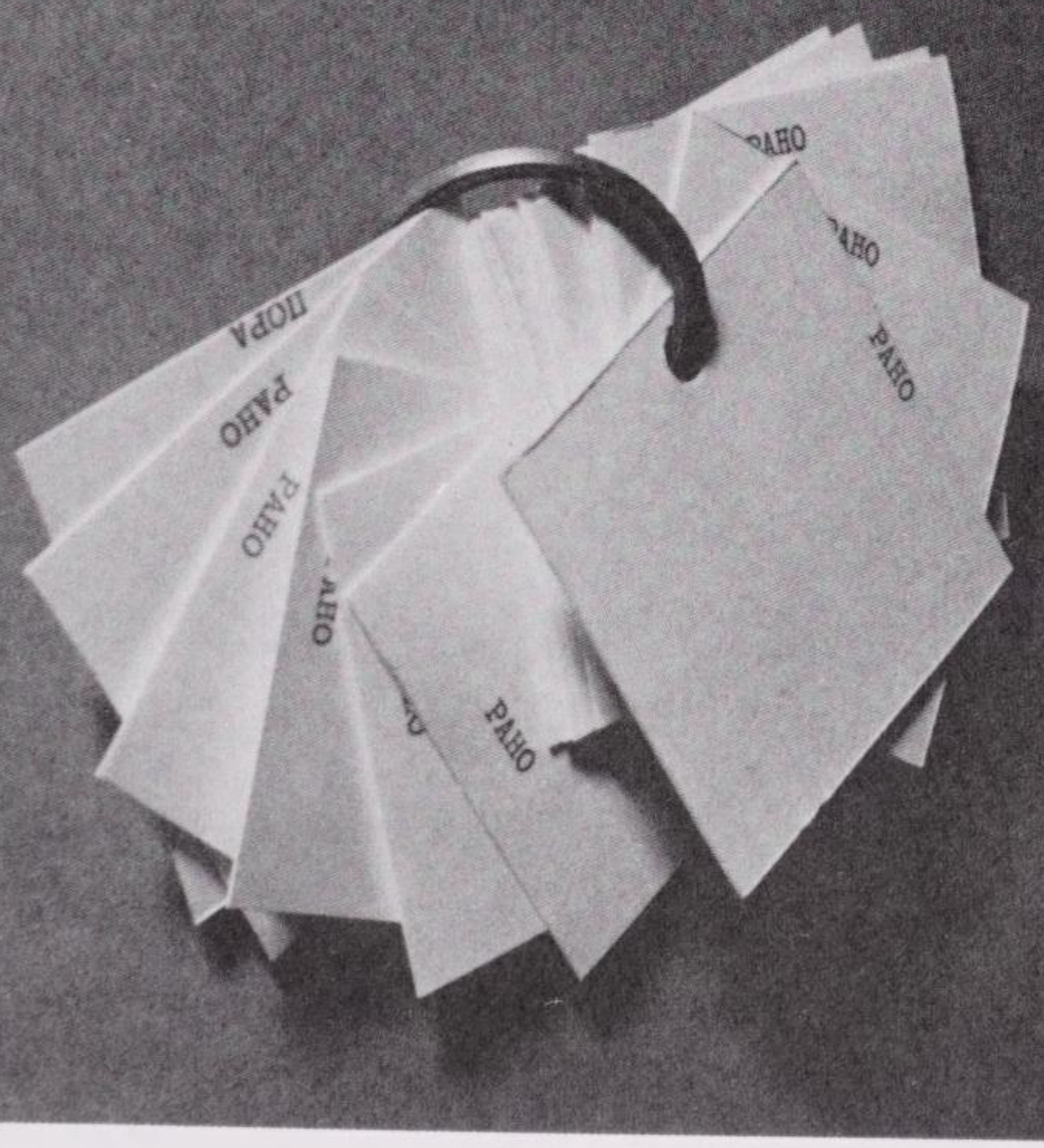

НЕ ТАЯЛО
И НЕ
РАССВЕТАЛО
ВСЕВОЛОД НЕКРАСОВ
ЧЕРНО-БЕЛАЯ КНИГА
ничего

МОЖНО ЖИТЬ
А МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ

МОЖНО ВЫЙТИ

ТОЖЕ ХОРОШО.ТОЖЕ МОЖНО

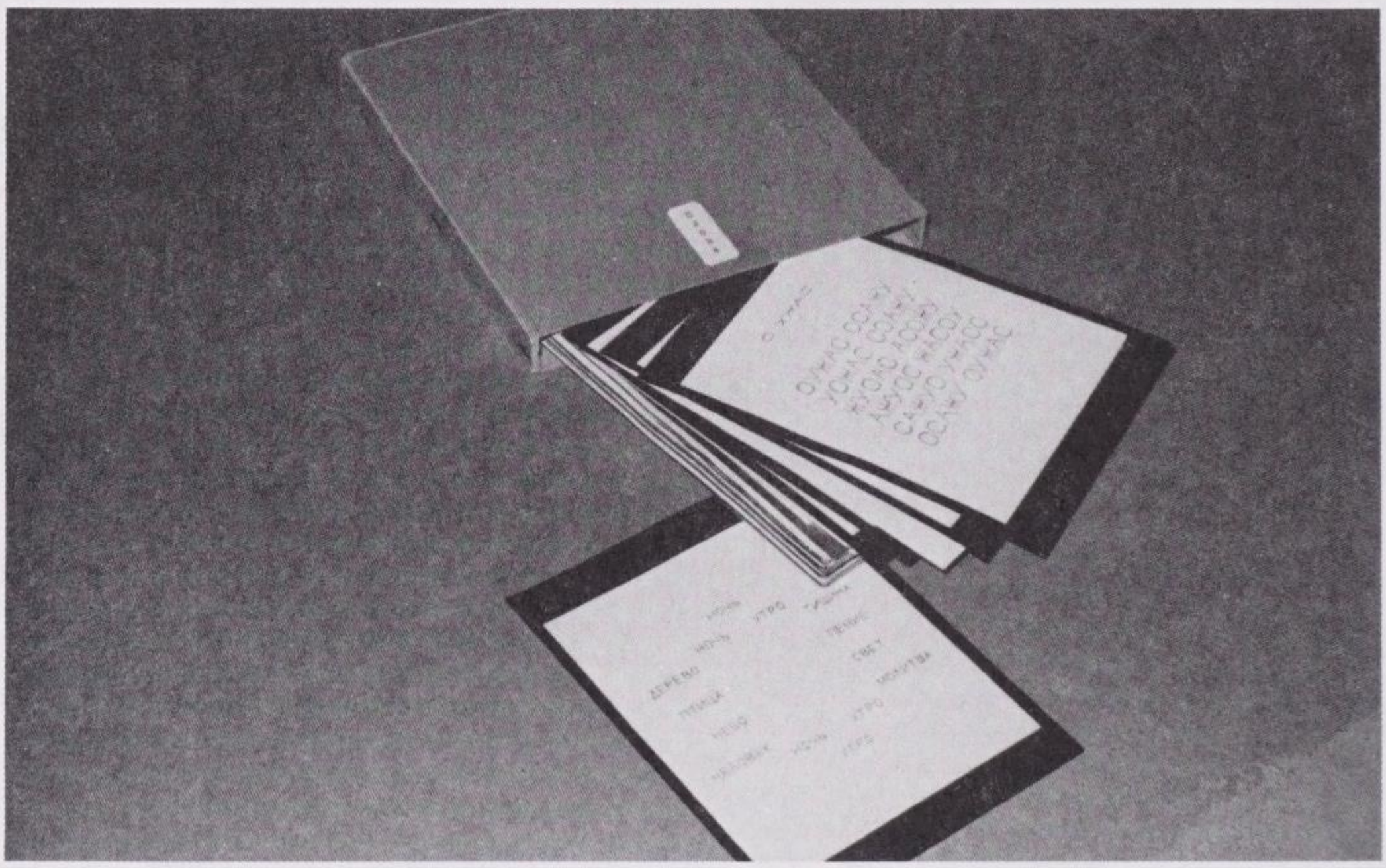
ТОЖЕ МОЖНО.ТОЖЕ ХОРОШО



From time to time Vsevolod Nekrasov turns his attention to textual objects: for example, a miniature book of signs and words, which is strung on to a key ring like a rosary. In another mini-book the word *rano* (early) is gradually inverted until it is transformed on the last of thirty-two pages into *Pora* (it is time).

It would be difficult not to mention Vilen Barsky (born 1930) in this article. This Kiev poet now living in Germany used to visit Moscow occasionally, bringing his books with him. His witty and penetrating verse structures with their lyrical and philosophical symbols were cast in the same laconic, representational style that was characteristic of the Moscow group of poets. This is one of his more famous poems:

To da Syo (one thing and another) (a haiku)
tyodaso
tadosyo
todyosa

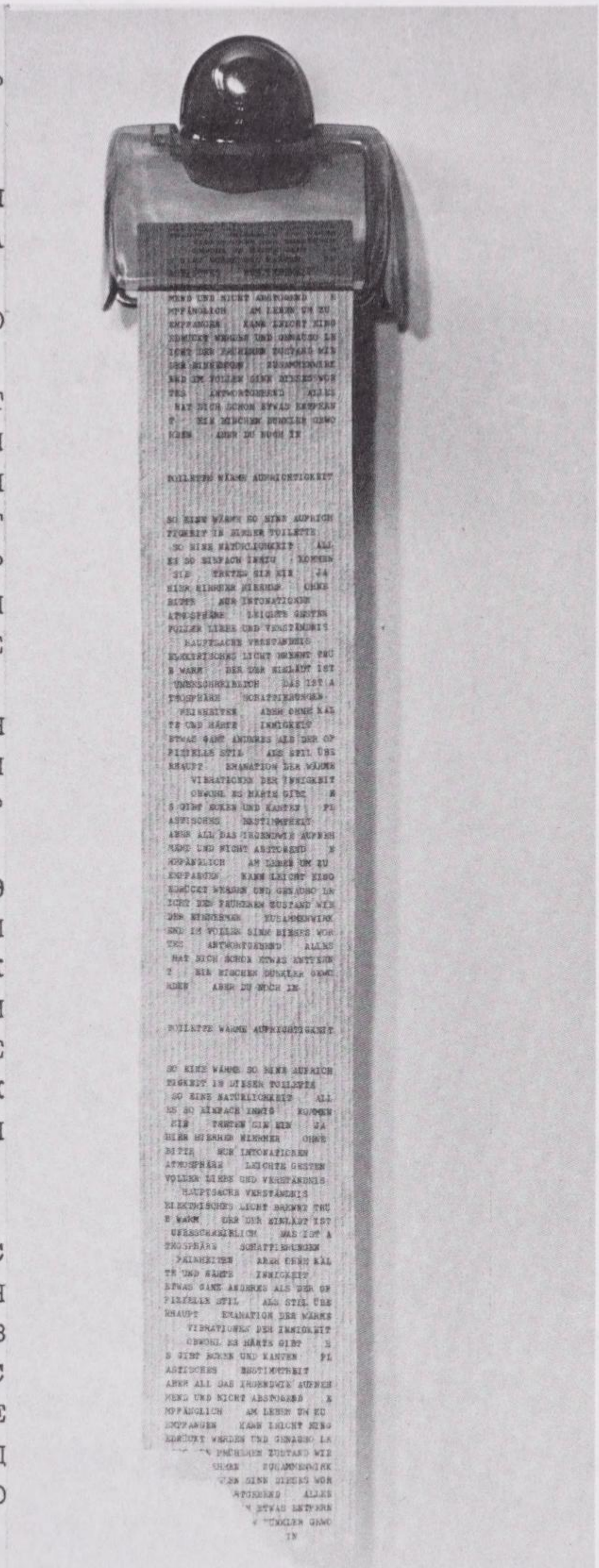


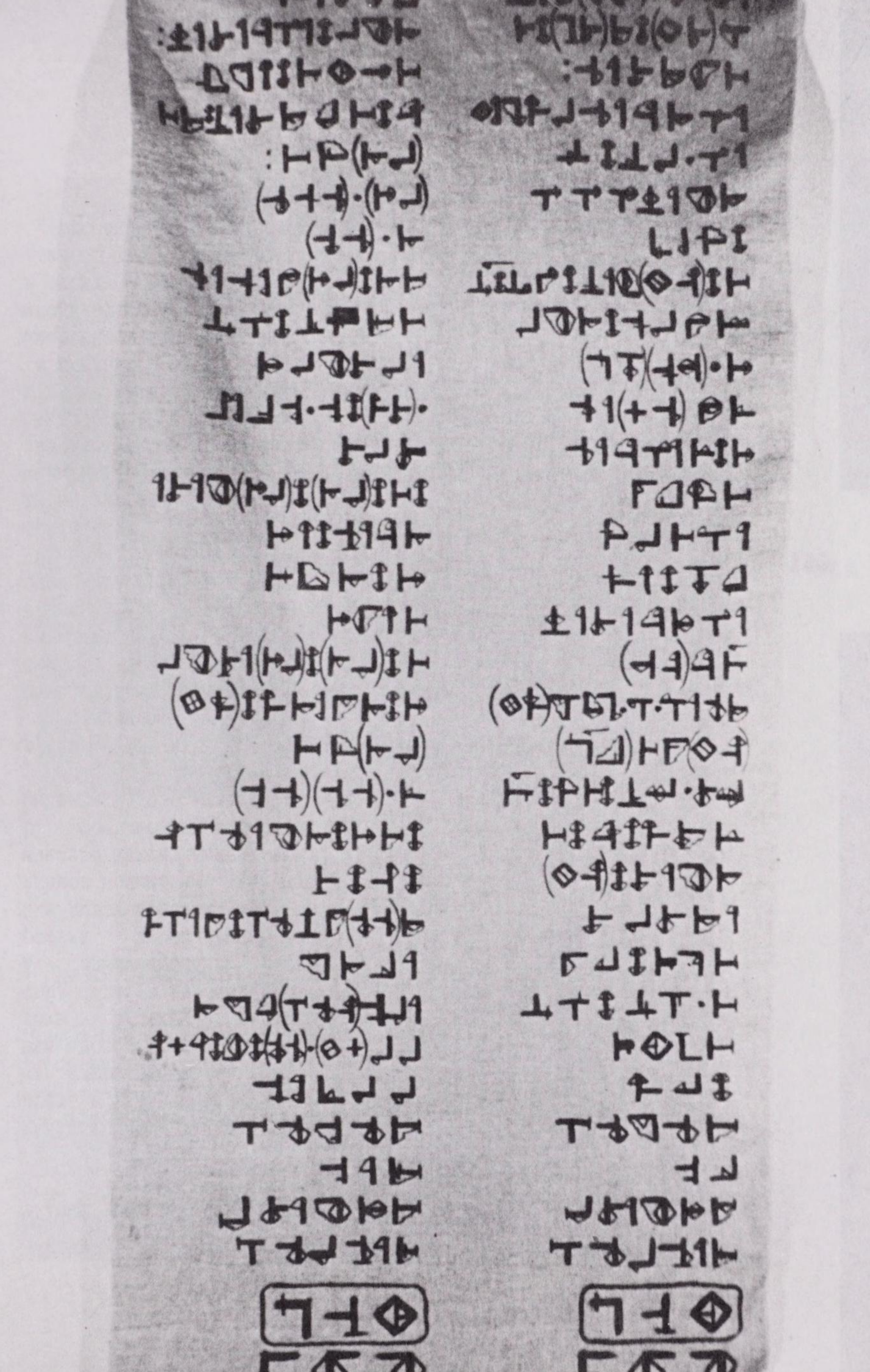
Vilen Barsky, *Slova* (Words), Kiev, 1976-80. Photo by the author.

Vilen Barsky, *Poslaniye Tualetnogo Rulona* (Message of Toilet Paper), Kiev, 1977-1981; a second version was done in Dortmund, West Germany.

ТУАЛЕТ ТЕПЛОТА ИСКРЕННОСТЬ

ТАКАЯ ТЕПЛОТА ТАКАЯ ИСКРЕН
НОСТЬ В ТУАЛЕТЕ ЭТОМ ТА
КАЯ ЕСТЕСТВЕННОСТЬ ВСЕ
ТАК ПРОСТО ДУШЕВНО ЗАХО
ДИТЕ ВХОДИТЕ ДА ВОТ
СЮДА СЮДА БЕЗ ПОЖАЛУЙСТ
А ОДНИ ИНТОНАЦИИ АТМ
ОСФЕРА ЖЕСТЫ ЛЕГКИЕ ПОЛ
НЫЕ ЛЮБВИ И ПОНИМАНИЯ Г
ЛАВНОЕ ПОНИМАНИЕ ЭЛЕКТР
ИЧЕСТВО СВЕТИТ НЕЯРКО ТЕПЛ
О ТОТ КТО ПРИГЛАШАЕТ НЕ
ОПИСУЕМ ЭТО АТМОСФЕРА
ОТТЕНКИ ТОНКОСТИ Н
О БЕЗ ХОЛОДА БЕЗ ЖЕСТКОСТИ
ДУШЕВНОСТЬ НЕЧТО ПР
ОТИВОСТОЯЩЕЕ ОФИЦИАЛЬНОМУ
СТИЛЮ СТИЛЮ ВООБЩЕ Э
МАНАЦИЯ ТЕПЛОТЫ ВИБРАЦИ
И ДУШЕВНОСТИ ХОТЯ ЖЕСТК
ОСТЬ ЕСТЬ ЕСТЬ И УГЛЫ И
ГРАНИ ПЛАСТИКА ОПРЕ
ДЕЛЕННОСТЬ НО ВСЕ ЭТО К
АК БЫ ВБИРАЮЩЕЕ А НЕ ОТТАЛ
КИВАЮЩЕЕ ПРИНИМАЮЩЕЕ
ЖИВУЩЕЕ ЧТОБЫ ПРИНИМАТЬ
СПОСОБНОЕ ЛЕГКО ВДАВИТЬС
Я И ТАК ЖЕ ЛЕГКО ВЕРНУТЬСЯ
В ПРЕЖНЕЕ СОСТОЯНИЕ ВЗ
АИМОДЕЙСТВУЮЩЕЕ В ПОЛНОМ С
МЫСЛЕ ЭТОГО СЛОВА ДАЮЩЕ
Е ОТВЕТ ВСЕ НЕМНОГО ОТД
АЛИЛОСЬ УЖЕ ЧУТЬ УГАСЛО
НО ТЫ ЕЩЕ В





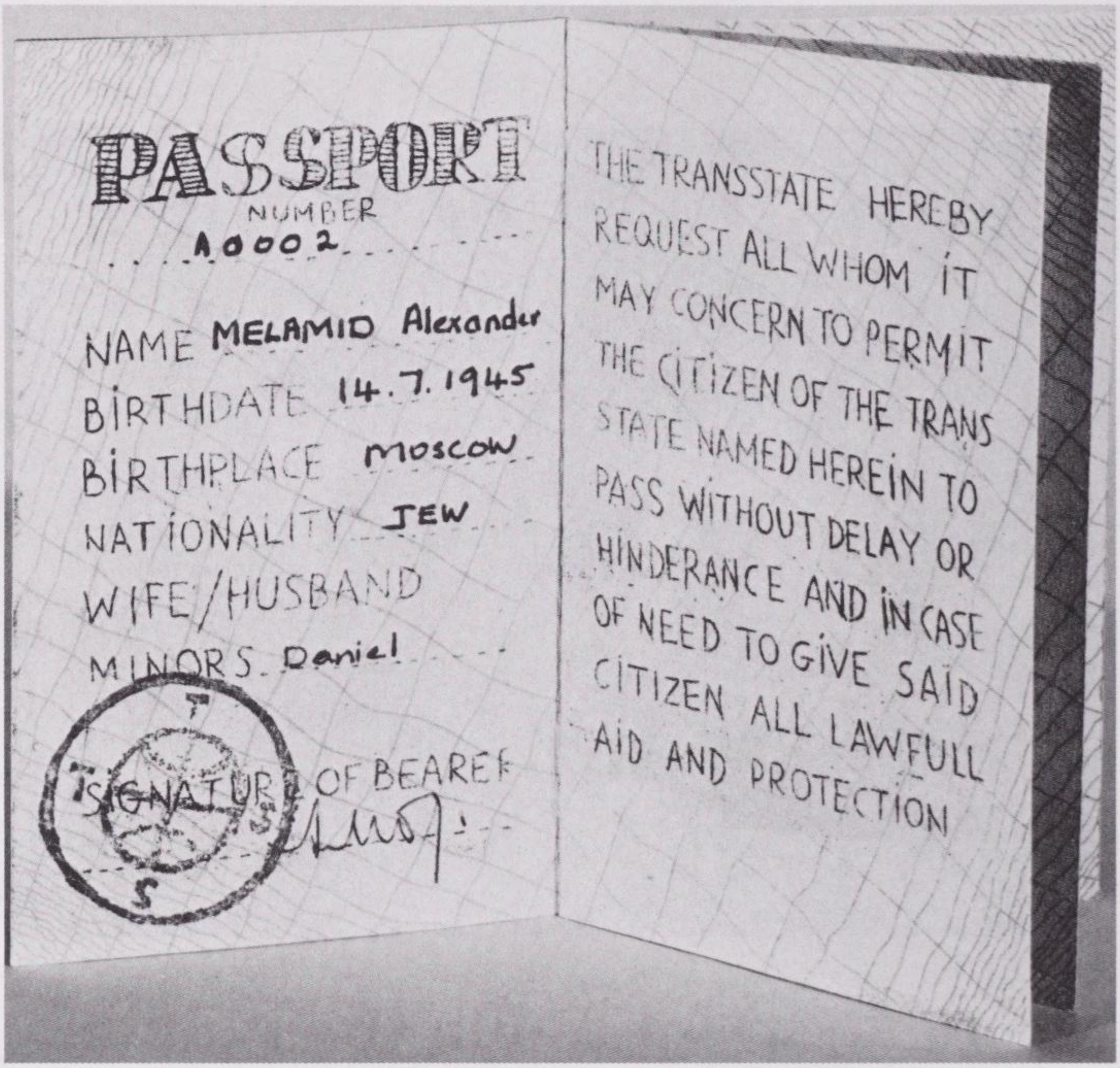
The political artists Vitaly Komar (born 1943) and Alexander Melamid (born 1945) made a conceptual transposition of their ideas into book form, when they pasted articles about themselves in *The New York Times* into the last chapter of the Bible, thus testifying involuntarily to a certain degree of egocentricity. In Moscow they constructed several book objects, the most interesting of which was *Passport for Trans-State* (1977) for a new nation created by the artists with passports, money and Declaration of Independence, etc. Anybody can be a citizen of Trans-State "who in his own opinion falls outside the structure of all known functioning state systems."

Although their output in the book genre is not so large, there is a case for considering their art as an example of the transformation of artists who work in the political cosmos. The Moscow period of Komar and Melamid's work was

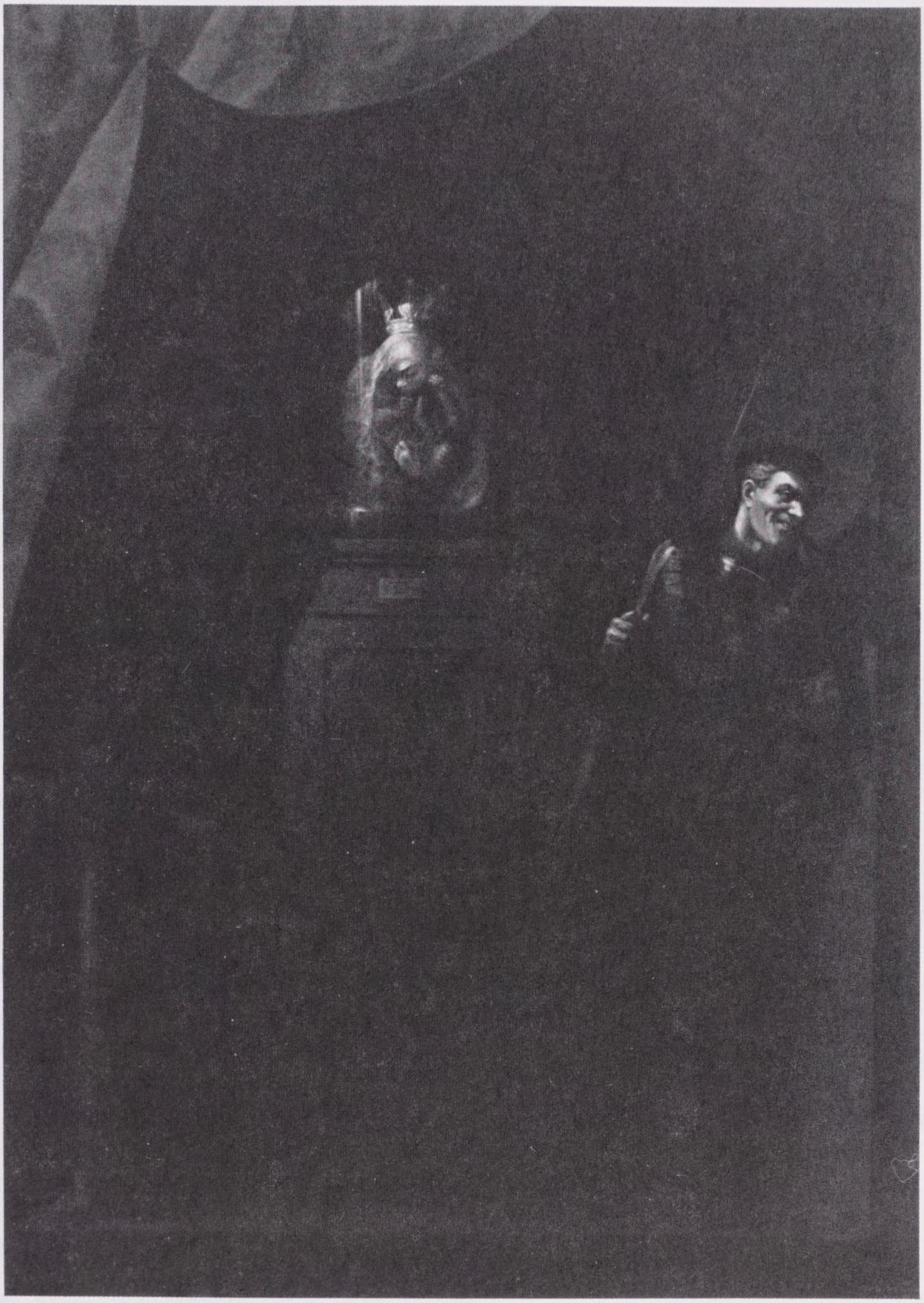
Komar and Melamid, Moscow, 1976. Photo by Igor Makarevich.

◀ **Komar and Melamid, *Language of Trans State*, Moscow, 1977, canvas scroll. Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.**

marked by the richness and variety of their ideas, which were extremely topical. We enjoyed their inventiveness in creating a catalogue of *Superobjects* that could possibly obliterate class distinctions, the hamburger from *Pravda* (propaganda meat) or *Biography*, 1973, a multistylistic series of small paintings that they reforged and copied in New York for their exhibition in 1985. "Famous artists of the 197Os" reads the card fixed to their door. For a long time they prepared for emigration and they always precisely programmed their politics and art, calling their style *sots-art* playing with cosmopolitan terminology (socialistic pop-art). At the same time they were so deeply involved in the



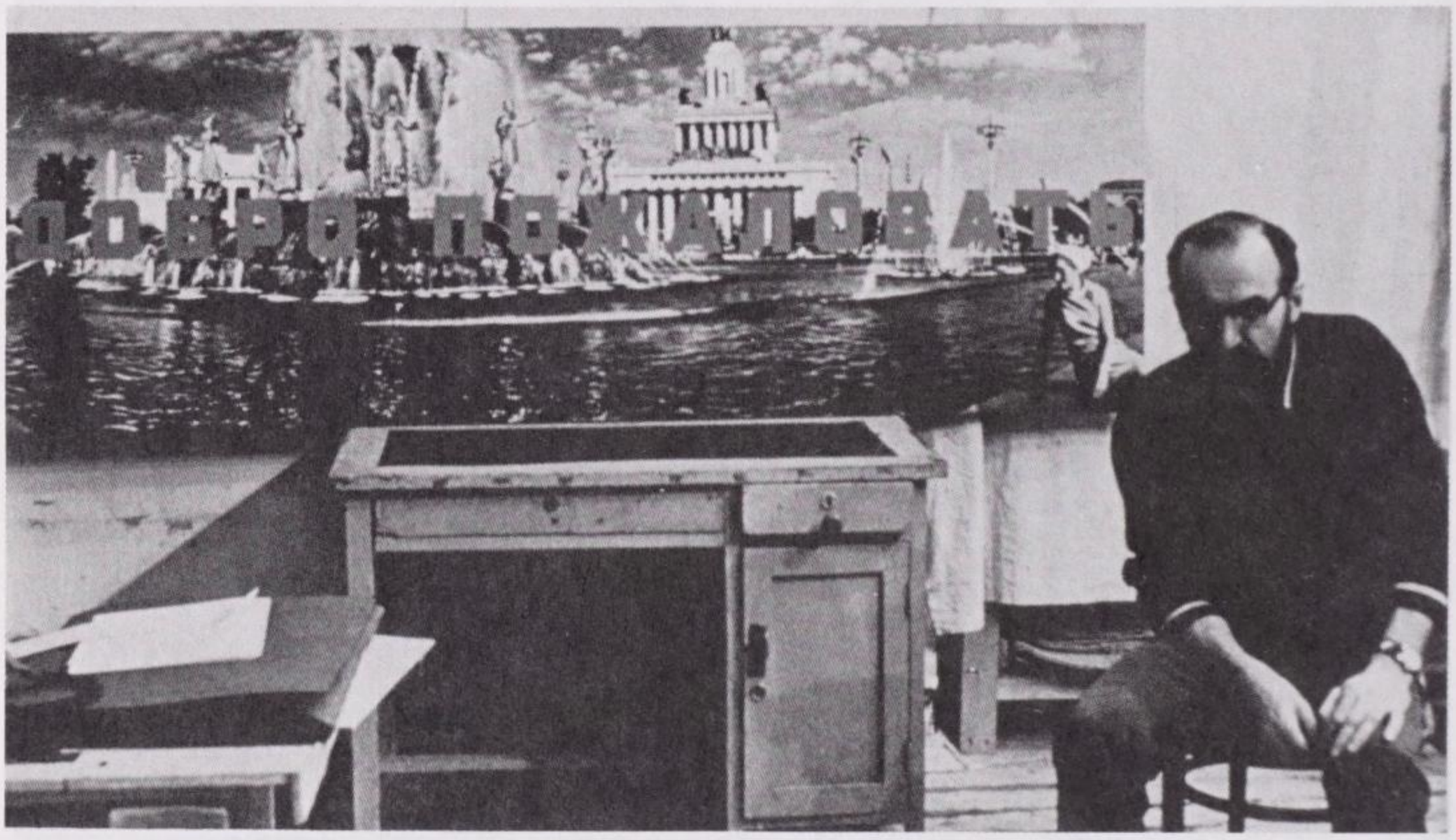
Komar and Melamid, *Passport from Trans State*, Moscow, 1977. Photo by Eeva-Inkeri, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.



Komar and Melamid, *Visit to the Museum of the Revolution,* oil on canvas, 72" x 54"; 183 cm x 137 cm, NY 1981-82. Photo by D. James Dee, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.

Soviet world, so wrapped up in ironic, love-hate commentary upon it, that their break with an environment so natural to them inevitably had a powerful effect on their work and views. In 1978 these two political artists moved to the USA, a country where politics is not by preference a major topic in art.

They have always been fascinated by the materialist basis needed to achieve fame, either after the example set by Soviet artist Ilya Glazunov or the skyrocket career of American Julian Schnabel. Seeing artistic talent as a phenomenon is quite antagonistic to their casuistic approach.* Reverting to their nostalgic, Soviet heritage, as if they were trained lawyers they have begun to parody the models of Stalinist classical paintings, mixed with various popular western styles. Their choice of eclecticism as an artistic medium provides them with sufficient flexibility to follow any and every turn of fashion, especially now that innovative approaches do not play so important a role. Komar and Melamid's exhibitions, devoted to Soviet subjects, have been successful, both



Eric Bulatov at his studio, Moscow, 1978. In the background his painting *Welcome*, Moscow, 1973, oil on canvas. Photo by Igor Makarevich.

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* Quotations from their interview in *The New York Times*, Jan. 29, 1984: "Malevich was an idiot;' "Pollock defaced museums with his art as graffiti artists defaced buildings."

with critics and public. They create a Soviet Disneyland geared just for the American market. Nevertheless, the art of two sharp-eyed Russian artists looks original compared to the other mannerists of contemporary postmodernism.

Komar and Melamid are artists of a particular context, closely linked to time, place and politics. However, as history shows, works of art are rated by their extratemporal qualities, upon which also the archetypical links of human culture are based. Their close friend and critic Jamey Gambrell writes of them: "In their own specifically dialectical way they are a clarion call to possess and understand history, rather than to repeat it, like so many unwitting sheep . . . They do not take cover in the frayed garments of modernism." *

In this context it is worthwhile to mention another realist painter who lives in Moscow. Eric Bulatov (born 1933) started an extensive series of paintings with Soviet imagery at the beginning of the seventies. His style has a classical quality at the same level portraying strong ideological (never straightforward or satiric) images of the Russian reality which he himself is a part of. Leading a rather secluded life, Eric approaches life philosophically.

Once he wrote in his article: "When they say that in contemporary America the dollar has devoured art, I always want to add that it devoured that art which itself tried to devour the dollar. Any society devours art that places itself in a common space with the society. It doesn't matter how this is done, whether through the dollar or through ideology. Every society simply uses the means at its disposal." * *

In recent years, *samizdat* performance documentation has circulated in Moscow. The first works of this type were made by Lev Nussberg (born 1937), organizer of the kinetic group *Movement*. Full of original drawings, collages and texts, his book *Zhiznj, Dvizheniye, Budushcheye* (Life, Movement, Future, 1964) has quite a seditious history. It illegally crossed the Soviet border four times, back and forth, and was included in different exhibitions and publications in the West. An energetic leader, Lev Nussberg kept his art brigade in full subordination. In the sixties, with his group Movement, he staged several complex kinetic environments with performances in Moscow, Leningrad and along the Black Sea coast; the pieces include *Metamorphosis, Transformations, Sea Monsters* and *The Extraterrestrials,* among others.

His futurologic projects, as he calls them, which are close to the ideas of Russian Constructivists Pevsner and Gabo, were invisibly brought into harmony with official technological development. So all these big environmental projects of his were built with state money. Nussberg predicts that art will

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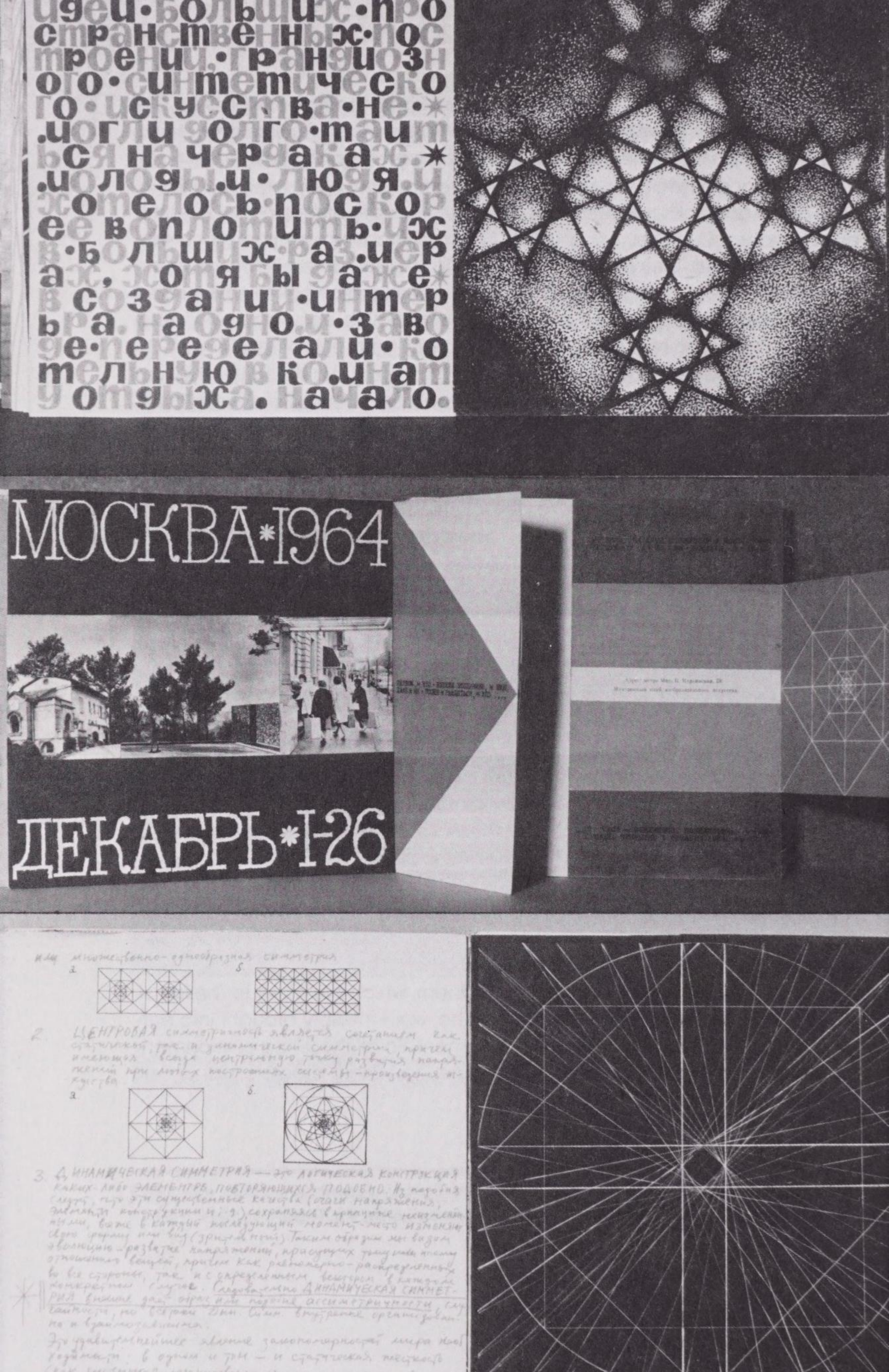
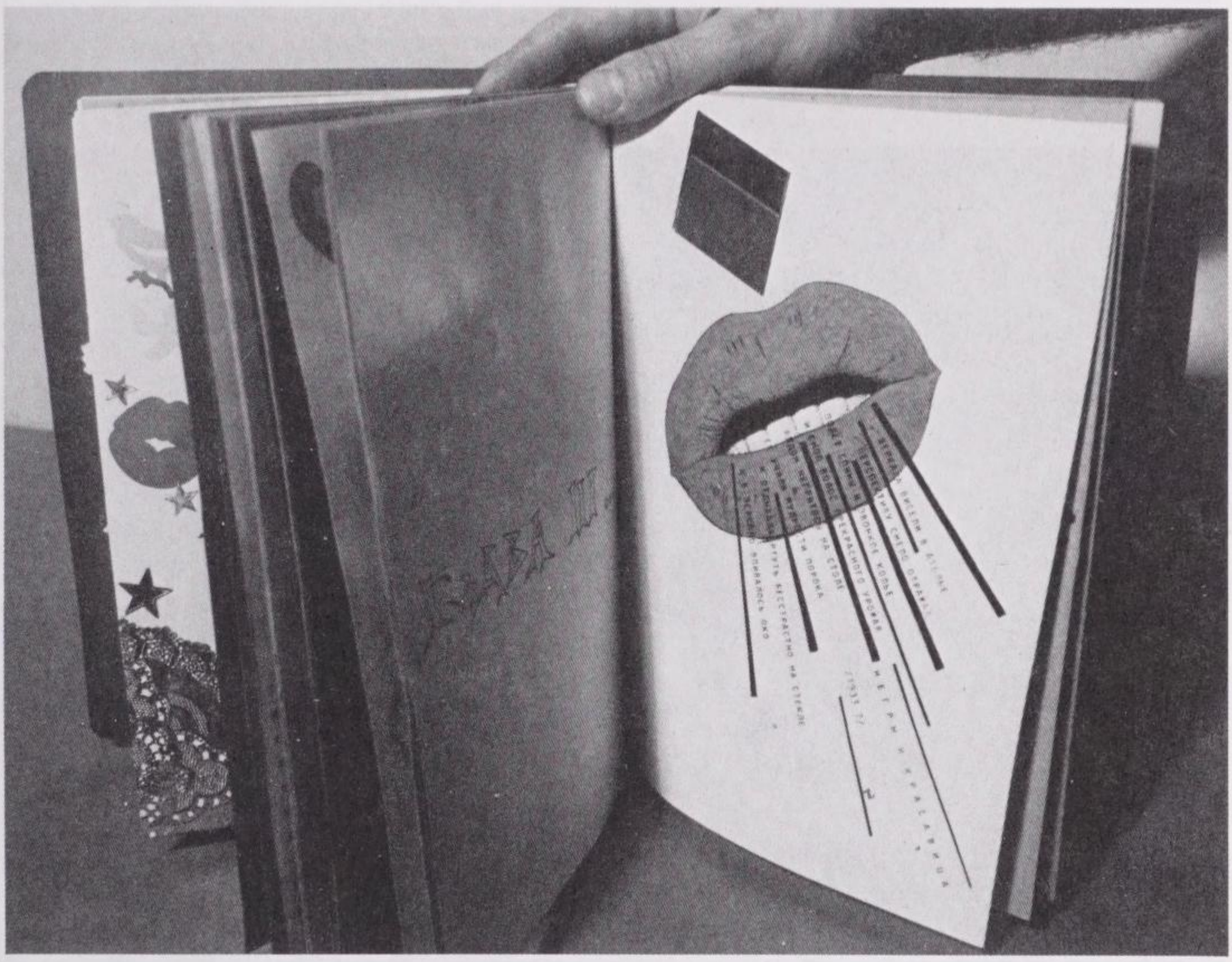
* "Vitaly Komar–Alexander Melamid," by Jamey Gambrell, *A-Ya*, #5, 1983

* * Eric Bulatov, "Malevich's Relationship of Space," *A-Ya*, #5, 1983


идей·больших·про
странственных·пос
троений·грандиозн
ого·синтетическо
го·искусства·не·
могли долго·таит
ься на чердаках.
молодым·людям
хотелось·поскор
ее воплотить·их
в·больших·размер
ах, хотя бы даже
в создании·интер
ьра. на одном·заво
де·переделали·ко
тельную в комнат
у отдыха. начало.
МОСКВА*1964
ДЕКАБРЬ*1-26
или множественно-однообразная симметрия
а
б
2. ЦЕНТРОВАЯ симметричность является сочетанием как статической, так и динамической симметрии, причем имеющая всегда центральную точку развития напряжений при любых построениях системы — произведения искусства
а
б
3. ДИНАМИЧЕСКАЯ СИММЕТРИЯ — это логическая конструкция каких-либо элементов, повторяющихся подобно. Из подобия следует, что эти существенные качества (очаги напряжения, элементы конструкции и т. д.) сохраняясь в принципе неизменными, всегда в каждый последующий момент — место изменяют свою форму или вид (зрительный). Таким образом мы видим эволюцию — развитие напряжений, присущих тому или иному отношению вещей, причем как равномерно-распределенных во все стороны, так и с определенным вектором в каждом конкретном случае. Следовательно ДИНАМИЧЕСКАЯ СИММЕТРИЯ внешне дает образ или подобие ассиметричности, случайности, но всегда Дин. Симм. внутренне организованно и взаимозависимо.
Это удивительнейшее явление закономерностей мира необходимости: в одном и том — и статическая жесткость

ultimately create artificial environments, "visions from past to future," that he has been elaborating for more than 20 years.

In 1981, with Galina Goloveiko, he put together an unusual publication, all 150 copies of which were handmade. This was *From the Unpublished Letters of K.S. Malevich (1878-1935) to L.V. Nussberg (1937-1998)*, an imaginary correspondence with Malevich together with drawings and projects. Later, with the assistance of his wife Galina Goloveiko, he did another book-assemblage, *Titjki Rodiny Burliuka Davida* (Tits of Burliuk David's Motherland) based on a collec-

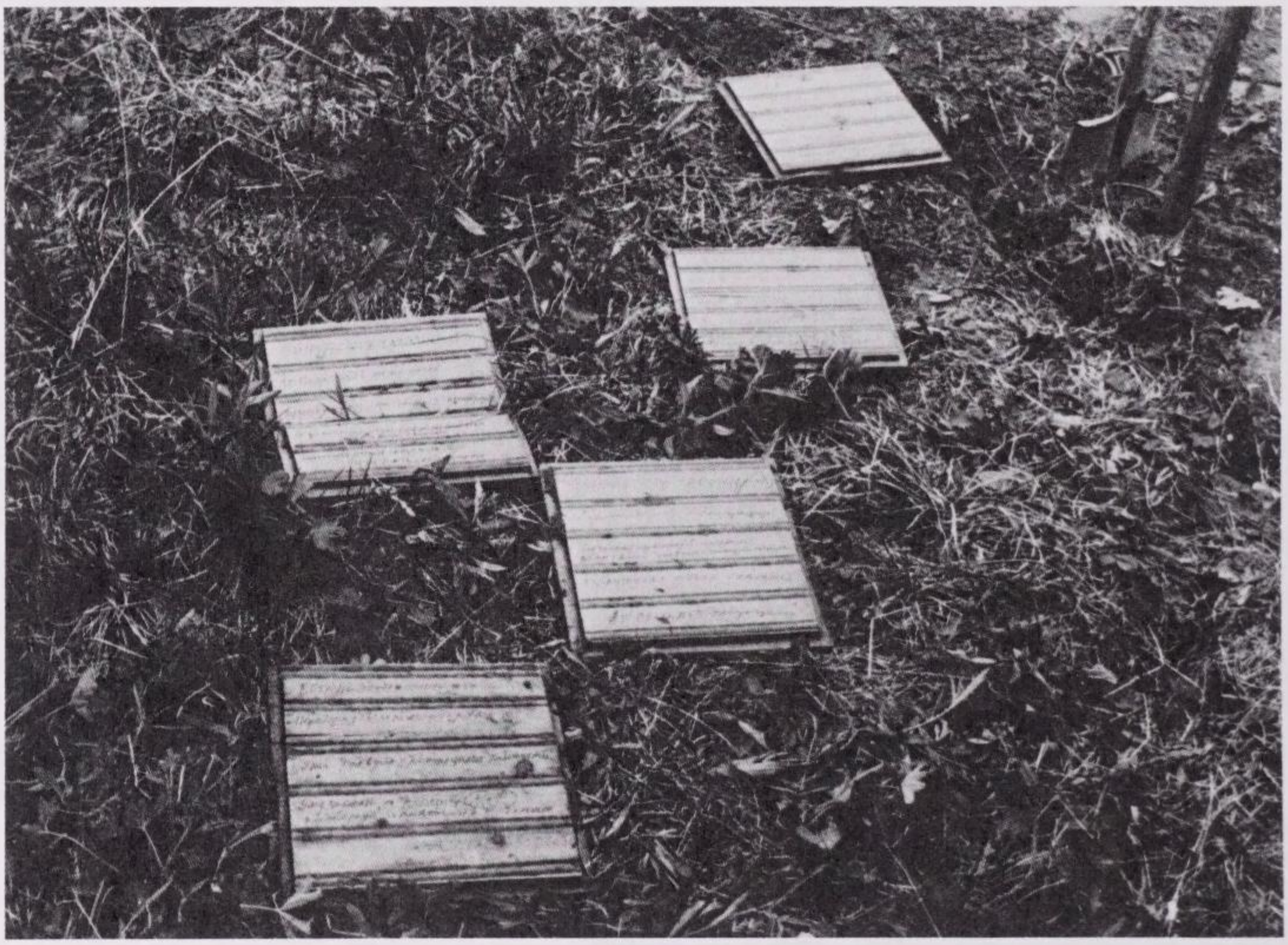


Lev Nussberg, *Titjki Rodiny Burliuka Davida* (Tits of Burliuk David's Motherland), Connecticut, 1982, 11½" x 9"; 29 cm x 23 cm, drawings, collages, poems by David Burliuk.

◀ **Lev Nussberg, pages from his book *Zhiznj, Dvizheniye, Budushcheye* (Life, Movement, Future), Moscow, 1964, 8⅝" x 8⅝"; 21.5 cm x 21.5 cm, original drawings, collages, texts.**

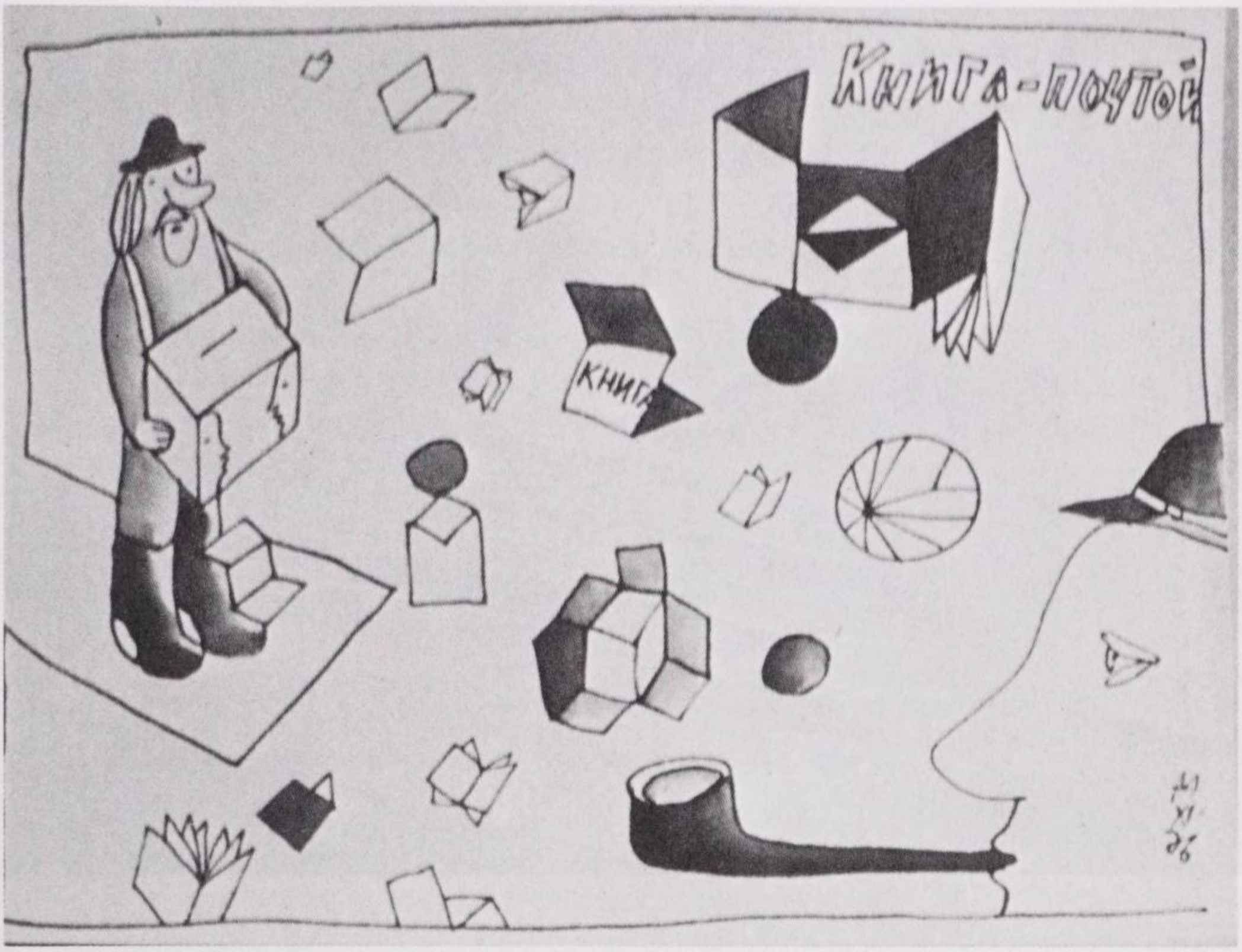
tion of poems by the Russian Futurist David Burliuk, edited by Konstantin Kuzminsky. Despite the range of new printing technologies available in the West where Nussberg has lived since 1976, he chose a traditional method of *samizdat*, affirming his continuing vital influence on Russian artists.

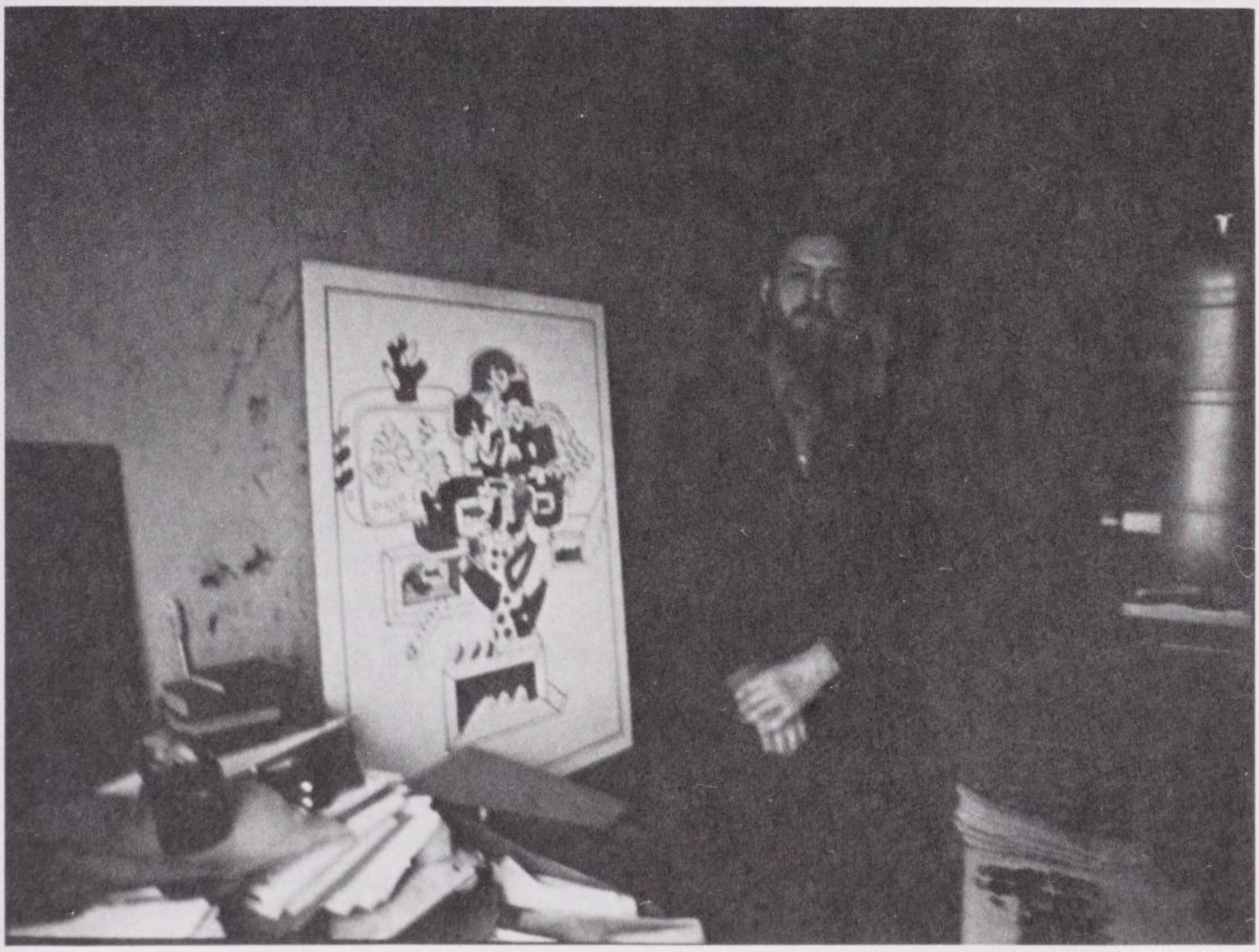
The Moscow *Collective Actions Group* (Andrei Monastyrsky, Nikita Alekseyev, Nikolai Panitkov and Goga Kizevalter) also uses books for its performances. In the winter of 1979 they organized a happening with Andrei Abramov in which the audience laid out brightly colored pages on snowdrifts, thus creating a vivid composition in a snow-covered field near Moscow. Each spectator-participant took an original book away with him. For the international exhibition entitled *Other Child Book* in Warsaw, Monastyrsky and Abramov pro-

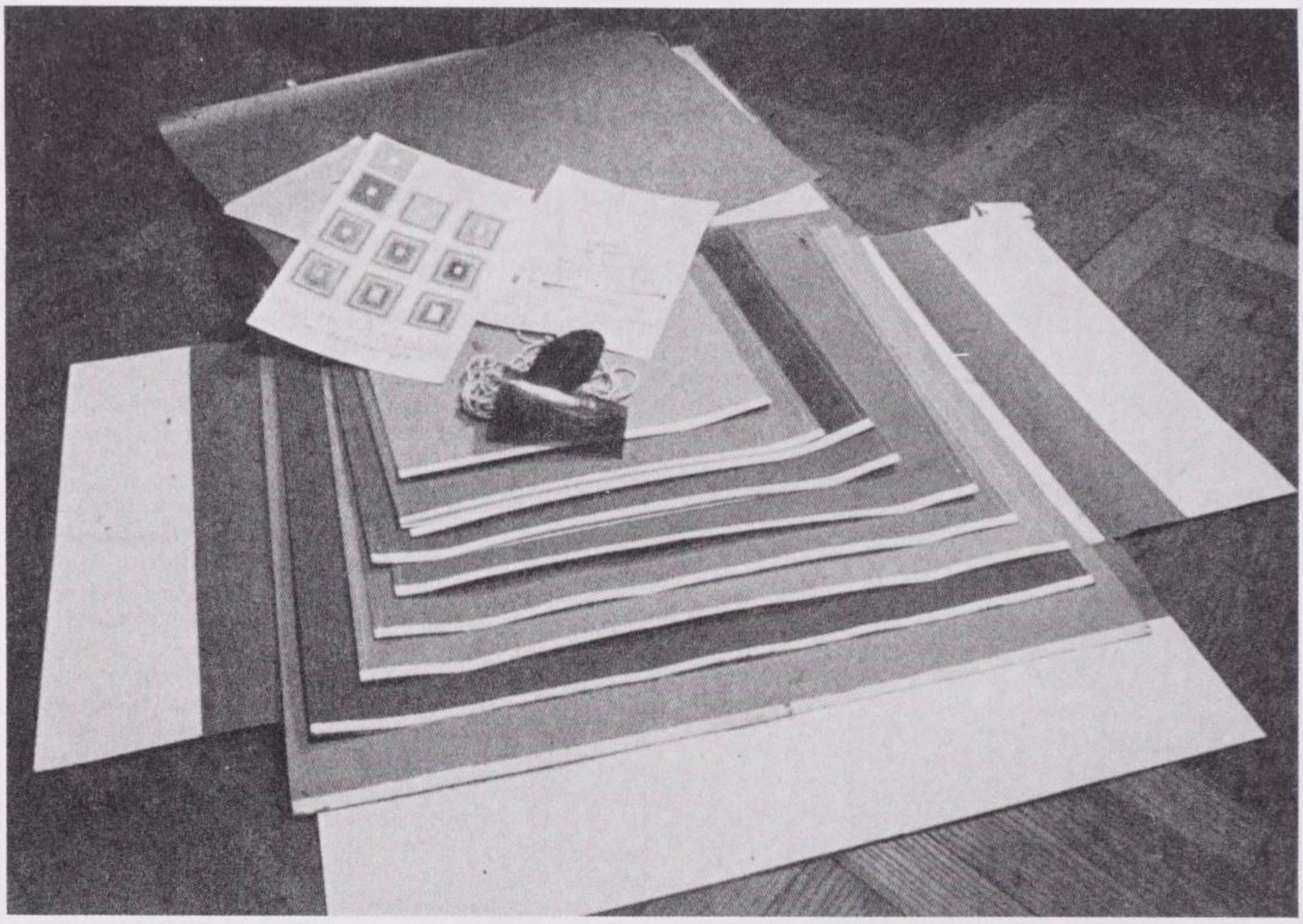


Nikolai Panitkov, performance with plates dug up from the ground, Moscow, 1981.

Andrei Abramov, from the series *Proekty Knig* (Projects of Books), 1976, Moscow, 14⅜ x 20⅛″; 36.5 cm x 51 cm, markers and water colors. Below: Andrei Abramov at his studio, Moscow 1978. Photos by the Gerlovins. ▶


Книга-почтой
КНИГА





Andrei Abramov and Andrei Monastyrsky, *Lichnaya i Nyeobyknovennaya Kniga* (Personal and Unusual Book), Moscow, 1978. Photo by the Gerlovins.

duced a folder of sixteen sealed envelopes with the instructions "Open in the first year," ". . . in the second year," and so on, up to sixteen. As well as group works, all the members publish their own independent book objects.

Andrei Abramov (born 1951) always works with series of drawings collected in albums which often have literary implications, like "Solar Eclipse," "Echo" (1976), "Projects," "Strange Circumstances" and "Yellow, Red, Blue" (1977-79).* His text shows a morphological play like that of his favorite poet Velimir Khlebnikov. The commentary is always interwoven with his colorful visual compositions. Very asocial and impractical himself, Andrei is always deeply involved with his own utopian dreams and monumental projects, that we doubt

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* "Solnechnoye Zatmeniye," "Ekho," "Proecty," "Strannyye Obstoyateljstva" and "Zheltyi, Krasnyi, Goluboi."

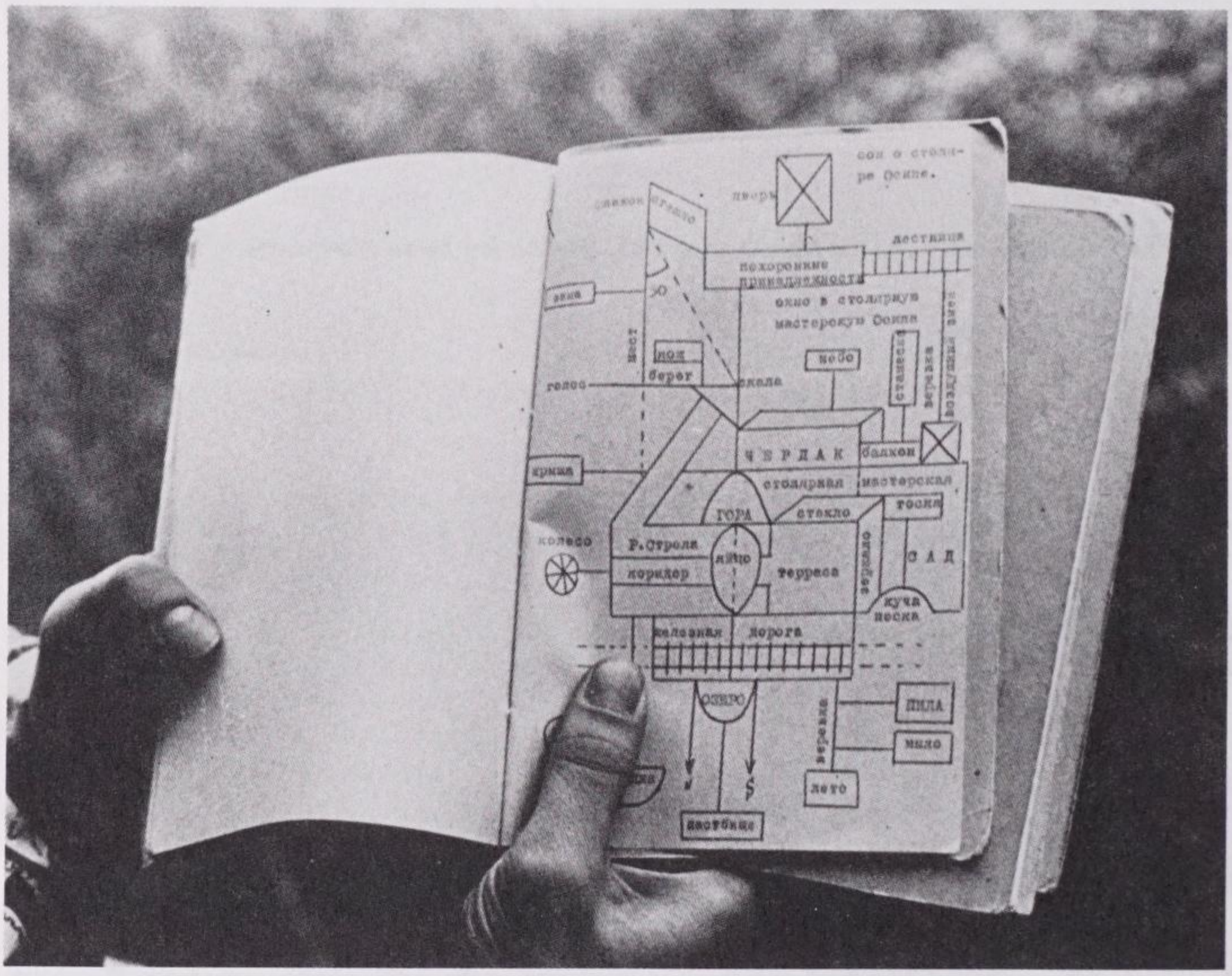
could even be finished partly because of his own nature. Once, before our departure from Moscow, we showed his drawings to Ilya Kabakov, hoping that he could help our friend. Strangely enough, the works evoked displeasure in Ilya. Both artists had touched nearly the same spiritual subject with some esthetic similarity, but from an opposite attitude in their work. Kabakov's pieces are deeply thought out, logical and conceptual. This contrasts with Abramov's spontaneous feelings and pseudologic.

We met the poet Andrei Monastyrsky (born 1949, real name Sumnin) in 1969 when he wore a long white scarf like the symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont and led an extremely active bohemian life. At the end of the sixties, he began to write surrealistic poetry which he accompanied with his own squiggly, jelly fish-like drawings, the cycle which he completed in *Bezkonechnoye Chteniye* (Endless Reading), 1972. Originally, he intended to work on this book

Andrei Monastyrsky, near Moscow, 1981. Photo by Igor Makarevich.

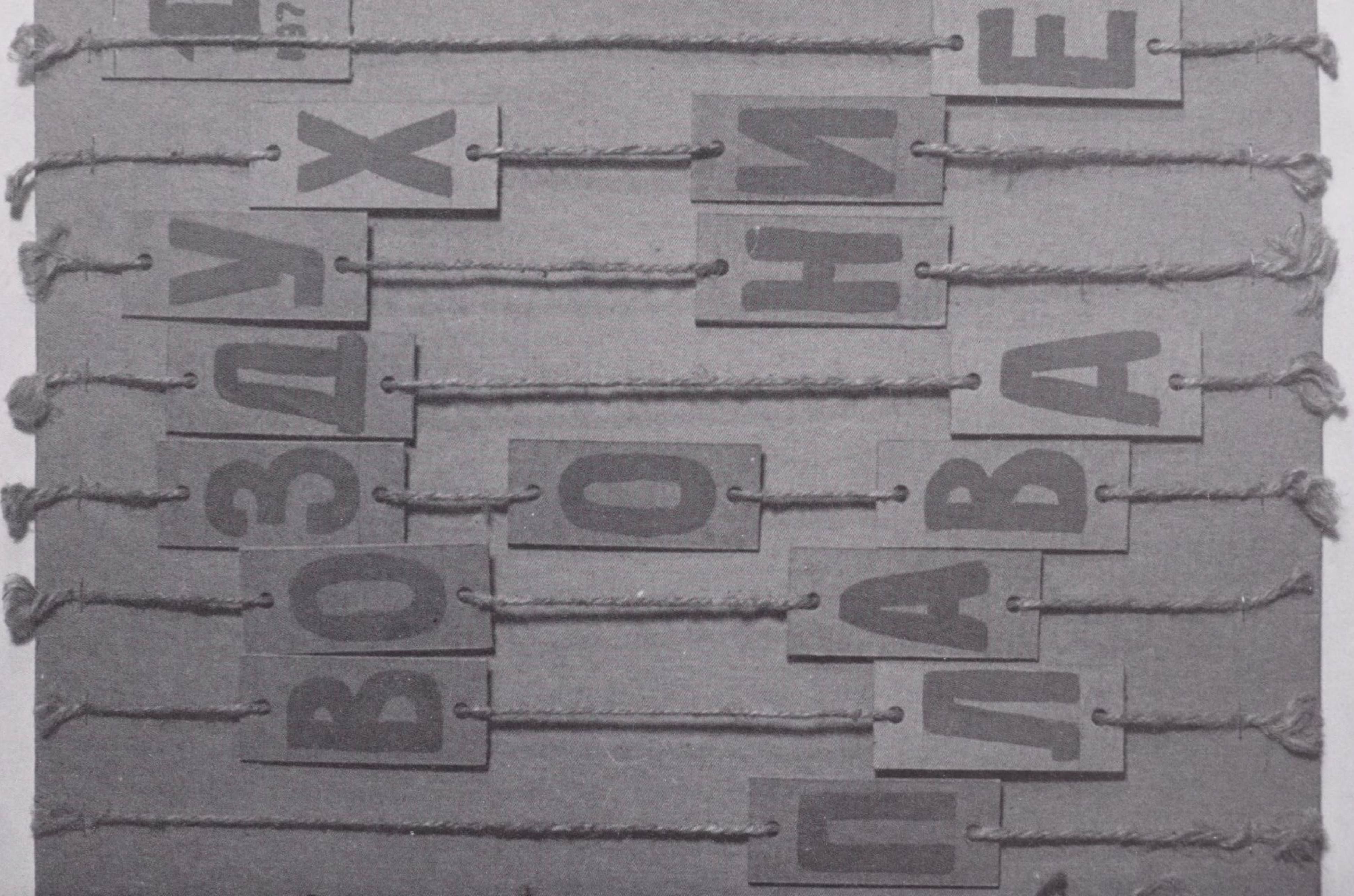
for the rest of his life. A year later, his long form transformed into short poems and linguistic experiments, which he developed into a series of graphic conceptual books.

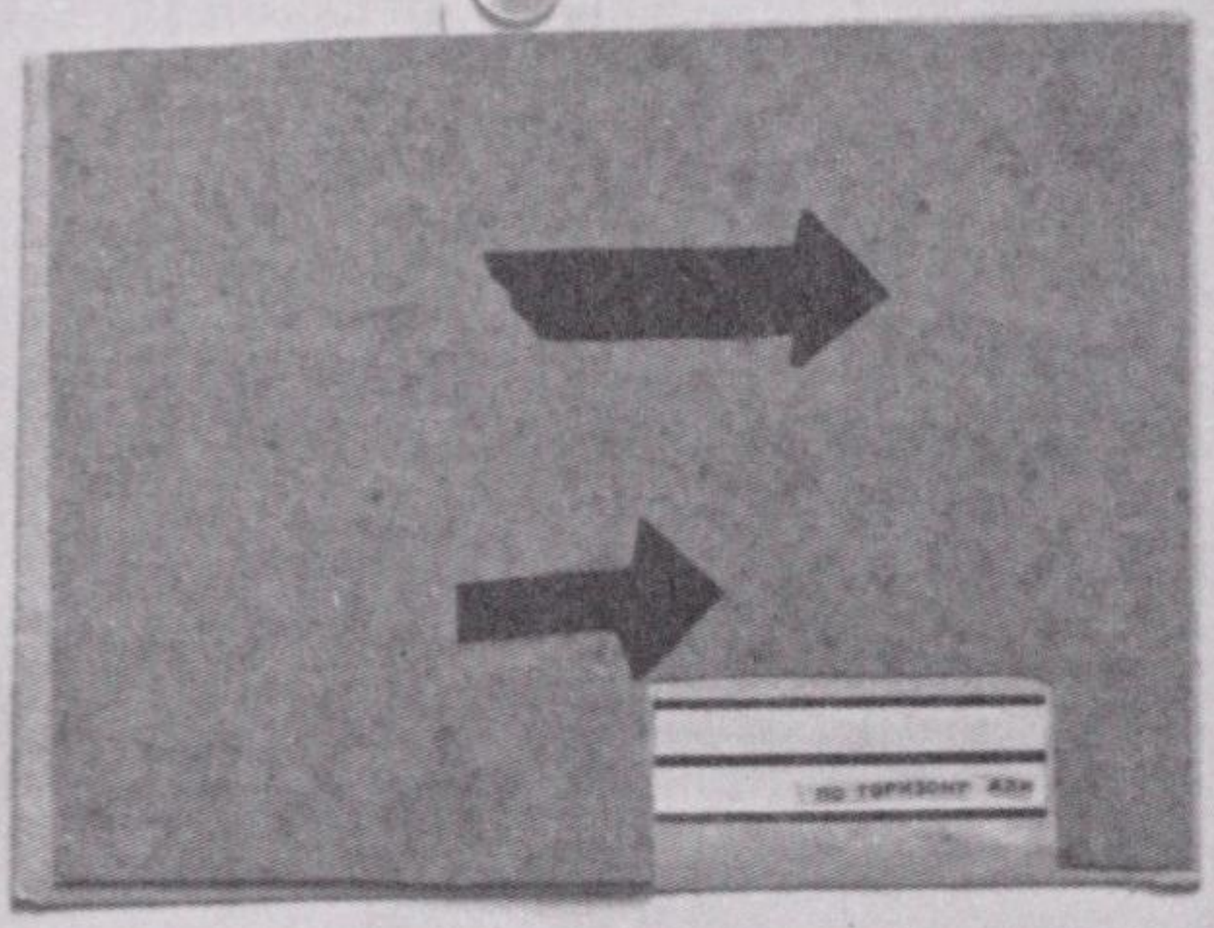
Andrei Monastyrsky liked to express his poetic feelings with his own made-up esoteric words such as *nedbennostj* something between "imperishable" and "wakeful". He styled himself Minister of Life. One popular entertainment in our circle was a game called *Burime*, which requires various poets and artists to compose collective poetry. Each participant writes two lines after



Andrei Monastyrsky, Collected Visual Poems, Moscow, 1975. Photo by the Gerlovins.

Pages from the assembling *Vozdukhoplavaniye* (Aeronautic), Moscow, 1973, 19" x 14"; 48 cm x 30.5 cm. Cover by Valery Gerlovin, cardboard, tempera; Lev Rubinshtein, assemblage; Andrei Monastyrsky, markers; Irina Gerlovina, woodcut stamps; Nikita Alekseyev, water color.

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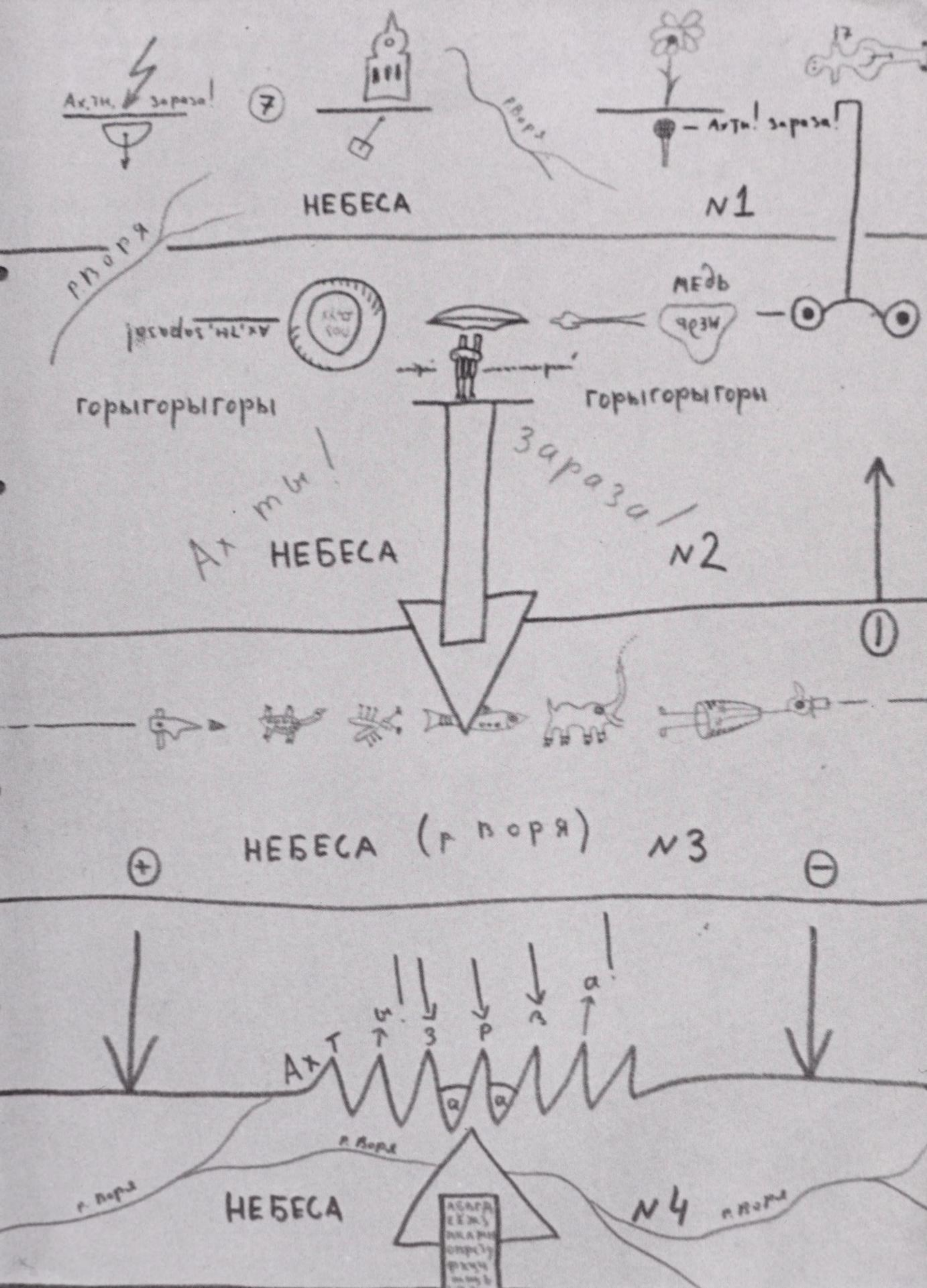
Лева



Ах, ты, зараза!
7
р. Воря
— Ах ты! зараза!
НЕБЕСА
N1
р. Воря
Ах, ты, зараза!
МЕДЬ
МЕДЬ
горы горы горы
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Ах ты!
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N2
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N3
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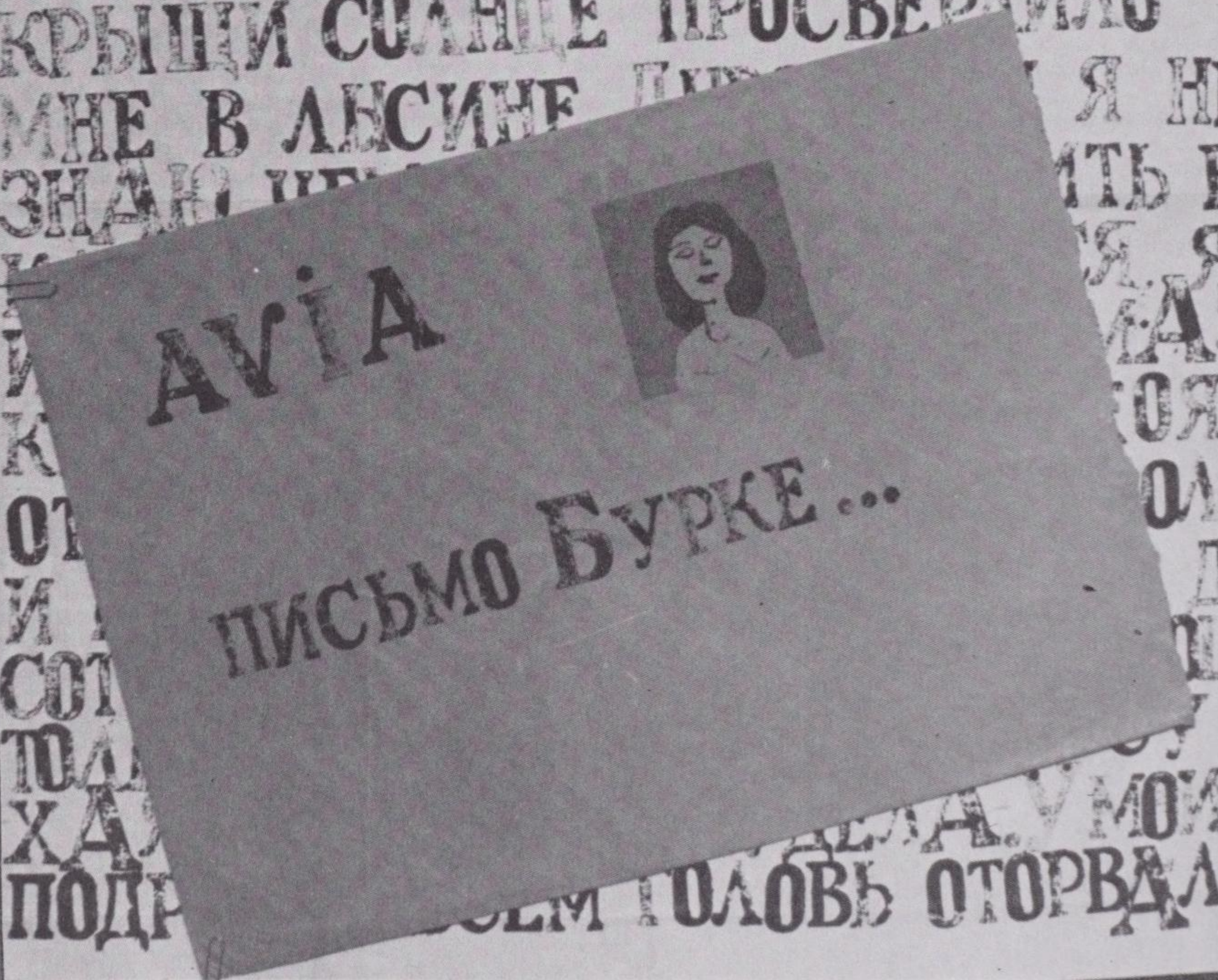
Ах ты! зараза!
р. Воря
р. Воря
НЕБЕСА
N4
р. Воря

ЗДРАВСТВУИ МОЯ БУРКА!

СЕЙЧАС Я В СТЕПЯХ КАЗАХСТАНА. У НАС ВЕТРЫ СДУВАЮТ ЛЮДЕЙ ВМЕСТЕ С ОДЕ ДОЙ. ЖАЛКО ТОЛЬКО ЧТО КРЫ ЩА НОЧЬЮ КУДА-ТО ДЕЛОСЬ... ИЗ-ЗА НОЧНОГО ИСЧЕЗНОВЕНИЯ КРЫШИ СОЛНЦЕ ПРОСВЕРДИЛО МНЕ В ЛЫСИНЕ ... Я НЕ ЗНАЮ ... ИТЬ Е ... Я ... ОТ ... ОЛ И ... ДО СОТ ... ТОЛ ... ХА ... ПОДР ... ОЕМ ГОЛОВЬ ОТОРВАЛО



AVIA

ПИСЬМО БУРКЕ...

Никита Алексеев: „Квадратинга на достоинства Воздухоплавания"

I САМОЛЕТ=УПРАВЛЯЕМОЕ ТЕЛО

⇓

АЭРОСТАТ=СВОБОДНО ДВИЖ. ТЕЛО

⇓

АЭРОСТАТ ЛУЧШЕ САМОЛЕТА

IV

seeing only one previous line written by another. These evenings represented a creative atmosphere typical for the time. Documental conversation of similar poetic games at artist Andrei Demykin's kitchen was included in Rimma Gerlovina's visual novel *Sle*, 1972, typed under different color carbon paper. After our departure, Andrei Monastyrsky inherited our whole collection of such collaborative poems.

Later Andrei began to make objects designed to be manipulated by spectators. Monastyrsky created *Elementarnaya Poeziya Nomer 9–Kucha* (Elementary Poetry No. 9–Heap), 1976, a work completed by the audience. The author, for his part, included instructions on how "to feed the pile" with different objects, writing down the necessary data in an accompanying ledger.

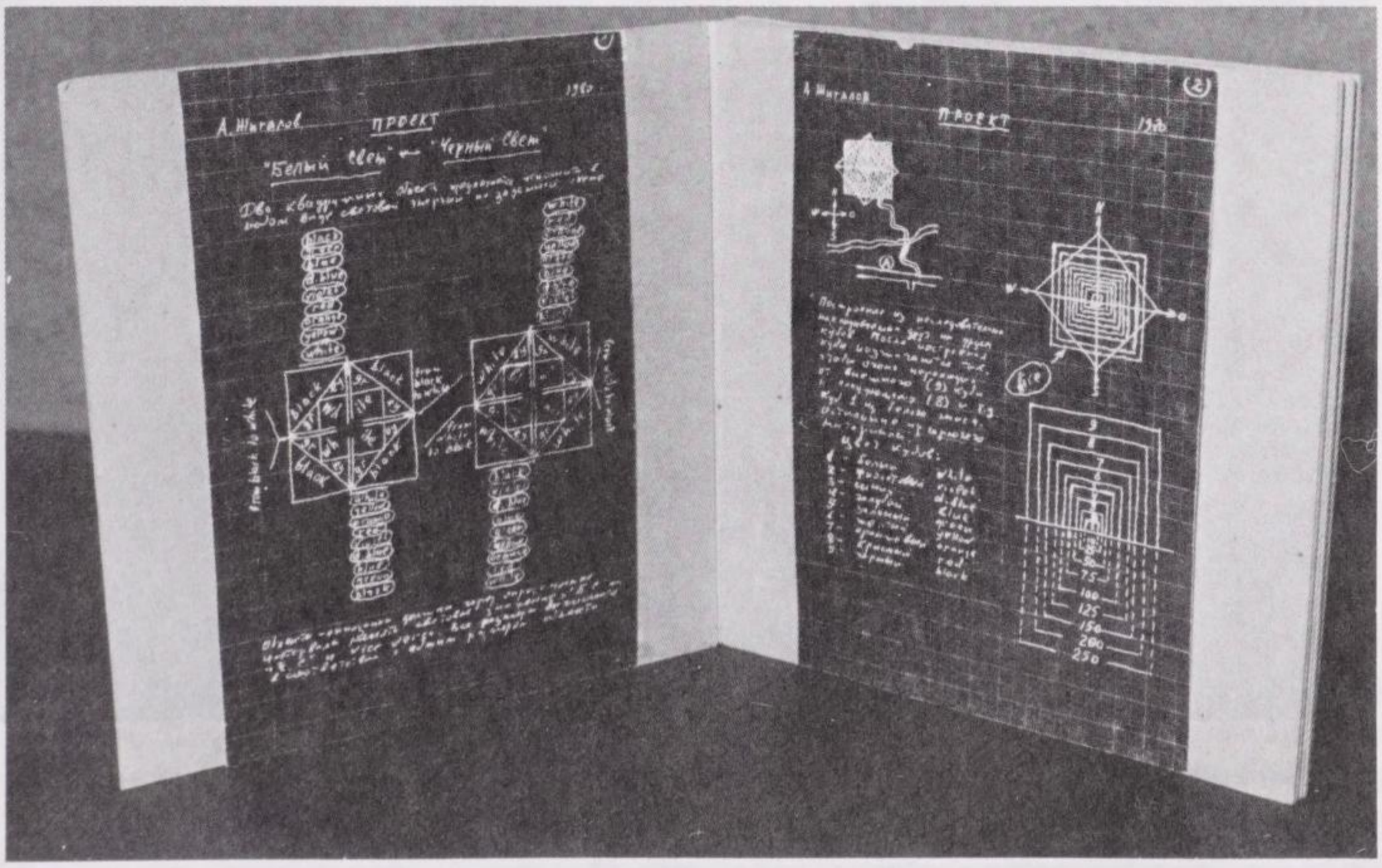
In the middle of the seventies he organized *Collective Actions Group* which usually did prolonged performances, with little to no events taking place, in the open air outside Moscow. Spatial exoteric commentaries that explain and are, in a sense, equal to these performances have become an important genre in Monastyrsky's work. As someone by nature artistic and convivial, Monya (as his friends call him) is always ready to discuss anything under the sun, his gifted language often as varied as the ideas underlying it. In our view, he plays an important part in Moscow's artistic world. His personal charm, gift for communication, artistic curiosity and vivid talent enable him to form the center of a definite artistic group.

Nikita Alekseyev's (born 1953) mythological hero changes throughout his series of book albums, which contain texts and drawings. Many of his books are marked by a rich vocabulary. There are interesting constructive book forms. One, for example, is composed of a stack of pages half a meter thick, while another, an illustrated history of a character imagined by the author, is written on a thirty-meter-long roll of paper.

One can find similar patterns in the works of Natalia Abalakova (born 1941) and Anatoly Zhigalov (born 1941), a Moscow couple who always do documentations of their performances and multiply their editions not on a typewriter but by using photographic printing not only for images but also for handwritten texts. In 1982 they made a huge and complicated book object depicting their prolonged performances.

Elizaveta Mnatsakanova (born 1922) is a former music critic who at the beginning of the seventies developed a polyphonic system of notation for her piercingly female lyrics. Her elegant manuscript books with abstract pastel drawings are, as a rule, produced in one copy only. Her highly charged, emo-

Above: spectators looking at a book of Nikita Alekseyev, 1978, Moscow. Photo by the Gerlovins. Below: Anatoly Zhigalov, *Proekty* (Projects), Moscow, 1980, 8½ x 6⅝; 21.5 cm x 16.5 cm, multiplied by photographic medium.


А. Шиталов ПРОЕКТ
"Белый свет" — "Черный свет"
А. Шиталов
ПРОЕКТ
75
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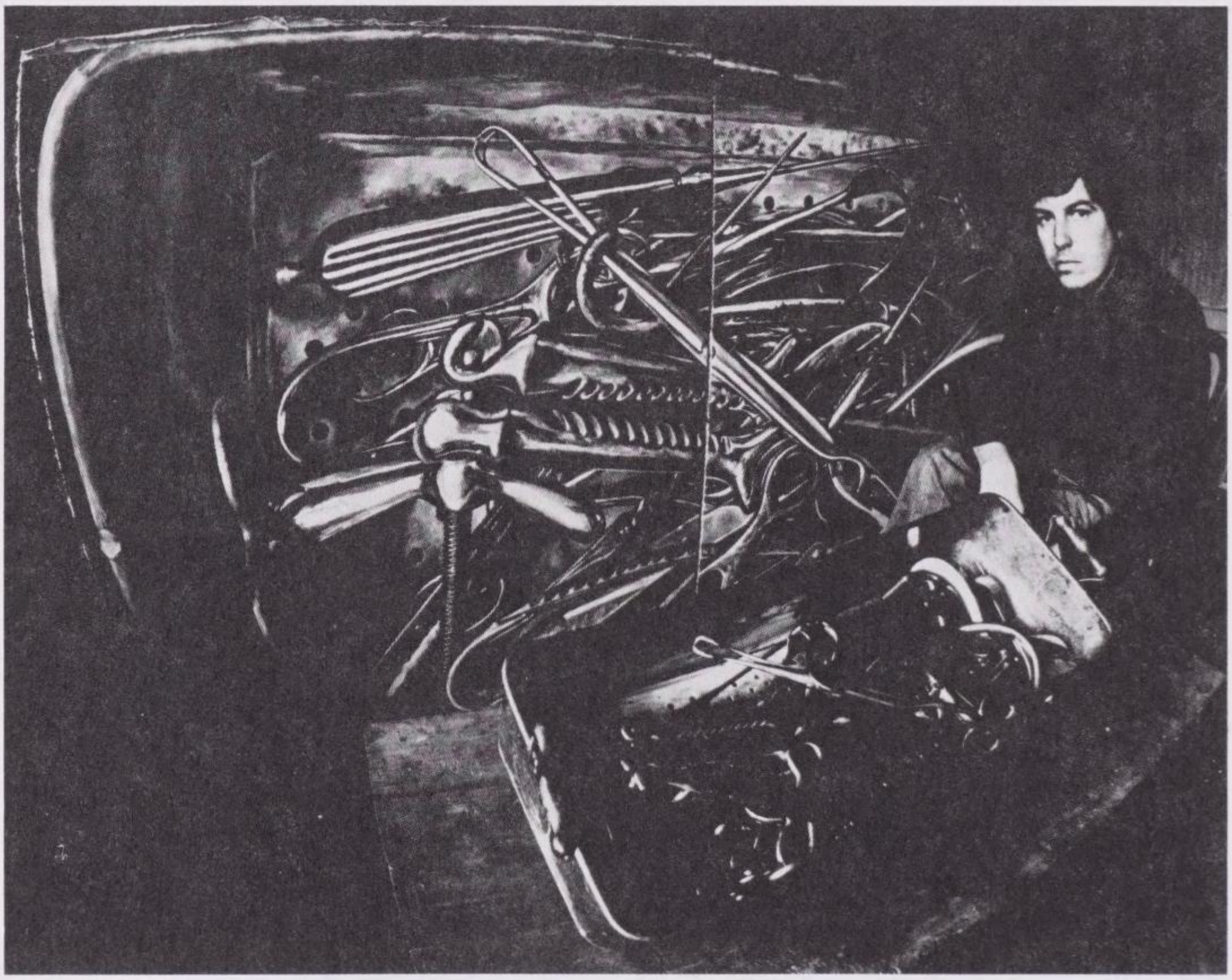
200
250

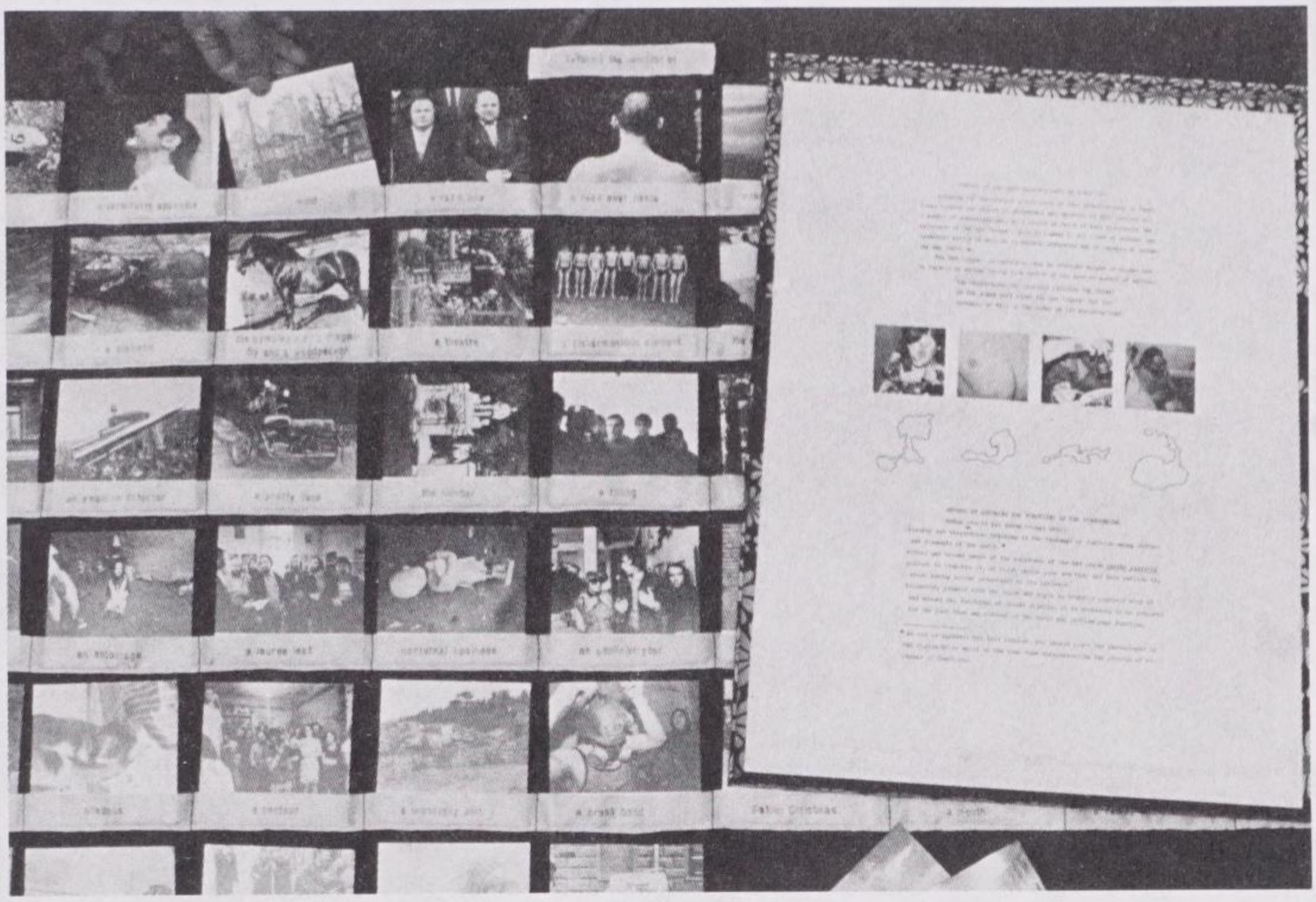
tional lyrics, written in a style current at the end of the sixties among many young poets, have hardly changed. Mnatsakanova's most valuable innovation is the musical structure of her verse and the polyphonic echo of the poet's voice. Despite the visual dissimilarity between the written form of her poetry and musical scores, when they are read we can sense space-time relationships akin to notation.

As mentioned previously, the Russian psychological outlook has had a big influence on all types of creativity. A sensitive attitude that includes the emotional marks of suffering is discernible in the works of Moscow artist Igor Makarevich (born 1943). He was a designer for several TV movies (*The Tales of Hoffman, Stories of Gogol*) and books (a series of etchings on Kafka). All his works have one and the same ultimate totality, horrifying freeze-framing. The high quality and precision of his execution is another feature of his works.

It can be seen on his large oil canvas *Death of the Communards*, 1977,



Igor Makarevich, selfportrait at his studio, Moscow, 1978.

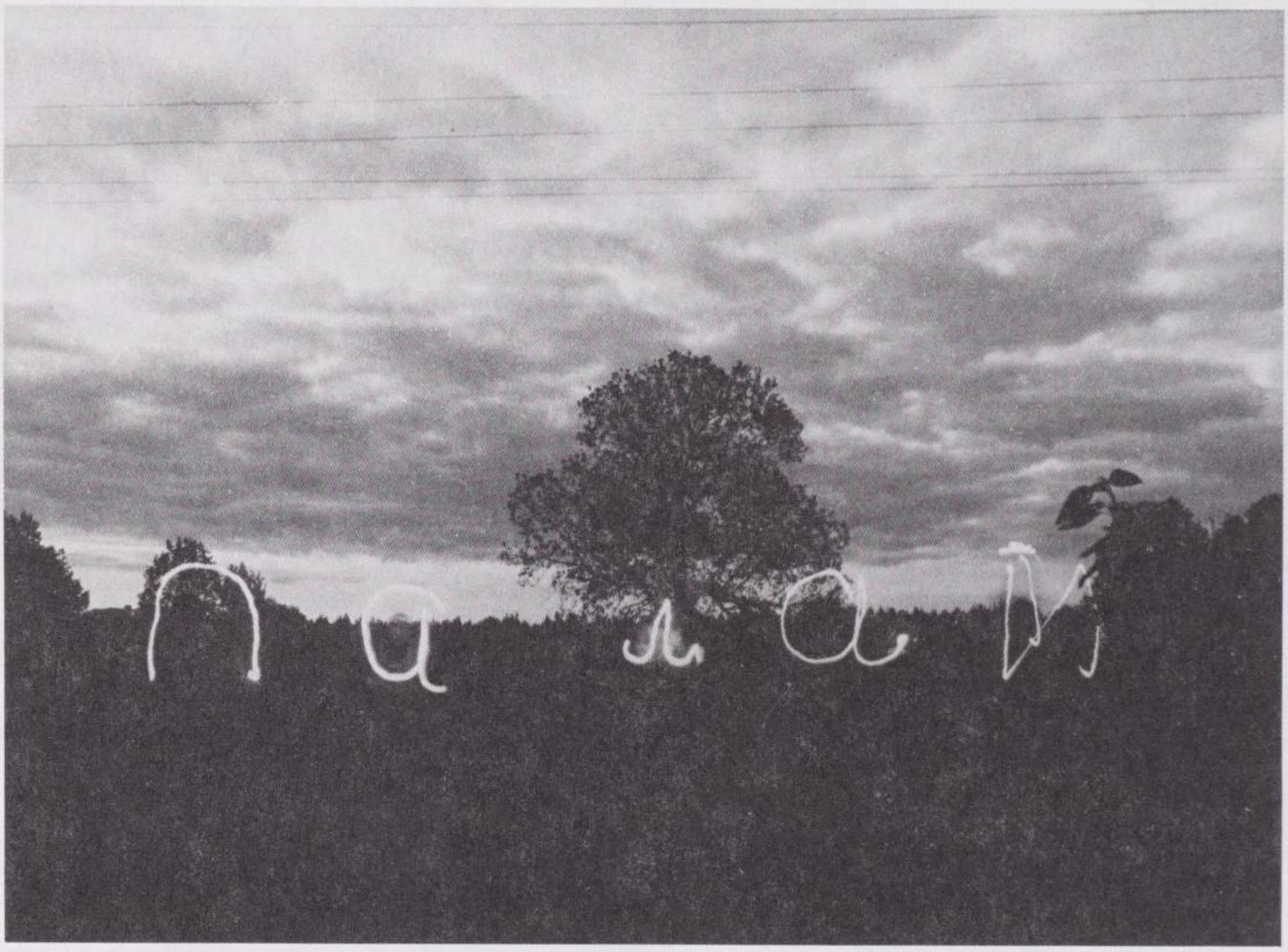


The Gerlovins and Igor Makarevich, *Theory of Free Transformation of Functions*, Moscow, 1978; fabric support with labeled pockets for 54 photo-cards, 49″ x 33″; 125 cm x 84 cm. The reader is supposed to change the arrangement of these cards. Box with the theory, 17¼″ x 22½″; 44.5 cm x 57 cm.

a large-scale hyperrealistic copy of the famous photograph of 15 dead French communards in their coffins, or his paintings of abortion instruments. His photo series *Changes* (1978) is self-analytic research into his own face and body which gradually disappear under a gypsum mask. As he comments in his *Stratigraphic Structures*, Moscow, 1977: "Joining the initial and terminal elements humanizes the passion and calls for estrangement . . . devoid of any external attractiveness of perspective on deromanticized reality."

Igor Makarevich, 2 pages from his accordion book *Vybor Tseli* (Choice of Aim), Moscow, 1976, 13½″ x 9⅜″; 34.5 cm x 24 cm. Moving figures correspond to the moving dice. Photographs taken during the unofficial exhibition show the following artists in the left hand photo (from left to right): Valery Gerlovin, Sergei Shablavin, Rimma Gerlovina, Igor Shelkovsky, Alexander Yulikov, Leonid Sokov, Ivan Chuikov. ▶

His fold-out book *Vybor Tseli* (Choice of Aim, 1976) is a series of photo-mutations of a fortune-telling bone contrasted with changes in a group photograph of Moscow artists. In 1979 this book was exhibited in the video section at the Pompidou Center, because of the hidden relationships of its moving elements. During our last years in Moscow, Igor Makarevich and his wife, the sculptor Elena Yelagina, were our closest friends. We always valued Igor's ex-



Igor Makarevich, *Lalai*, slow-speed photo series, Pogorelovo, 1981.

treme peceptiveness, altruism and keen insight, despite his changeless apocalyptic conclusions. Once he said that for him creativity is a search for truth and that an artist's main purpose is to approximate sincerity to the maximum, when artistry is connected to morality.

Together we did several book objects: *Trees, or How to Photograph Dreams* and *Theory of Transformations of Functions* (1977), based on his

photography. Our environmental piece "Wedding Party" includes his photography as well, and shows the social structure of a Russian wedding with keen observation and black humor.

In 1981 Igor Makarevich did a slow-speed photo action: every participant wrote a letter by flashlight in a country field at night. Altogether, they produced different words like *Lalai* (name of an old man who had recently passed

Anatol Ur, *Bookshelf Theater,* NY, 1981, handwritten text on paper, assemblage, 12" x 14" x 9"; 30.5 cm x 35.5 cm x 23 cm.

away in the nearest village), *da* (Yes) and *aktsiya* (action).

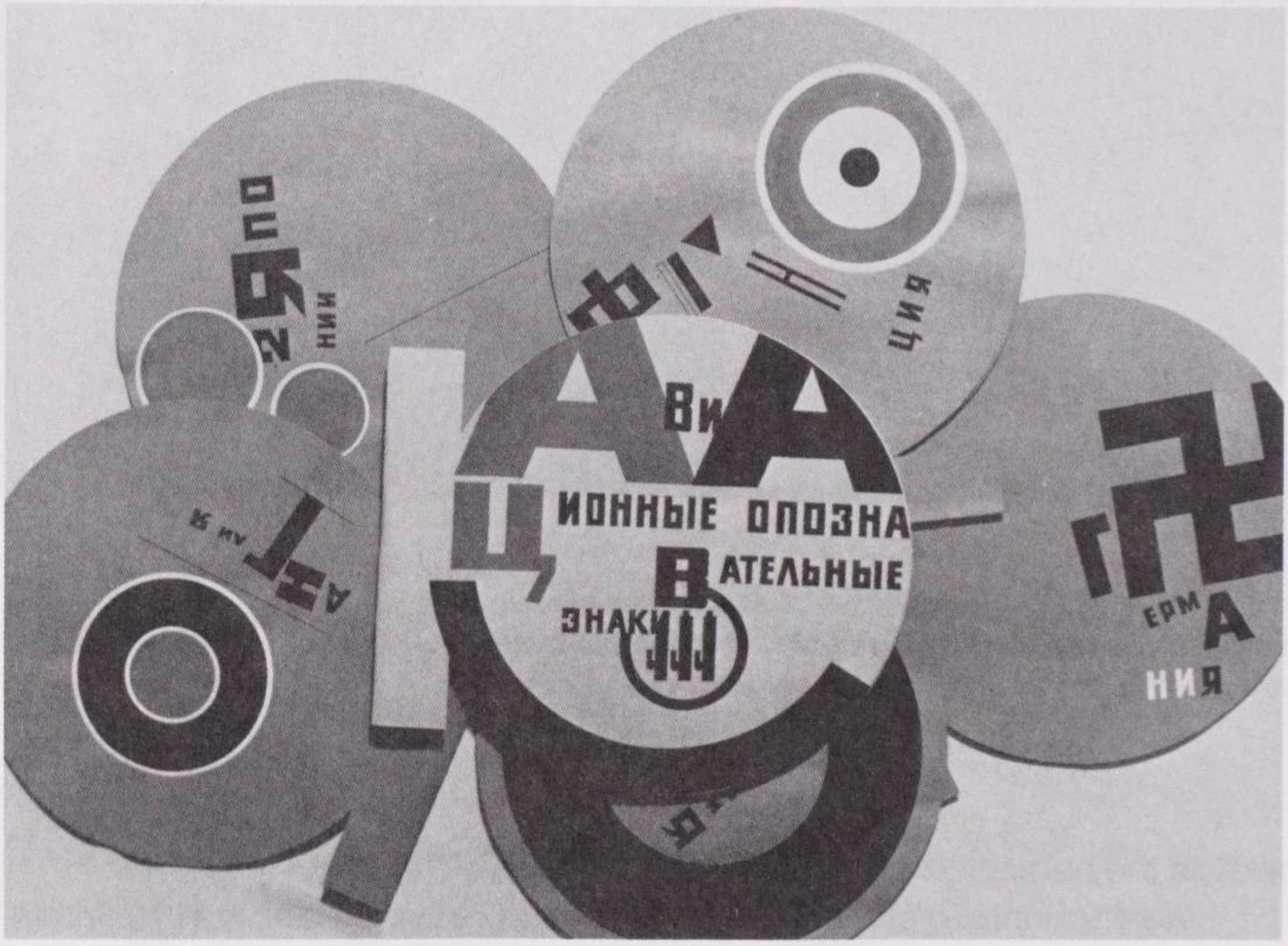
We encounter a completely opposite aggresive sensibility in the works of another artist who now lives in New York. Anatol Ur works rather obsessively with his face, putting it on every one of his paper sculptures. *A Book for Cutting Up and Tearing Apart,* 1982, which comes complete with scissors and appropriate authorial commentary is placed at the audience's disposal and

testifies to the author's subconscious desire for destruction.

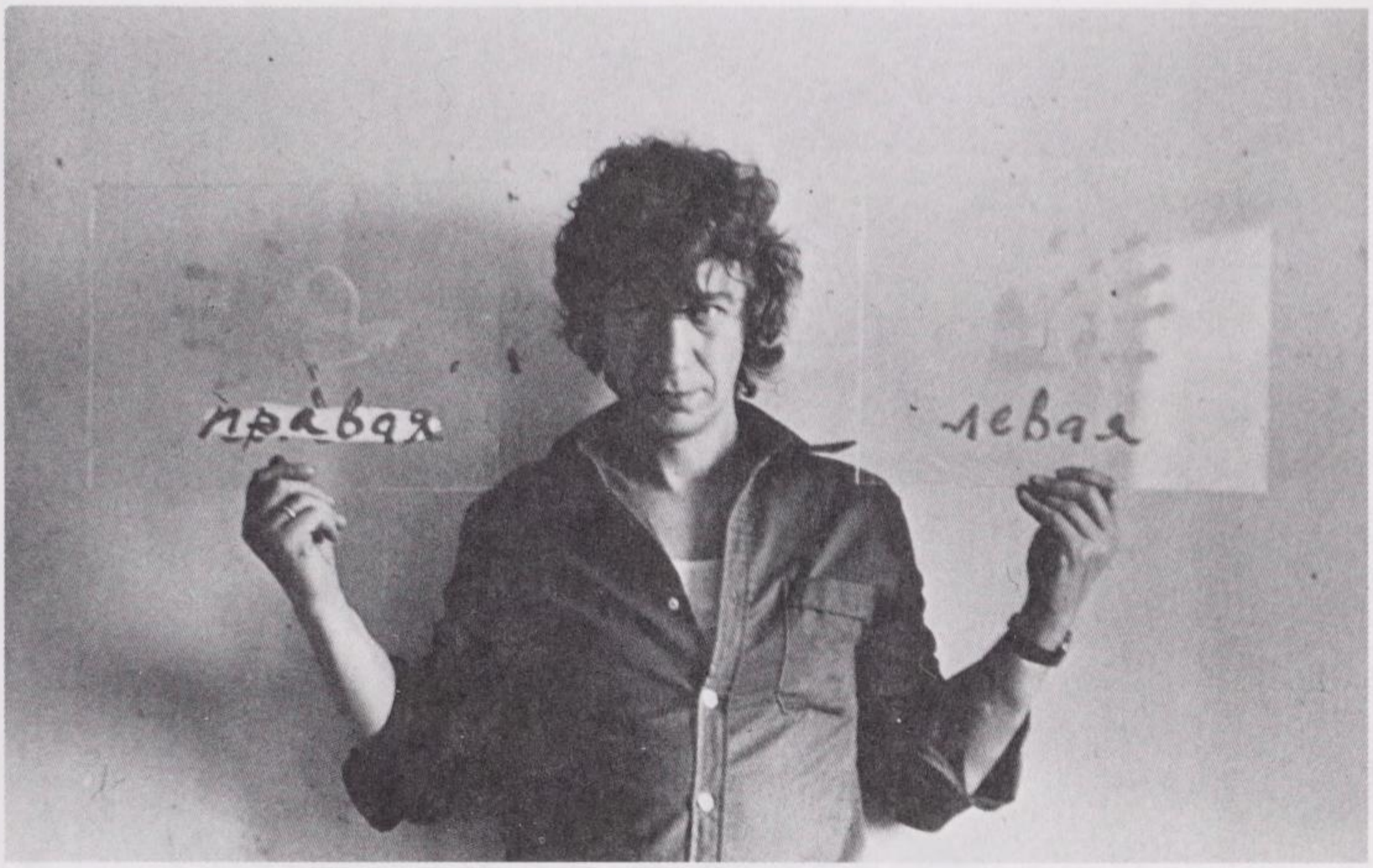
Such compositions by Ur represent a kind of bookshelf theater–an intermediate genre between the book and theatrical set design. For example, a model stuck together from copies of *Pravda* and *The New York Times* includes a paper mannequin with the face of the author, sitting amid a pile of books and newspapers; he looks sadly bureaucratic.

Michael Chernyshov (born 1945) carries on the formal traditions of the Russian Avant-Garde in graphics, paintings and books. In 1962 he put together his first exhibition "Red Truck" in the apartment of another Moscow artist Michael Roginsky, the first Russian pop artist, who worked with Soviet imagery, like his painting *Wall in Militsia* or the ready-made *Red Door*, (1964-65). Chernyshov's early graphic series of fighter planes dominated his later book works. His large compositions consisted of drawings joined together with medical bandages. All these pieces folded into numerous school file folders.

At an early age Michael Chernyshov was quite well informed about con-



Michael Chernyshov, *Aviatsionnye Opoznavateljnye Znaki* (Aviation Identification Signs), NY, 1981, diameter 7½"; 19 cm, original drawings.



Ivan Chuikov, Moscow, 1978. Photo by the Gerlovins.

temporary Western art, spending hours in the Library of Foreign Literature. Now he leads a very secluded life in Jersey City, where he has lived since 1981. His view of the mythic image of American culture is somewhat tarnished, but his personal artistic language and high productivity remain unchanged.

Aviatsionnye Opoznavateljnye Znaki (Aviation Identification Signs, 1981), is a book of his in the form of a circle, that displays a precise and constructivist correlation of lines and dots. Subtle graphic devices in combination with tinted paper in *Mitsubishi-Kawasaki-Nakayama* are characterstic features of Chernyshov's work. Using ideological symbols like stars or swastikas, he insists: "For me the formal game is the foundation of art, and only in the function of the form do I see the sense of production." * Such a purely formalistic view is quite strange for the Russian School.

Ivan Chuikov (1935) investigates the problems of illusions and echoes in different media: in panoramic landscapes on big parallelepipeds, false win-

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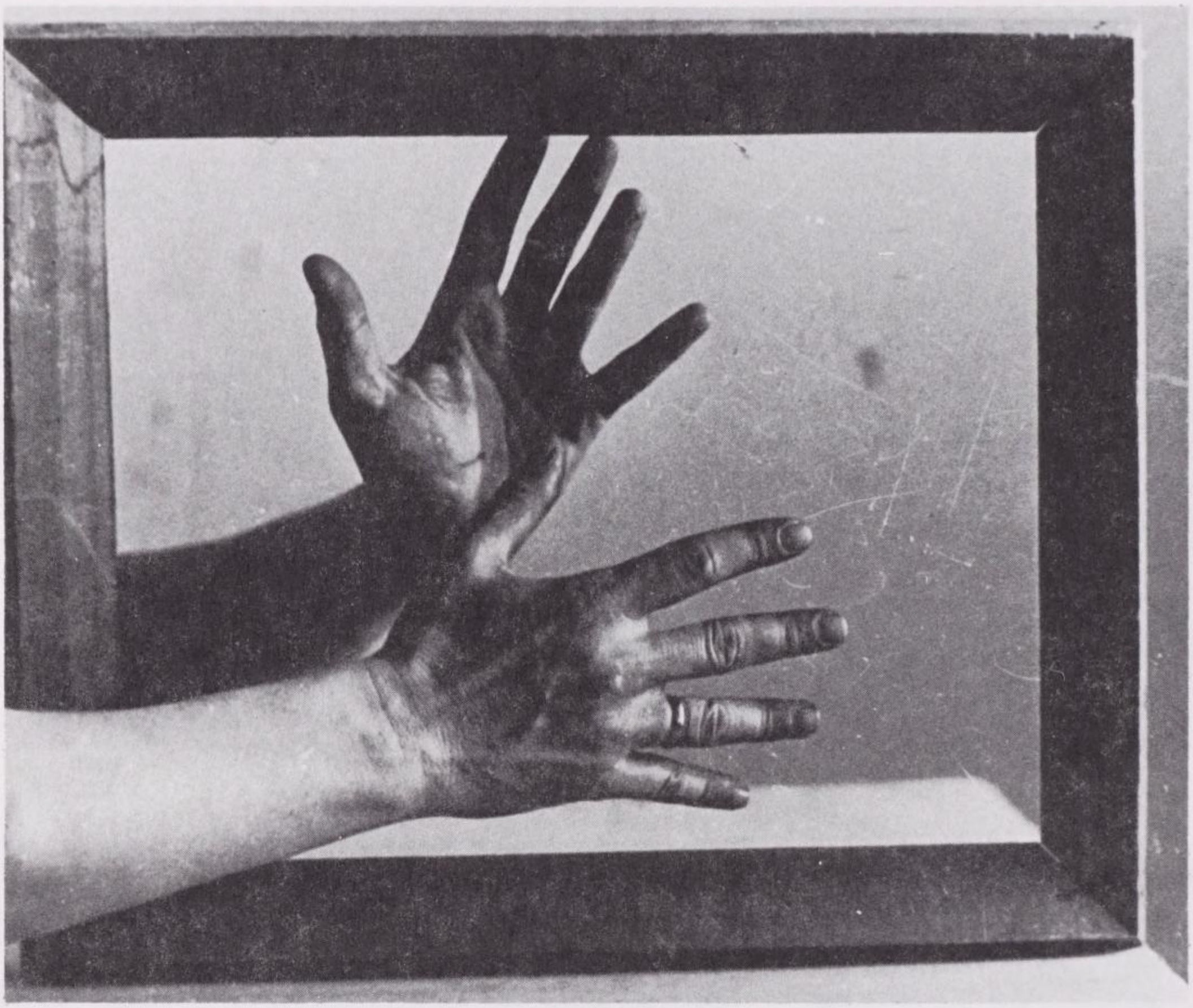
* "Michael Chernyshov", *A-Ya*, #6, 1984, p. 7



Ivan Chuikov, page from his book *Zerkala* (Mirrors), Moscow, 1977, 11" x 13⅜"; 28 cm x 34 cm. This folded book was done for the *Other Child Book* exhibition in Warsaw, Poland.

dows with enamel paintings on them, or photo series of delusive mirrors. His book *Virtualyny Project* (Virtual Project, 1977) is a similar exercise in the eternal concave and convex corners of houses, shown in false perspective. It contains many drawings and the author's theory.

Evgeny Kharitonov (1941-1981), a producer and poet, is famous for his candid gay novels, written like visual poetry. He organized (although he never took part in) the musical performance group *Last Chance*. They not only wrote their own songs, but used poems by Daniil Kharms and Genrikh Sapgir in their buffoon performances which are permeated with sad humor. We saw them first in our own apartment, where they gave a spontaneous concert, simply because they liked our work. The noisy event evoked a desperate protest by

our middle-class neighbors. For a while, they performed officially for Barricade, a movie theater for children. Art for children, in theory, serves as a regular shelter for many artists and poets.

Before leaving Russia, we had a long discussion with Evgeny Kharitonov about the painful problem of leaving or staying, that was nagging artists and the intelligentsia. In our opinion his talented and sensitive writing could develop better in the West, because in Russia homosexuality is strictly forbidden. He answered, "I was born in this country, and we have to suffer together." He died in 1981 of a heart attack on a Moscow street. His group *Last Chance* changed slightly and took another name, *Football*.

The collaboration by the young conceptual artists Victor Skersis, Michael Roshal and Gennady Donskoi was called *Gnezdo* (Nest), after their performance where they hatched eggs. They did many projects and objects with text usually with political significance. Later Victor Skersis cooperated with an other artist, Vadim Zakharov, in a new group *CZ*. Since 1984, he has lived in Philadelphia.

The young prose writer Vladimir Sorokin (1955) usually makes his own drawings for his taboo novels. At the same time, he works as a book designer for an official publishing house.

Our old friend the artist Vitaly Gribkov, a connoisseur of the new, sent the *Mukhomory* (Fly-agarics), a group of artists to see us. The Fly-agarics are: Sven Gundlakh, Sergei and Vladimir Mironenko, Konstantin Zvezdochetov and Alexei Kamensky.* They belong to the young generation of Moscow artists, all of whom were born at the end of the 195Os.

That very same night on the walls of our Moscow hallway we saw scribbled pictures resembling those that crowd the New York subway. The Fly-agarics behaved like a boisterous crowd of recruits bursting into a bath house. Out of a suitcase they removed a stack of crooked and lopsided books, some cut in pieces, bitten through, and folded into paper dolls. There were also sawed-off metal squares, notebooks folded into small sections, photo albums, labels, signboards, manifestoes and a pile of accidental things. It was clear that they were capable of coming the next day with another such suitcase full of books that they had constructed within a few hours.

The style of their work is close to that of agit-prop performances. We think

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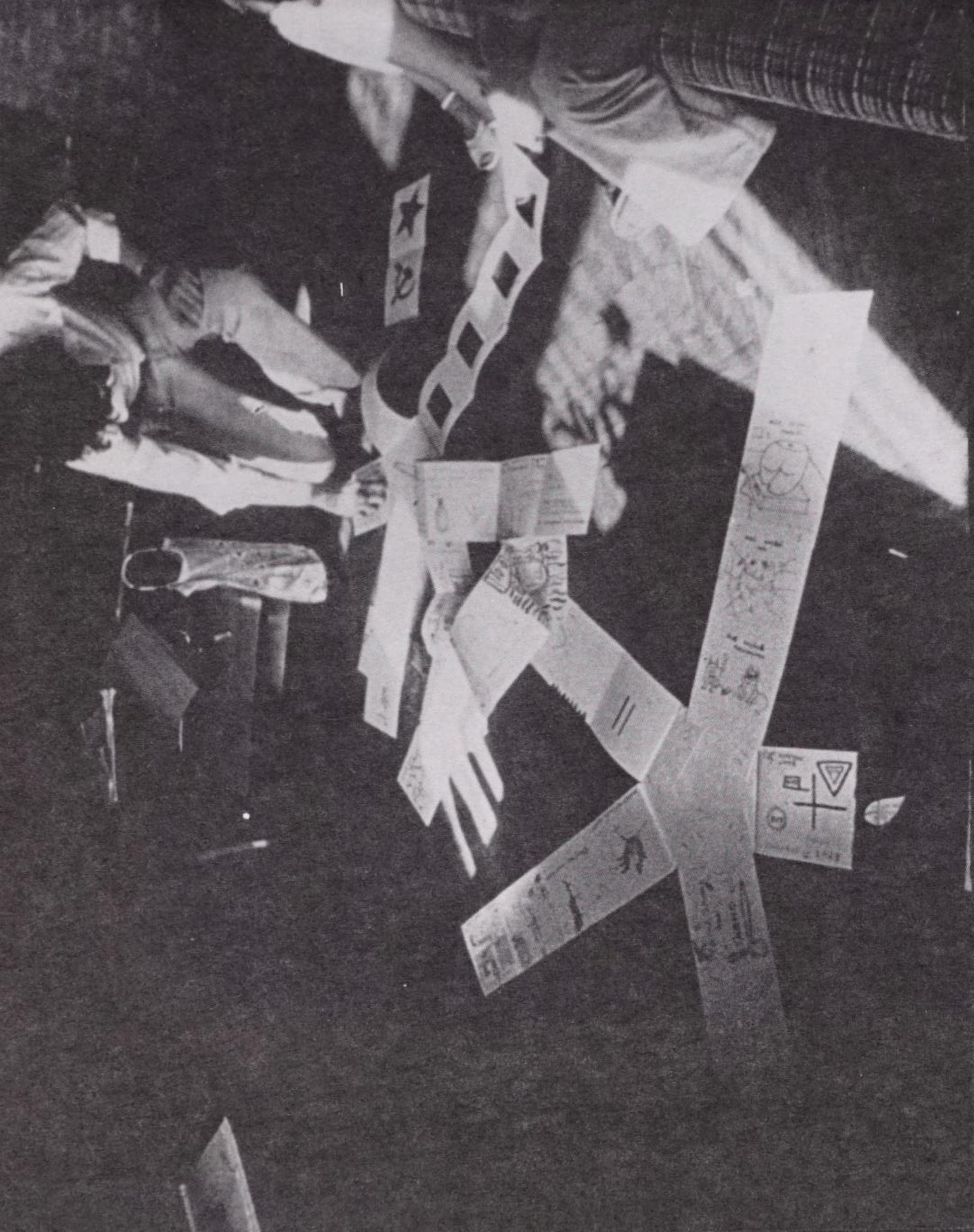
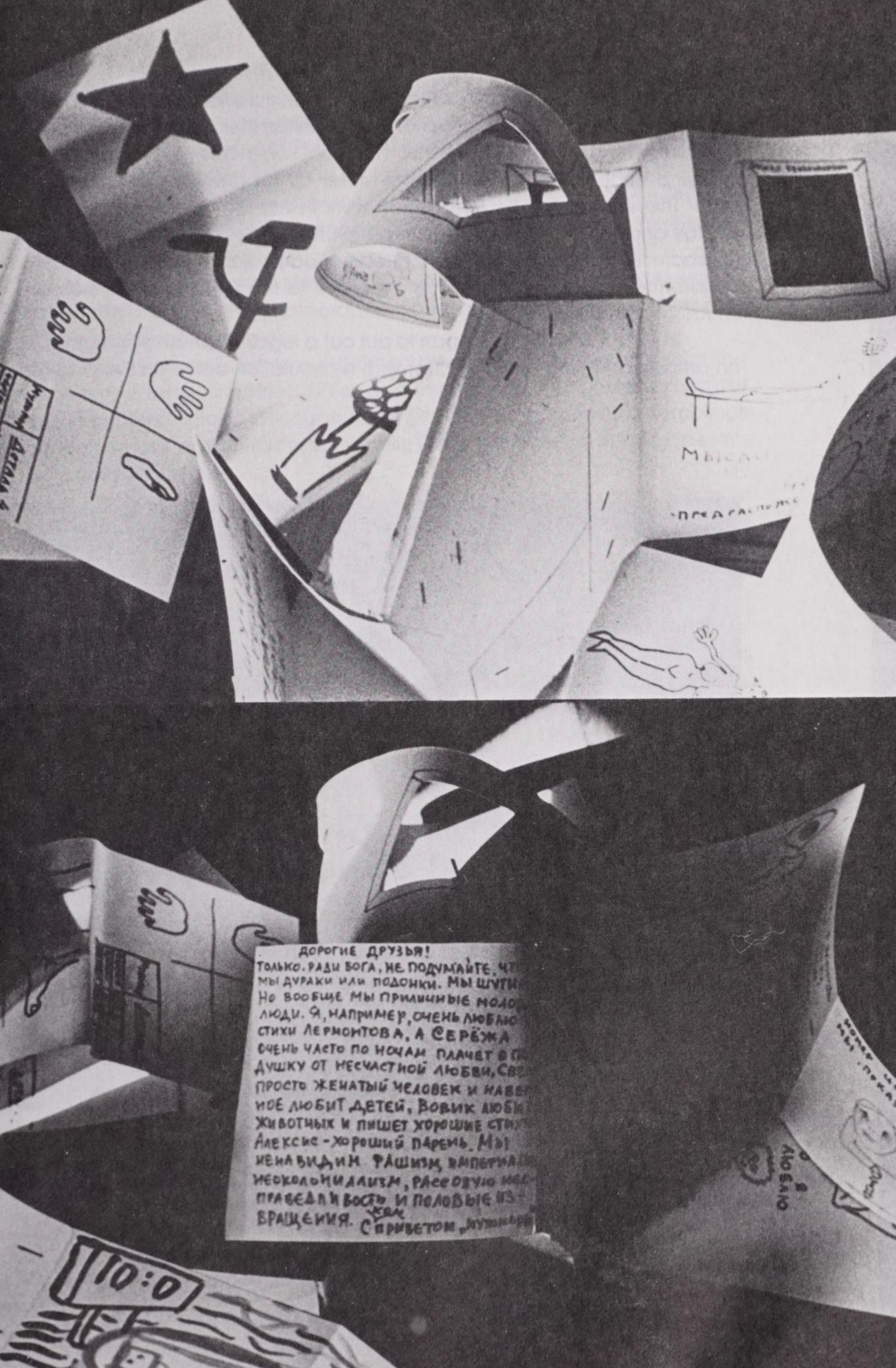
* See our article about them "Mukhomory" (Toadstools), *A-Ya* #3, pp. 1O-13

Group *Mukhomory* (Fly-agarics), series of folded books, Moscow, 1979. Photo by the Gerlovins. ▶

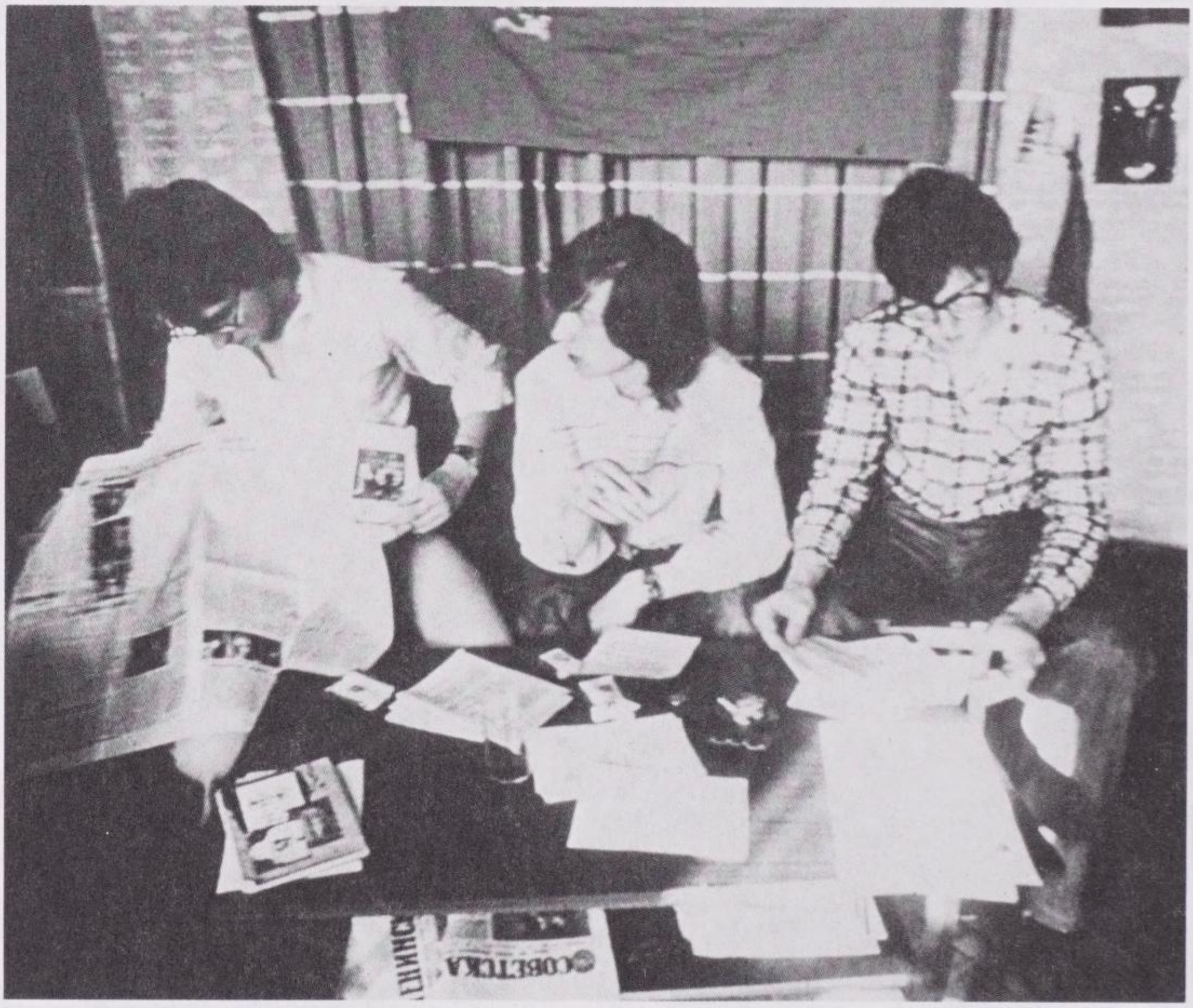



ДОРОГИЕ ДРУЗЬЯ!
ТОЛЬКО, РАДИ БОГА, НЕ ПОДУМАЙТЕ, ЧТ
МЫ ДУРАКИ ИЛИ ПОДОНКИ. МЫ ШУТИ
НО ВООБЩЕ МЫ ПРИЛИЧНЫЕ МОЛО
ЛЮДИ. Я, НАПРИМЕР, ОЧЕНЬ ЛЮБЛЮ
СТИХИ ЛЕРМОНТОВА, А СЕРЁЖА
ОЧЕНЬ ЧАСТО ПО НОЧАМ ПЛАЧЕТ В П
ДУШКУ ОТ НЕСЧАСТНОЙ ЛЮБВИ, СВЕ
ПРОСТО ЖЕНАТЫЙ ЧЕЛОВЕК И НАВЕ
НОЕ ЛЮБИТ ДЕТЕЙ, ВОВИК ЛЮБИ
ЖИВОТНЫХ И ПИШЕТ ХОРОШИЕ СТИ
АЛЕКСИС - ХОРОШИЙ ПАРЕНЬ. МЫ
НЕНАВИДИМ ФАШИЗМ, ИМПЕРИАЛ
НЕОКОЛОНИАЛИЗМ, РАССОВУЮ НЕС
ПРАВЕДЛИВОСТЬ И ПОЛОВЫЕ ИЗ-
ВРАЩЕНИЯ. С ПРИВЕТОМ „МУХОМОРЫ"
10:0

that the Fly-agarics' book work is their most successful and expressive because this medium gives them the opportunity to manifest their lightning-quick ideas very swiftly. As a rule they make their book-objects in one edition, and many of their pseudomythological tales are written by hand with a brush or marker.

The strength of the Fly-agarics' work lies in their abundant creative energy and spontaneity. That their energy frequently exceeds their ideas is characteristic of the Russian temperament, particularly in the avant-garde period. The actual event is not as important to the Fly-agarics as the continuously active environment.

In 1975 the artist V.G. began to put out a regular handmade journal as an art object called *Metki* (Marks) with a circulation between five and ten



Group *Mukhomory* (Fly-agarics), from left to right: Vladimir Mironenko, Sven Gundlakh, Sergei Mironenko, Moscow, 1979. Photo by the Gerlovins.

copies. The contents included critical articles, interviews with artists, information on Western art, poetry and music, many photographs, original drawings and manuscript poems. In 1976, we collected material for a new magazine and prepared a complete mock-up. However, we decided that publishing it would require too much time, so we handed over the entire project, with eight copies in typescript, to V.G. who made it the third edition of *Marks*. This issue included interviews with artists Yuri Sobolev and Komar and Melamid, a collection of stills from a movie by Alex Kiselyov, visual poems by Vsevolod Nekrasov, a theoretical article and photographs of ours, and a manifesto by composer V. Artyomov's musical group.

A similar magazine was published by various poets and artists at the same time in Leningrad. Titled *37* (an apartment number), it contained critical and journalistic articles. Of course, there were many handmade assemblings of poetry, prose and criticism, but usually they were done as simple typewritten books in multiple.

Michael Grobman, who now lives in Israel, used to publish a Russian newspaper on art called *Leviafan* (Leviathan, 1975), all of whose texts are handwritten.

Former Leningrad artist Michael Chemyakin published his *Apollon,* a collection of poetry and art, in Paris in 1977. This expensive volume was typeset on a regular typewriter. Another Paris publication with handmade elements (including original drawings by artists) was put together by Tolsty in 1984. His almanac *Muleta,* called "a family album," is a mixture of poetry, literature, information about art, and domestic chit-chat.

In Moscow in 1979 he made a folded book *Tolsty. Protopolovizm Art* (protopolovizm is a neologism which means "arch"/"sex"). The book is designed by Felix Elinbaum, and the photographer is Boris Neiman. The book includes texts and photographs of performances by Tolsty (pseudonym of Vladimir Kotliarov) that he did naked in winter in an open field near Moscow. The book was done in 18 copies, all signed, and sent as presents to people in different parts of the world.

In New York in 1981, together with Vagrich Bakhchanyan, we began to produce a handmade international journal called *Collective Farm* (one hundred copies per issue), consisting of envelopes bound into a book, each of which forms a kind of mini-gallery for the contributing artist. The journal makes use of the monoprint method with the aid of Russian color carbon paper, Xerox copies, original drawings, prints and collages. The first issue ('Kolkhoz"), prepared by an expanded editorial force, consisted solely of works by Russian artists; all subsequent issues–No. 2, "Letters to the USSR," No. 3, "Post Office Dinner," and No. 4, "Wonderkids"–were international in character. In the last issue, works by Miro, Picasso, Dubuffet, Twombly and others, who were influenced by children's art, appeared as elements in original drawings by children of contemporary artists. The idea of the design came to us when we found a huge

ЛЕВИАФАН

ИЗДАНИЕ МИХАИЛА ГРОБМАНА · 28 EPHRAIM STR. – BAKAH JERUSALEM TEL 262-493 · ЯНВАРЬ 1975 · № 1

МОДЫ В СТРАНЕ МОЛОКА И МЁДА

Художники чрезвычайно чувствительны ко всякого рода ограничениям. Любое ограничение – будь то цензурное, моральное или религиозное – воспринимается ими как вызов, как стимул к творчеству. Поэтому неудивительно, что в стране, где существует столько ограничений, как в Израиле, искусство переживает настоящий расцвет.

Но, с другой стороны, в стране, где существует столько ограничений, как в Израиле, художник, который не хочет творить в рамках официальной идеологии, вынужден искать себе какую-то нишу, какой-то круг ценителей, который поддержит его, не даст ему умереть с голоду. Такой нишей для многих израильских художников стала Америка. Сюда, в Америку, устремляются они, как только представляется малейшая возможность. Здесь они надеются найти признание, славу и деньги.

Одним из таких художников, уехавших в Америку, был Моше Кастель. Он родился в Иерусалиме в 1937 году, учился в Бецалеле, а затем в Академии художеств в Париже. Вернувшись в Израиль, он стал преподавать в Бецалеле, а потом в Тель-Авивском университете. Его работы неоднократно выставлялись в Израиле, Франции, Италии, Англии, Америке. Он получил несколько премий, в том числе премию Рокфеллеровского фонда. Словом, Кастель был одним из самых преуспевающих израильских художников.

Однако в 1971 году Кастель неожиданно уехал в Америку. Причины, побудившие его к этому, были, по-видимому, самые разные. Во-первых, Кастель, как и многие израильские интеллигенты, был недоволен политической ситуацией в стране. Во-вторых, он, по-видимому, надеялся, что в Америке его ждет большой успех. И наконец, в-третьих, Кастель, как и многие другие израильские художники, был недоволен тем, что в Израиле нет настоящего художественного рынка, нет настоящих ценителей искусства, которые могли бы покупать картины.

Вскоре после приезда в Америку Кастель получил несколько престижных заказов. Он создал серию работ для Еврейского культурного центра в Нью-Йорке, выполнил заказ для Еврейского университета в Филадельфии, сделал несколько работ для Еврейского музея в Нью-Йорке. Но, несмотря на эти заказы, Кастель не смог обеспечить себе в Америке такой же материальный уровень, какой был у него в Израиле. Ему пришлось преподавать в нескольких американских университетах, чтобы прокормить себя и свою семью.

Кастель не порывает связей с Израилем. Он часто приезжает сюда, выставляет свои работы в Тель-Авиве и Иерусалиме. Однако, по-видимому, он не собирается возвращаться в Израиль. Он считает, что в Америке у него больше возможностей для творчества.

Работы Кастеля, которые он привез с собой в Израиль, производят странное впечатление. Они кажутся одновременно и очень израильскими, и очень американскими. Израильскими – потому что в них ощущается влияние древнееврейской культуры. Американскими – потому что они выполнены в технике, которая характерна для многих американских художников.

Работы Кастеля можно разделить на несколько циклов. Первый цикл – это серия работ, посвященных Иерусалиму. Иерусалим для Кастеля – это город, в котором он вырос, город, с которым связаны его детские воспоминания. Поэтому неудивительно, что Иерусалим занимает такое важное место в творчестве Кастеля.

Иерусалимский цикл Кастеля состоит из нескольких работ. Первая из них – "Иерусалим" (1972) – представляет собой изображение Старого города, выполненное в технике коллажа. На картине изображены различные символы Иерусалима: Стена Плача, Купол Скалы, Храм Гроба Господня, Башня Давида, Еврейский университет, Израильский музей, Кнессет, Иерусалимская синагога, Иерусалимская консерватория, Иерусалимская опера, Иерусалимская библиотека, Иерусалимский зоопарк, Иерусалимский стадион, Иерусалимский театр, Иерусалимская больница, Иерусалимская школа, Иерусалимский университет, Иерусалимский музей, Иерусалимский парк, Иерусалимский фонтан, Иерусалимский памятник, Иерусалимский мост, Иерусалимский вокзал, Иерусалимский аэропорт, Иерусалимский порт, Иерусалимский маяк, Иерусалимский флаг, Иерусалимский герб, Иерусалимский гимн, Иерусалимский праздник, Иерусалимский день рождения, Иерусалимский юбилей, Иерусалимский год, Иерусалимский век, Иерусалимский миллениум, Иерусалимский конец света, Иерусалимский Страшный суд, Иерусалимский рай, Иерусалимский ад, Иерусалимский чистилище, Иерусалимский Мессия, Иерусалимский Антихрист, Иерусалимский Апокалипсис, Иерусалимский Армагеддон, Иерусалимский Судный день, Иерусалимский Воскресший, Иерусалимский Вознесшийся, Иерусалимский Сошедший, Иерусалимский Грядущий, Иерусалимский Сущий, Иерусалимский Вечный, Иерусалимский Всемогущий, Иерусалимский Всеведущий, Иерусалимский Всеблагой, Иерусалимский Всемилостивый, Иерусалимский Всемилосердный, Иерусалимский Всепрощающий, Иерусалимский Всеблагословенный, Иерусалимский Всеславный, Иерусалимский Всепрославленный, Иерусалимский Всепрекрасный, Иерусалимский Всесовершенный, Иерусалимский Всеистинный, Иерусалимский Всеправедный, Иерусалимский Всесвятой, Иерусалимский Всеблаженный, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший, Иерусалимский Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший Всеблаженнейший

ПСАЛОМ III

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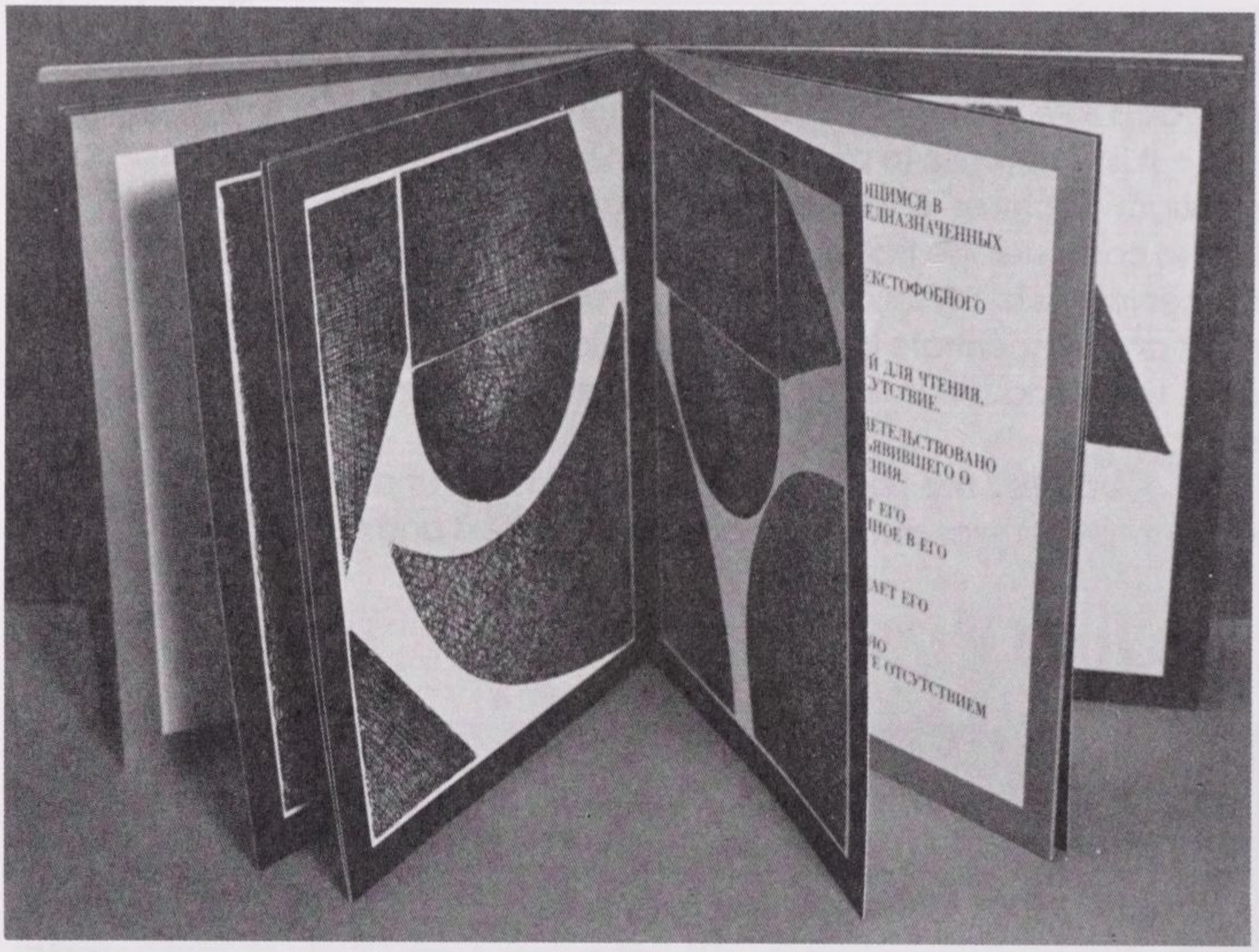
container of envelopes across from our garage-loft on Spring Street. Now the journal figures in many artist-book collections including the Museum of Modern Art's as a rare edition.

It is worthwhile to point out that the Moscow and Leningrad schools of *samizdat* each use a different formal language. Figuratively speaking, Leningrad continues the traditions of the Russian symbolists from the beginning of the century. As many Leningrad artists will admit, they tried to avoid social comment and concentrate instead on estheticism, more than the Moscow school does. Leningrad *samizdat* art is much closer to regular self-published literature and poetry.

A book by two Leningrad artists William Brui and Gregory Kapelyan, *Ex Adverso* (1969), was done in nine copies. Both text and drawings were printed

***Collective Farm* magazine, NY, 1981-85, ed.100, edited by Vagrich Bakhchanyan and the Gerlovins, #1,2,3,4.**

◀ **Michael Grobman, newspaper *Leviafan* (Leviathan), #1, 13¼" x 9½"; 34 cm x 24 cm, 1975, Israel.**



William Brui and Gregory Kapelyan, *Ex Adverso*, 1969-79, 9½" x 11"; 24 cm x 28 cm, 18 pp., Etchings.

from etched metal plates. Its constructive composition consisted of black and white images and a repeating red frame around the text, which could be read from either left or right. Ten years later, it was reprinted in facsimile in Paris in two languages (Russian and French) in an edition of 100 copies and exhibited in many international bookfairs including the one at the Pompidou Center.

Probably the most intriguing figures are the poets Alexey Khvostenko and Konstantin Kuzminsky, who zealously publicize artists and poets from the former Russian capital, which they all still call St. Petersburg.

Alexey Khvostenko (born 1940) made many original books containing his visual poetry, that included a lot of collages from chance pieces of paper like tickets or ripped advertisements. His handwritten typography includes not only strange cryptography, but also drawings, mathematical and literal collages, mixed with his profoundly elaborated formal language. Of particular interest is his book *Podozritelj* (Suspector, 1965). His original book *Institut Verpy*

Alexei Khvostenko, page from his book *Menu* (Menu), Leningrad, 1964, original drawings and collages. Reprinted from an anthology of modern Russian poetry *The Blue Lagoon* (in Russian), edited by K. Kuzminsky and G. Kovalev, Oriental Research Partners, Newtonville, Mass., 1980.

(Institute of Verpa, 1965), contains many handwritten texts, collages and transfers. The word *Verpa* like *Dada* is invented for Khvostenko's new muse.

Konstantin Kuzminsky (born 1940), was involved in *samizdat* publishing in the early seventies. He did his first book assemblage *Kitoboj* (Whale Hunter, 1972), which he replicated in the States in 1980. His language, as well as his collages, displays a colorful, eccentric style, but not as extravagant as his personality. He likes to appear naked at public events talking non-stop about the high estate of poetry. He enjoys memorizing all random incidents, facts and names.

In Leningrad in the seventies Kuzminsky used to arrange underground group exhibitions in his apartment, where he also showed his poetry of objects like *Nemoy Chemodan* (Dumb Suitcase, 1974) or *Perya ne v tu Storonu* (Feathers to the Wrong Side, 1974). Now living in Brooklyn, he has opened *Podval* (Basement), a gallery and emigre club, where he continues to show Russian art and handmade books not only of his own but also his friends'.

In Leningrad there were many examples of poet and artist collaborations, such as Michael Chemiakin who illustrated the poems of Roald

At the unofficial show in the Konstantin Kuzminsky's apartment, 1974, Leningrad. In the middle: Konstantin Kuzminsky and his wife Emma Podberyozkina.

Mandelshtam. Poet Anry Volokhonsky worked with artist Evgeny Mikhnov-Voitenko and later with Putov; Igor Zakharov-Ross illustrated Vladlen Gavriljchik's books. Valentin Levitin used to write his friends' texts on his etchings. Special mention should be made of poets like Ilya Bokshtein, Leonid Gubanov, Nikolai Bokov, V. Kovshin, Elena Shchápova; as well as Estonian artists like Tynis Vint, Raul Meel, Leo Lapin, and many others.

In the Ural Mountain town of Sverdlovsk in the sixties, there was a group of teenage poets and artists strongly influenced by the ideas of Russian Futurism. They even called themselves *Anarfuts* (Anarcho-Futurists) or the *Uktuss* group (after the Uktuss Mountain near their town). The artists were Sergey Sigei (born 1947), Ry Nikonova, A. Galamaga, E. Arbenev, V. Dyachenko. They assembled a handmade magazine *Nomer* (Number), which contained poetry, manifestoes and criticism. In 1974 S. Sigei and Ry Nikonova moved to Elsk, a town near the Azov Sea. There they continued their work, which can be briefly described as the transplanted language of such Russian Futurist poets as V. Khlebnikov, I. Zdanevich and A. Kruchenykh, mixed with performance.

In 1979, the Leningrad poet Boris Konstrictor joined them, changing his style from traditional Acmeism to visual conceptual poetry. Together they wrote several manifestoes and arranged a series of poetic performances and shows of their painted poems in several Leningrad clubs. Ry Nikonova and S. Sigei used a medium to write their poems on different printed texts, photographs and slides. Both have quite an eyecatching tendency to write manifestoes for any occasion. For example, they composed *Culinart Manifesto* in 1983 for poetic performances with food; they wrote words like "Literary Spice" with fruit preserves on a plate: the poem was destined to be eaten. They composed another manifesto called *Irfaerism,* together with D. Prigov, in 1983; the title plays on "euphoria," "affair," "fair," "air," etc., and suggests ready-made poetry.

All over the country, hundreds of poets and artists designed and made by hand their textual works. We hope that any poet and artist involved in *samizdat* will pardon us, if we fail to mention them here. We tried to discuss works that are closer in form to book objects rather than typical poetry manuscripts.

After analyzing works by our comrades-in-arms, we would now like to present our own point of view and discuss our contributions to *samizdat*. To describe our pieces, we will write in the third person.

Rimma Gerlovina's * (born 1951) first books (1972-73) took the form of pattern novels typed under different color carbon-paper and bound often with unusual multifolding (*Sle, Lamark, Po Vetru, Plodoslov*). Valery always did the

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* The ending *-a* for Gerlovina designates the female name in Russian (for example, Anna Karenina).

СЗОРПТИЦА БРЮХОНОГИ
ЦИСТЭРНЫ СДЕРНУЛА
ИДЕИ,
БОТ
ВИЕ ВИДЕИ

— ПТИЦЦА
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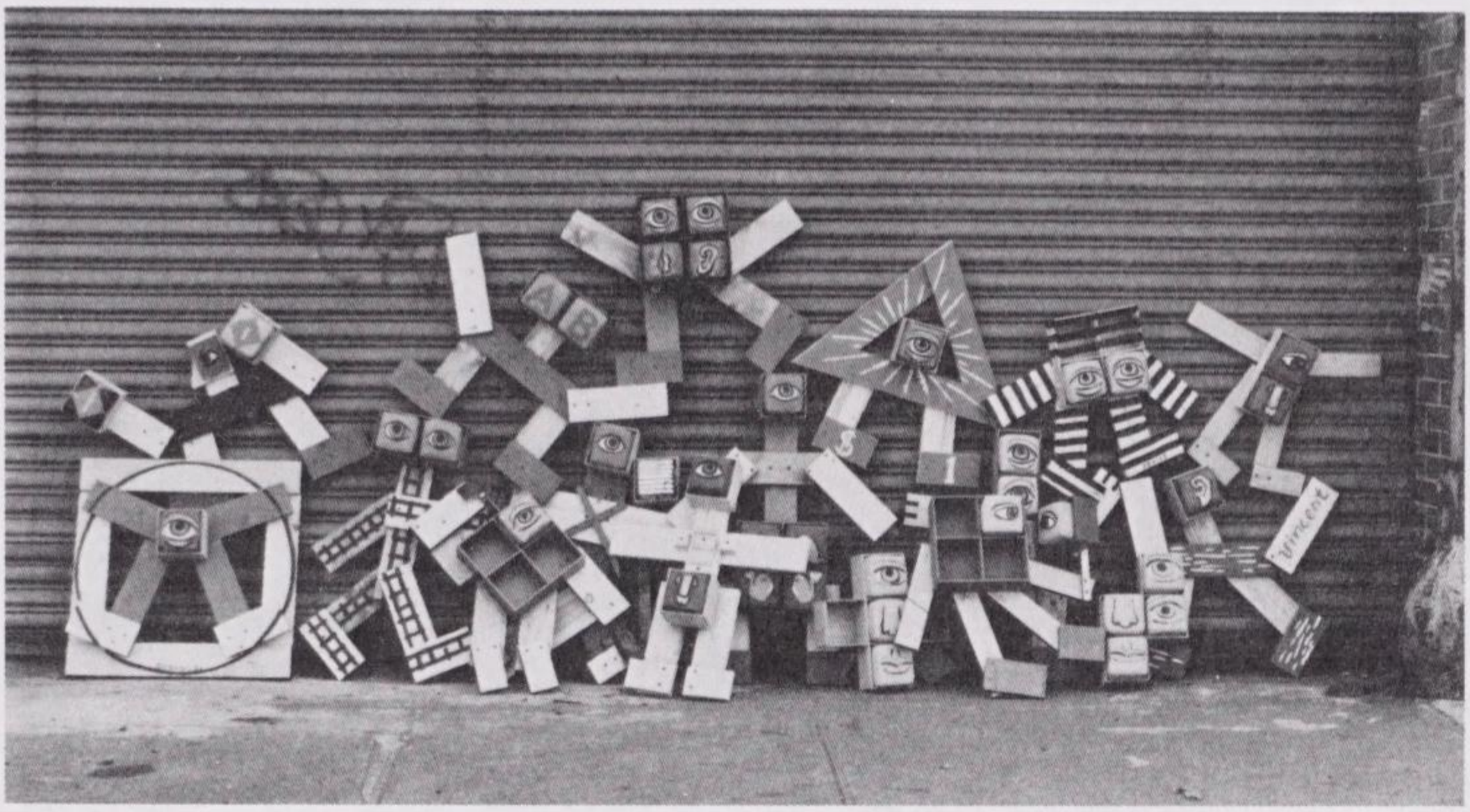

Rimma Gerlovina, series of works, photographed on the street, N.Y., 1985.

covers and page design with carbon-paper monoprints. A series of scores for polyphonic readings (1973-74) already implied the idea of group recitation, like opera. All these books were produced in four to seven copies from basic materials like wall paper (*Plays for Polyphonic Reading, Reflection on Sister Ira, Singing Bird for Ira*).* Their mood of desirable eternal tranquility was in part caused by the premature death of Valery's younger sister, the talented poet Irina Gerlovina, who was killed at age 19 in a truck accident at a collective farm where students work in the fall. Rimma's book-score *Chetyre Prelyudii k Rozhdeniyu* (Four Preludes for Birth) is dedicated to Irina and written in five Slavic languages. This poem was performed and recorded in 1974. The soundtrack and visual patterns show the panslavic echoes of the ancient unity of its five different languages.

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* *Pjecy Dlya Poliphonicheskogo Chteniya, Razmyshleniye O Sesre Irye, Peniye Ptitsy Dlya Iry*

◀ **Sergei Sigei, page from his book *Sobukvy Radi Yatj* (For co-letter Yatj Sake), Elsk, 1977, woodcut.**

Rimma Gerlovina, above: *Plodoslov* (Fruitword), 6⅜" x 9⅛"; 15.7 cm x 23.3 cm, ed.4. Below: *Pyesy dlya Mnogogolosnogo Chteniya* (Pieces for Polyphonic Reading), Moscow, 1973, ed.4, 37 pp. 7" x 10"; 18 cm x 25.5 cm, wallpaper; every poem is folded separately in a binding. *Po Vetru* (Down the Wind), Moscow, 1972, ed.4, 9⅜" x 6½"; 25 cm x 16.5 cm, carbon paper monoprints by Valery Gerlovin.

Rimma Gerlovina with her works, Moscow, 1976.

On the following pages: Rimma Gerlovina, cube-poems, Moscow, 1974, 3⅛"; 8 cm on each face, cardboard. Photographs by Victor Novatsky. On the left above: *Porochnyi Element* (A Depraved Element) completes the perfect cubic form; below: *Kub v Forme Tetraedra* (Cube in the Shape of a Tetrahedron). On the right above: poem *Em-Zhe* (Male-Female), the convex M-cubes can be rearranged in different positions with the concave F-cubes. Below: *Zhiznj Grazhdanina* (Life of a Citizen) consists of two parts: a citizen goes up and down.

a depraved
element

A cube in
the form of
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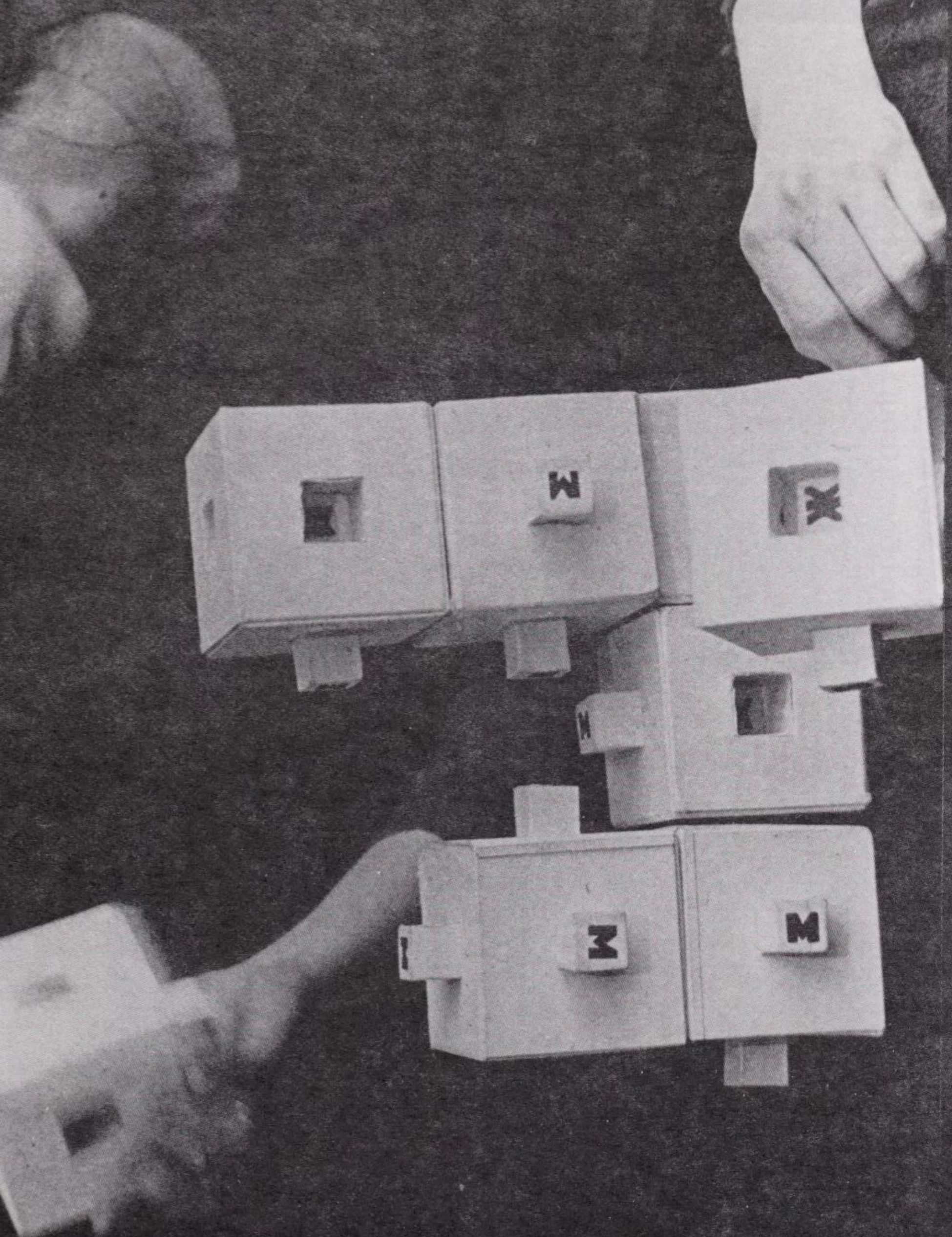

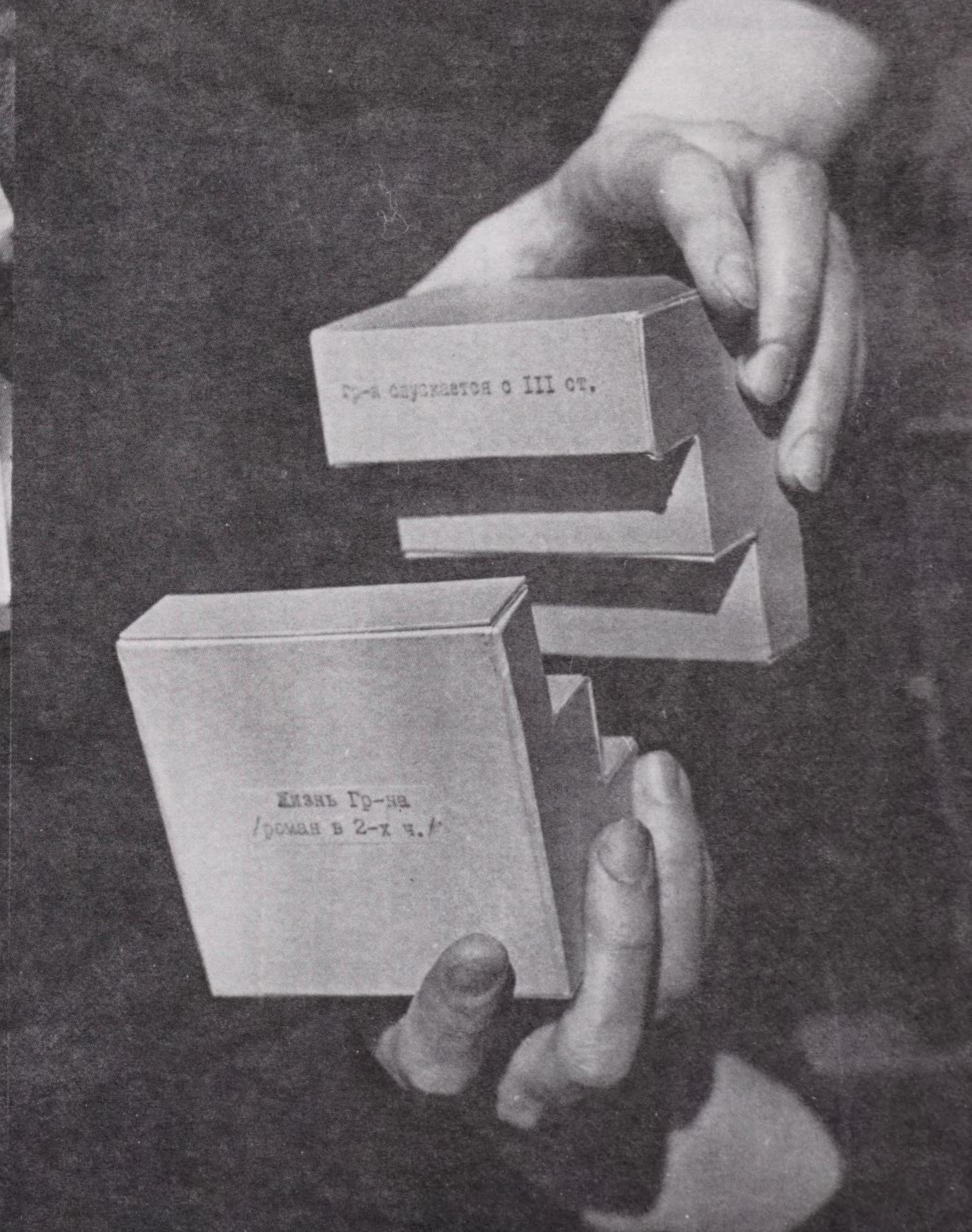
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Жизнь Гр-на
/роман в 2-х ч./

Rimma began her series of cube-poems in 1973. Each cube is an allegorical unit of time, space or human character and is a sort of a simple universal form of *samizdat*, that enveloped different aspects of Russian life. Let us quote some comments by our old friends Komar and Melamid:

> Her work consists of cardboard cubes which are covered with cloth and open on one side. Some of the cubes, large and small, bear labels describing their particular qualities, either from the author's or the cube's point of view.
>
> For example: "This cube is 5 centimeters closer to the Moon than this one"–they speak in ambiguities. Box: "There's a sphere inside me." The inside of the cube: "He's a sphere, I'm a cube." Box: "You think." Small cube inside: "But I am." This is not a dialogue, but a monologue in which the inside plays the role of an inner voice. Here we are face to face with the dichotomy of Homo-Box's consciousness. The only woman in contemporary Russian Modernism exhibits a profound inventiveness in designing a wardrobe for her soul.*

A paradoxical simplicity in combination with an analytical approach, lyrical irony and fatalism organizes, so to speak, the semiotic environments of utopia. The characters of all these homocubes are shown symbolically as they would be in an anatomy theater: not nude, but naked. Her easily executed cube poems were soon found in the collections of many Moscow artists and poets who got them through art trades. They became popular as a new symbolic language of the seventies, on the border between poetry and art. Once, an old friend, a Bulgarian movie director (whose name we omit because of his high official position today), asked us about some enigmatic blocks, which were described to him by his Russian colleague Marlen Khutsiyev. Suddenly he burst out laughing; sitting in the middle of our studio, he understood the comedy of the situation. This incident also shows the relationship between the unofficial and official cultures.

At present the molecular cubic structure has been arranged into large cube poems. A two-meter-high man made of cubes with inscriptions covering single concepts (from genius to lack of talent, or from saint to devil, and so on) is formed by the viewer himself, who at that moment is, in a sense, writing his own random poetry. This series also includes a *Calendar for a 100 Years* in the form of a dog sphinx, which the viewer uses to predict the future by means of movable cubes. *The Wandering Jew* is a soft cube that wanders across a world map shaped as a prostrate human figure. A special hero, the transvestite, with interchangeable sex symbols, appears in many different cubic sculptures. In her cubes poems, Rimma developed her theory of *Transfism* with the following

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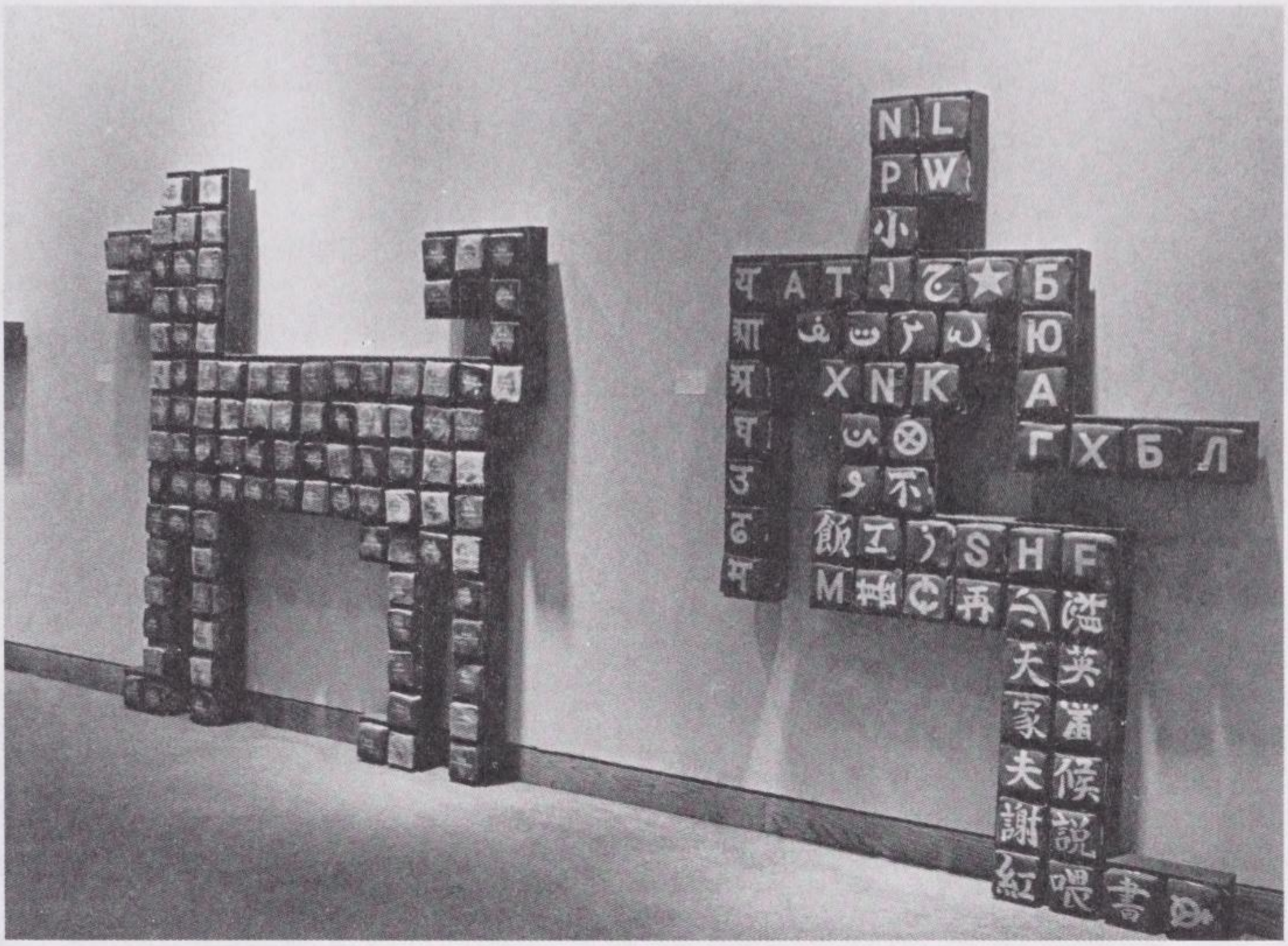
* Komar and Melamid, "The Barren Flowers of Evil", *Art Forum*, March 1980, p. 51



Rimma Gerlovina, *Cubic Organisms,* plywood constructions, covered wtih fabric and filled with soft cubes, acrylic. From left to right: *Calender-Dog for Next 100 Years* with six prophecies for each year on each cube, 68" x 59" x 4"; 173 cm x 150 cm x 10 cm, NY, 1982. *Man of Babel* in six languages, NY, 1983. Installation viewed from Citicorp Center, Saint Peter's Church, 1984. Photo by Francis Hauert.

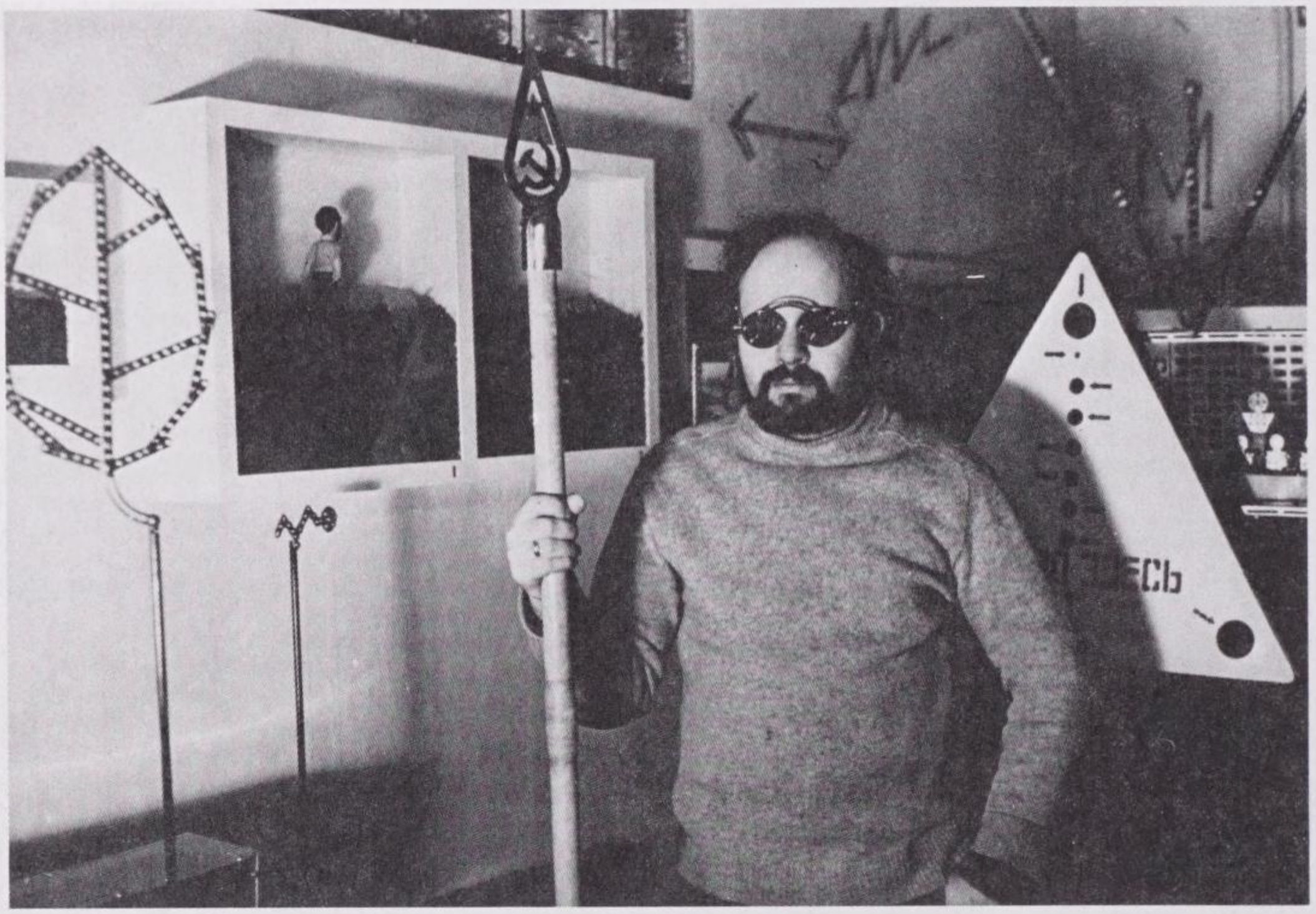
theses:

1. Interchangeability (of time, space, sex, etc., as a basic principle of life, and the unity of opposites)
2. Co-creativity and Pluralism (of the spectator, who completes the idea, changing the elements in the frames of the author's form)
3. Metaphoric Game (as a symbolic modeling of the world, as an *a priori* part of human nature)
4. Archetypal Units (cubes together make a perfect unity)

Since 1972 we often worked in tandem. We issued several plexiglass-bound books in shapes like a tortoise or a heart, with Rimma's transrational poetry typed on Valery's monoprints. *Zerkaljnaya Igra* (The Mirror Game, 1977)

Rimma Gerlovina, from the series *Shifting Totems*, N.Y., 1986; 40″ x 8″ x 3″, 33″ x 20″ x 5″, wood, acrylic.

I AM ALIVE YOU ARE ALIVE WE ARE ALIVE THEY ARE ALIVE
I AM DEAD YOU ARE DEAD WE ARE DEAD THEY ARE

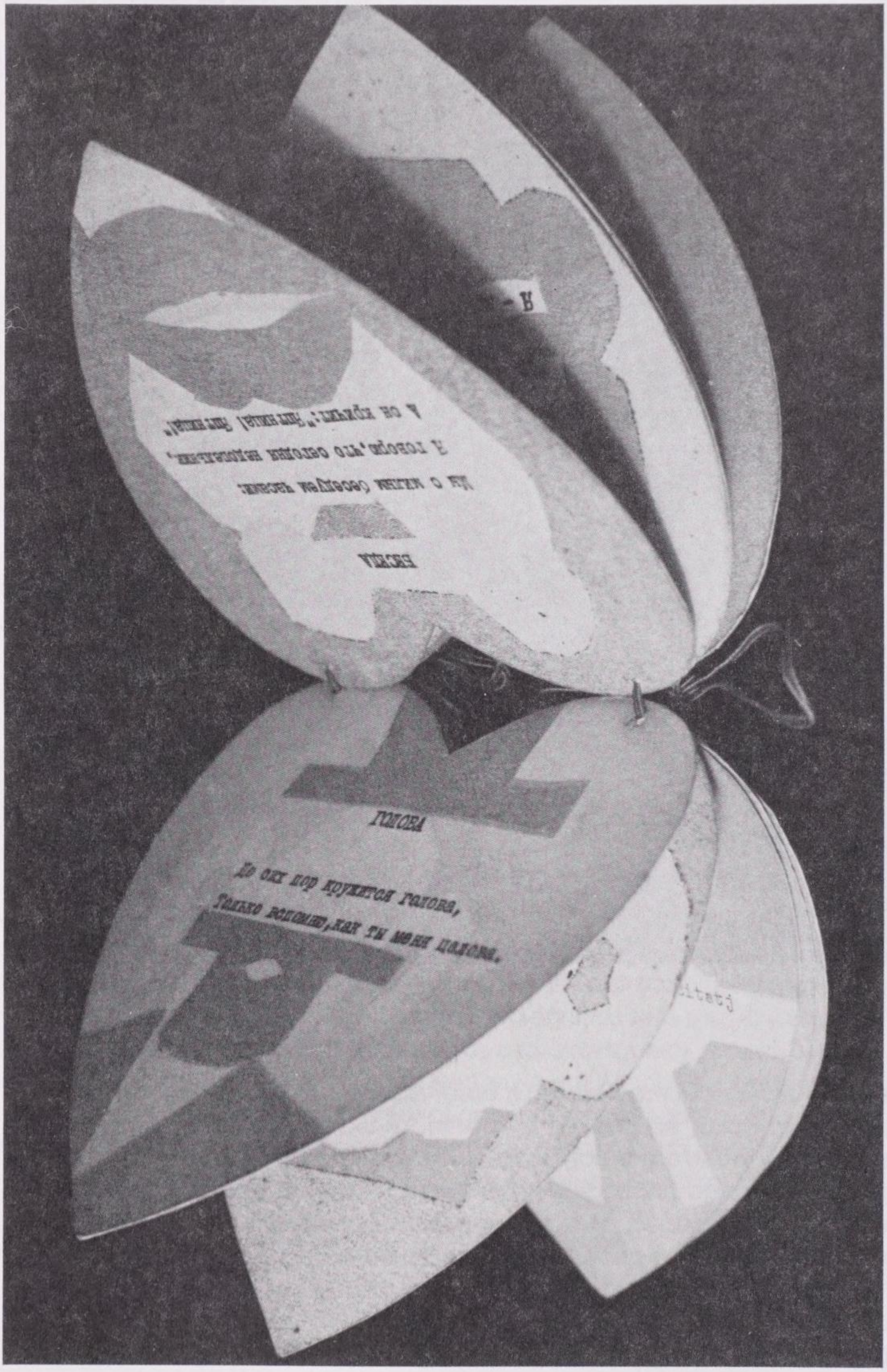


Valery Gerlovin at his studio, Moscow, 1976. Photo by Victor Novatsky.

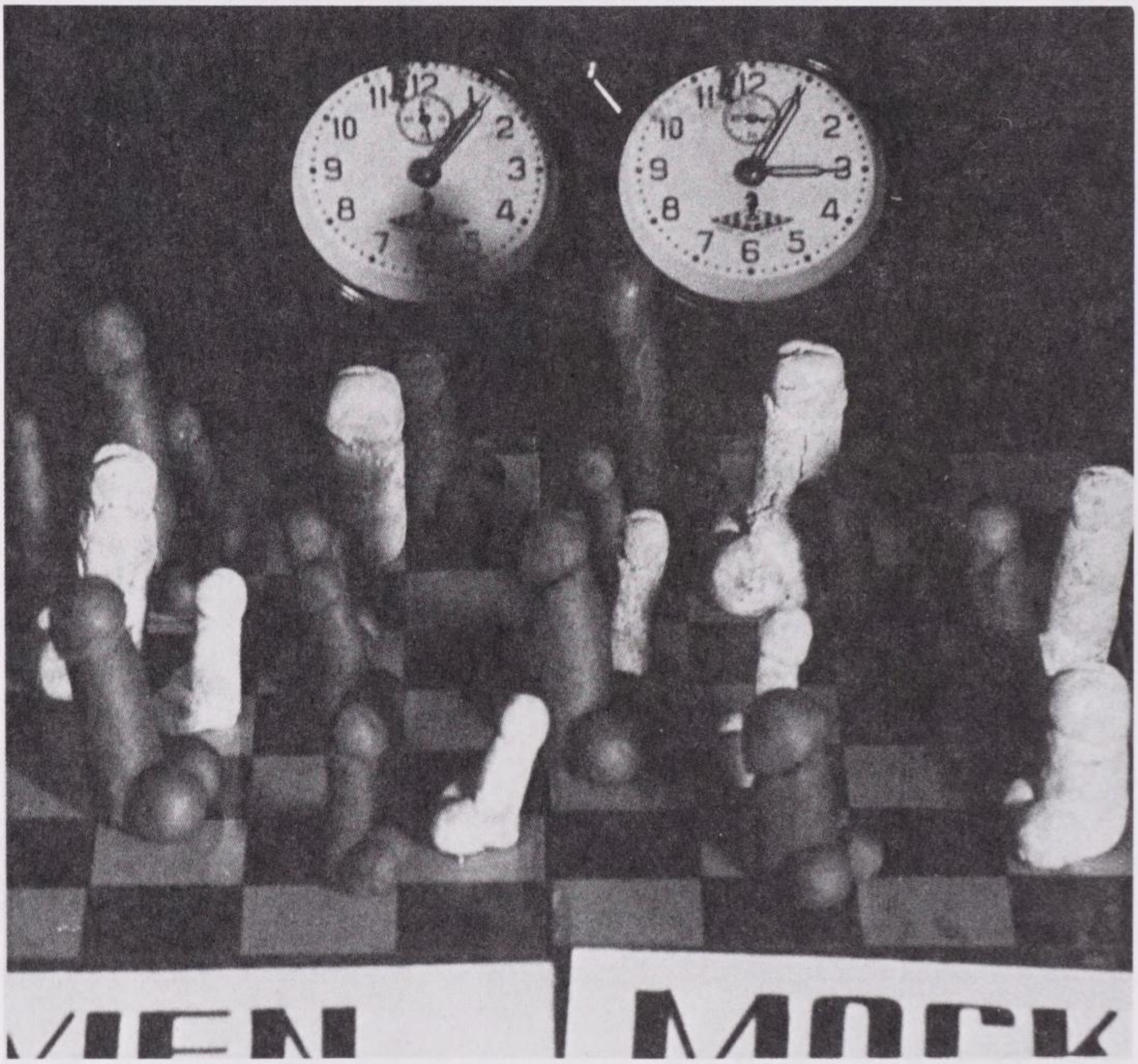
is a book object that tells the actual story of our performances, while all our utopian projects have recently been collected in *Isbrannoye* (Selected Works), NY, 1984.

Objects from meccano and bread were the most characteristic pieces of Valery Gerlovin's (born 1945) Moscow period. This medium arbitrarily expressed the coexistence of natural and artificial substances. For example, in 1974 he fashioned a series of meccano sculptures called "Spermatozoid," "Leaf," "Madonna with Baby" and "Party Meeting." In 1976 Valery buried some of them in the ground, as a symbolic anticipation of the end of any culture, including ours, which sooner or later returns to the earth. Valery's multimedia project *Bread Insects Community*, born and fed on the bread trees, was a mystification of the life of organisms modeled from real black bread.

The Gerlovins, *Serdtse* (Heart), Moscow, 1973, ed.3, 10 pp., 6" x 6"; 15 cm x 15 cm. Plastic cover with a color carbon paper print.


ГОЛОВА
До сих пор кружится голова,
Только вспомню, как ты мне сказал.

In his New York period, Valery started to combine his very early painting media with later creations of the meccano world. Altogether, these works metamorphosed into the syringe mosaics. Valery's monumental reliefs, frescos, paintings and sculptures show exaggerated fragments of faces with eyes or hair done as syringe mosaics that create the illusion of permanence. The face is an archetypal symbol in any culture. Valery's iconographic faces recall monumental mosaic portraits from Byzantium and Rome, two decaying cultures with qualities similar to today's superpowers, Russia (the Third Rome) and America (the New Babylon). At the same time, they are reminiscent of the



Valery Gerlovin, *Chess Game,* Moscow, 1977. Figures from black and white bread for the match-performance between Renate Bertlmann (Austria) and Rimma Gerlovina. Photo by Reinhold Bertlmann.

totalitarian style of mosaics found in subways and state buildings in the USSR. In New York, his syringe art is charged with an anarchic controversial suggestion of banned drugs, modern-day forbidden fruits which may be seen as both an attempt at self-affirmation outside society and as a means of self-destruction.

Once, for an exhibition in New York on Pier 34, which had been condemned for demolition, Valery did his staircase face as an encaustic Egyptian portrait that accompanies the dead to the grave. But, due to the possessiveness of capitalist society, this extremely heavy piece of art was stolen before the demolition. Valery's staircase figures were split up by the steps, while his frescoes with shrill eyes on huge brick walls gather together in one modern temple in the large space of a former mattress factory, now a gallery with the same name in Pittsburgh (1984). Rimma directed a video of this fresco series, which is based on the preposterous correlation of the live and canonized face. The multimedia *Ancient New York Mosaics* is another chapter in the photography album that we both constantly work on together with our friend, the photographer Francis Hauert.

In summary, we wish to emphasize that in Russia human dignity is routinely interfered with by the whole society itself, in contrast with life in the West. Therefore, we view *samizdat* art as a new social phenomenon and simultaneously as an antidote to totalitarianism with a universal creative strategy and application. The genre of artist's book as a convenient flexible language influenced Russian art in many dimensions: from Andrei Monastyrsky's piles of found objects that work as a poetic palette, to Mukhomory's colorful paper objects; from Komar and Melamid's average sizing of all Soviet documents, to Rimma Gerlovina's cube poems that form new book shelves.

The multimedia approach brings out new flavors in works beyond graphic, linguistic or structural categories with "a purpose all these artists share: to invite the viewer to open his mind, to examine his prejudices, to uncover new ideas and concepts, and to reflect upon the ironies of the condition of modern man." *

Looking at the art of the younger Moscow generation, sometimes we recognize our own patterns of perception, which are especially typical for our

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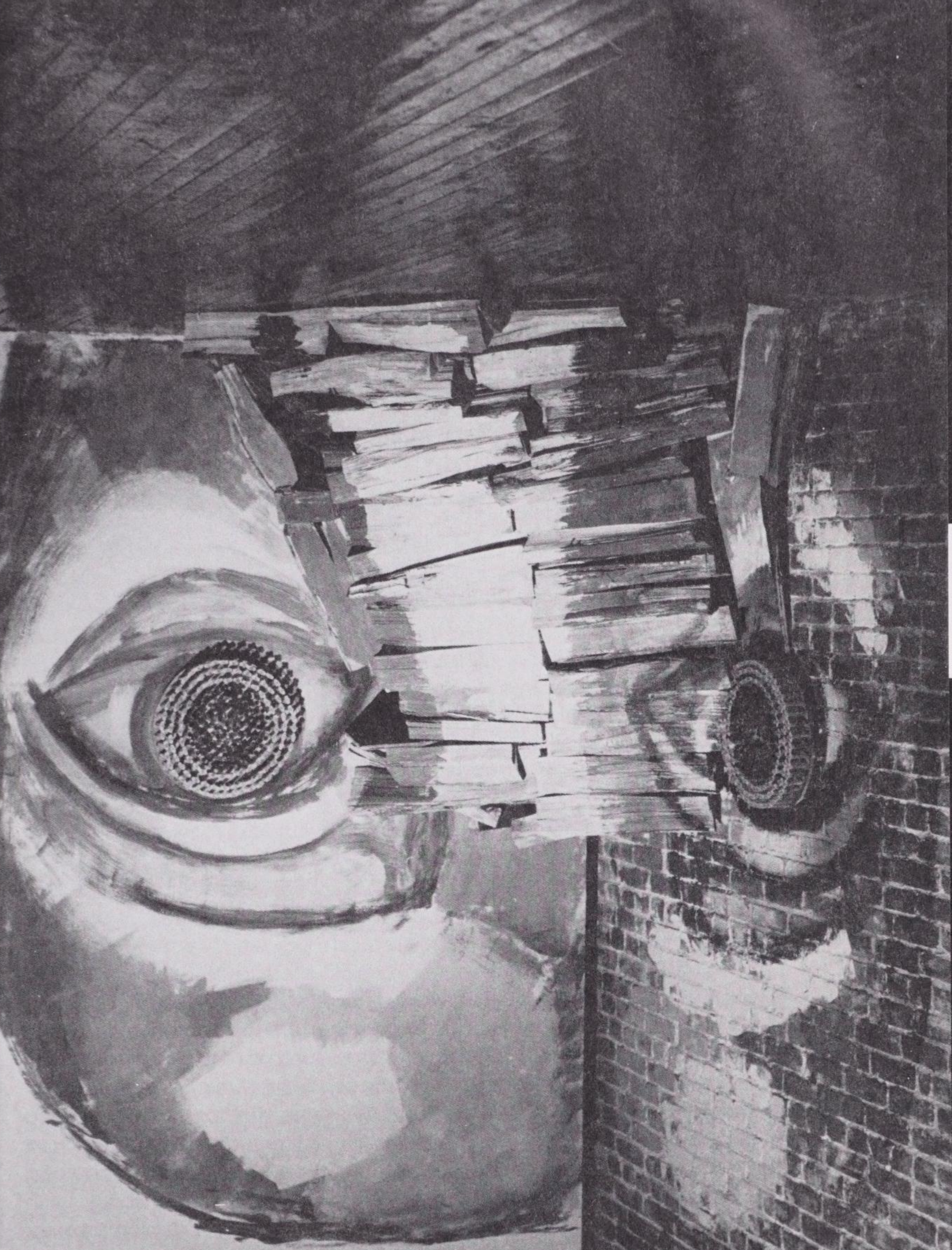
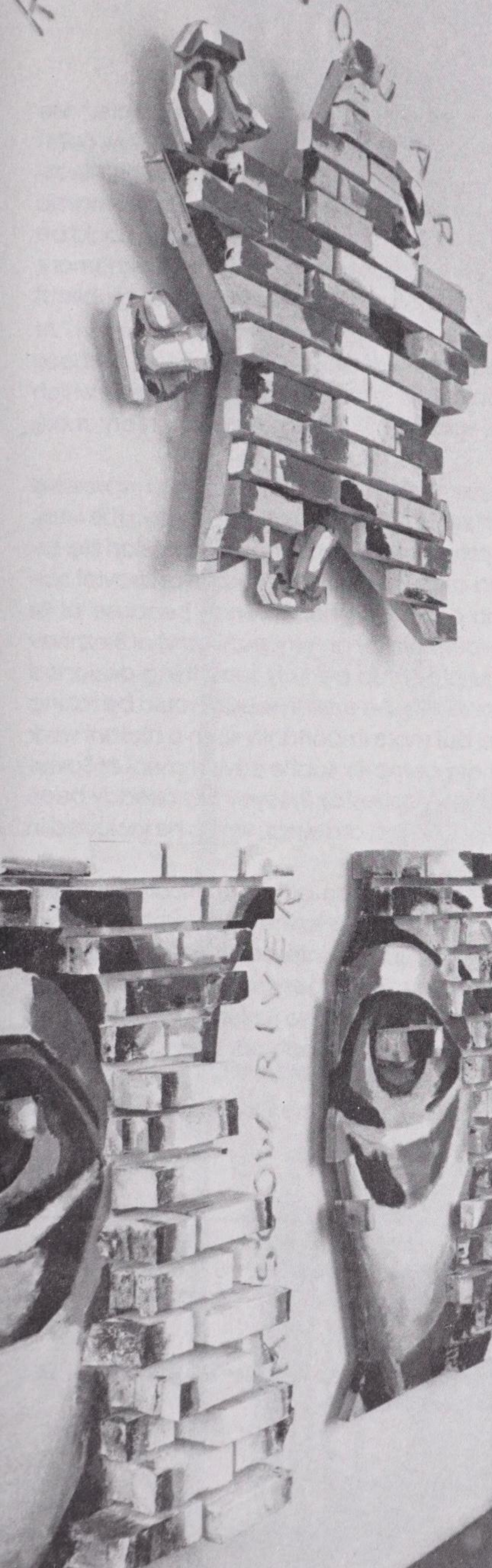
* Norton Dodge and Alison Hilton, *New Art from the Soviet Union*, Acropolis Books, Washington, 1977, p. 48

Valery Gerlovin, *Ancient NY Mosaics*, exhibition at Mattress Factory Gallery, Pittsburgh, 1984. Frescoes, syringe mosaics, wood. Also, installation, *Moscow Streets* at Hal Bromm Gallery, NY, 1985. ▶





series of utopian objects and projects. As long ago as 1977 in an article,* we suggested a prognosis for the prevalent ideas of new artists, that is now coming to pass. The absurd-philosophical approach, ironic play of thoughts in recent group apartment exhibitions, dominated the sterile language of romantic conceptualism or satirical art. The opinion of the younger generation could be used as an illustration of this idea. Sven Gundlakh, a member of Mukhomory, described the eighties as a period when artists got rid of the "publicist language", that "ultimately exploited, in trivialities, the methods of Sots Art." At the same time his generation "buried an extremely complicated, verbose presentation. In other words, attention became focused on the work itself, which was simpler, more emotional, and, with the abolition of commentary, more paradoxical." * *

Samizdat is an archetypal example of the vitality of art in a repressive situation. Possessing an ambiguous language and existing between the lines, as it were, it interprets the different problems of contemporary Russian life. Exported from Russia, Sots Art (named after Pop Art) is based on antisoviet sardonic devices; it later became an emigrant phenomenon because of its caricatural political denotation. A sculpture by an emigrant artist of Brezhnev wearing a state emblem as well as a pop-up penis is something designed merely to entertain an American sensibility. An artist in Russia would be taking a great risk to show such a sculpture, but more importantly such a blatant work would not be appreciated in the more complex subtle environment of Soviet Russia. For example, the Moscow artist Vyacheslav Sysoyev has already been in prison for two years because of his political drawings, which he included in several albums and books.

We will now say something about Russian artists' political language, which is subtle and deep. It is usually juxtaposed to the eye-catching official art. Sometimes, American critics find it difficult to interpret this language that comes from national traditions and symbolic images, and that is dictated by the social atmosphere. The work of art becomes valuable if, beside its political statement, it has an imaginative philosophical background: in a word, art.

Especially in the countries of Eastern Europe the language of art has this

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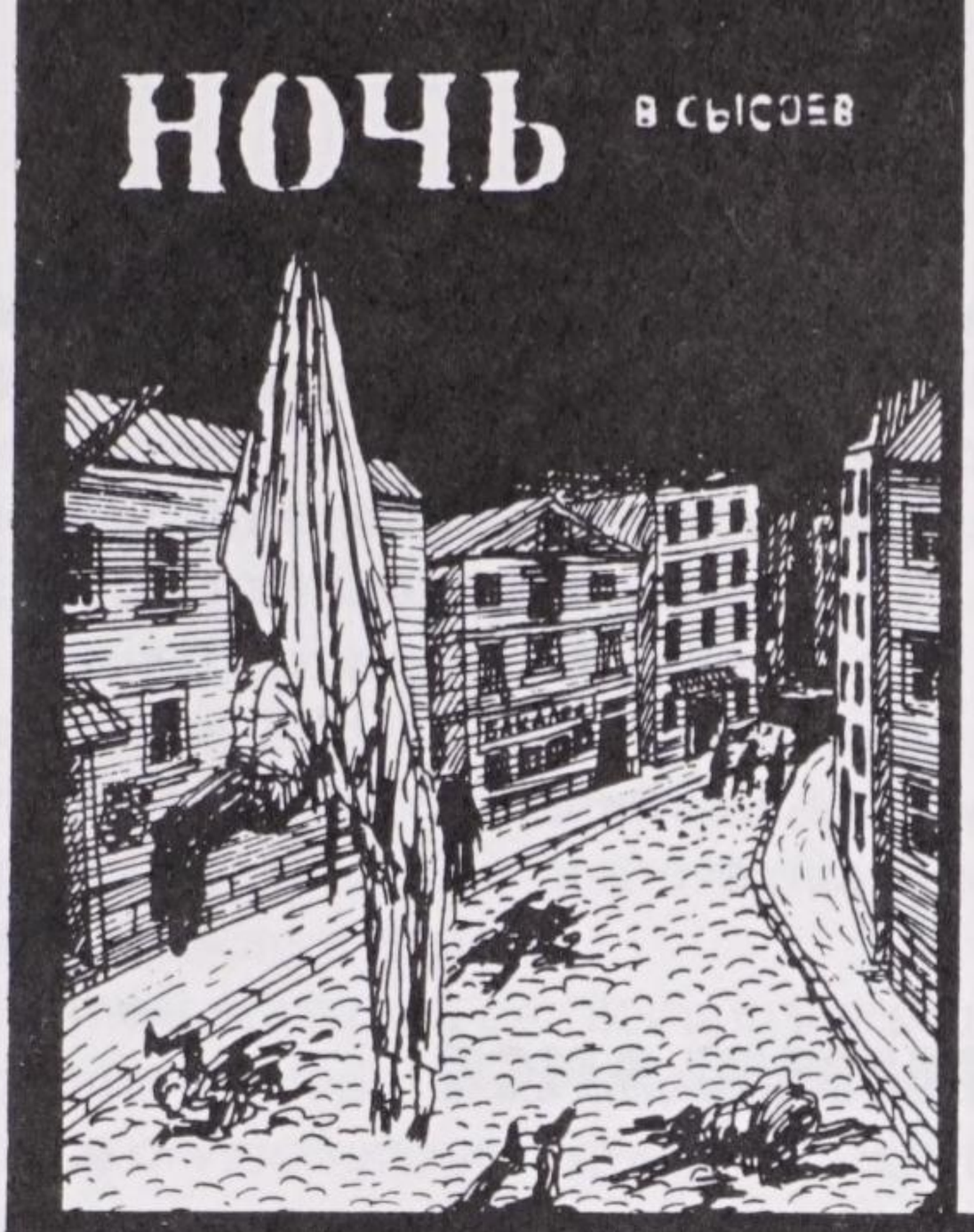
* It appeared in print as "Rimma and Valery Gerlovin", *A-Ya*, #1, 1979, pp. 16-20

* * Sven Gundlakh, "Aptart (Pictures from an Exhibition)," *A-Ya*, #5, 1983

Vyacheslav Sysoyev, Noch (Night), Moscow, 1984, 52 pp., 4¾" x 6½"; 12 cm x 16.5 cm. Reprinted from *A-Ya* (Literature issue #1), 1985.



В. СЫСОЕВ

НОЧЬ

НЕСКОЛЬКО РАССКАЗОВ О ДАНИИЛЕ ХАРМСЕ

1984 ©

БЕЗ СОГЛАСИЯ АВТОРА НЕ РАСПРОСТРАНЯТЬ!

5

Ночь

Однажды ночью в квартиру, где жил Даниил Хармс, раздался звонок.

Даниил Хармс подошёл к двери и не открывая её, спросил:

–Кто там?

–Откройте...–сказал за дверью грубый голос

–Это, наверно, Алексей Толстой?–спросил Хармс.

–Нет.

–Тогда, может, Леонов?

–Нет.

–Зощенко?

–Нет.

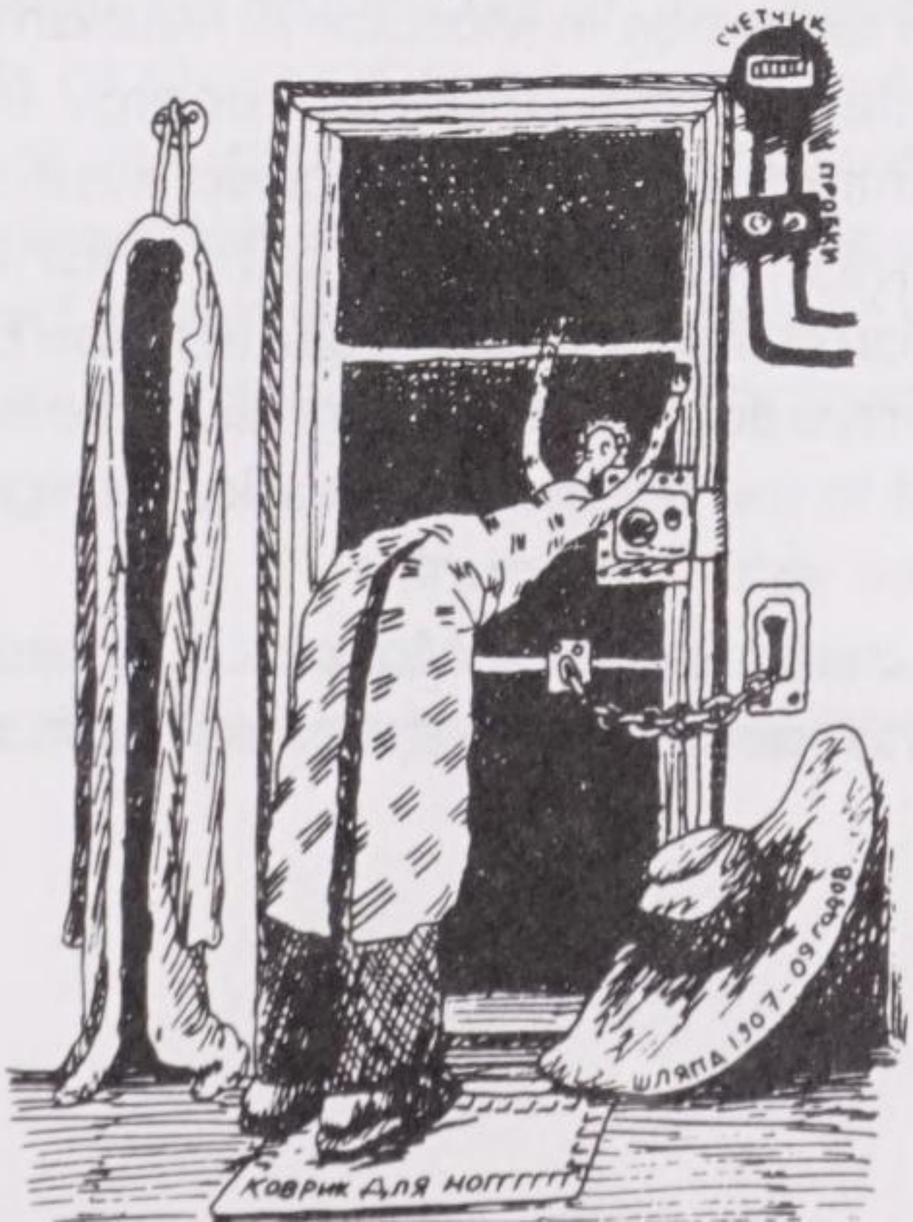
–Пильняк?

–Нет.

–Валентин Катаев?

–Нет.

6



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–Может, всё-таки, Зощенко?

–Нет.

–Алексей Толстой?

–Нет.

–Федин?

–Нет.

–Бабуинов?

–Нет.

–Пантелеев?

–Нет

–Аронсон, Бабель, Венчегонов, Гогия, Дмитриев–Есенин, Житков?

–Нет.

–Так кто же это, в конце концов?

–А вы откройте дверь и увидите,–вкрадчиво сказал голос.

–Я боюсь,–тихо ответил Хармс.

–Чего же, Даниил Иванович?

–Я боюсь, что вы меня арестуете.

–Да что вы, ей богу, дурака ва-

ambiguous flavor, that sometimes makes art more permanent. Perhaps the sense of our explanation can be expressed best in this passage from Keats' "Hyperion":

> For to bear all naked truth,
> And to envisage circumstance,
> all calm
> That is the top of
> sovereignty.

BEAR (NO) RESEMBLANCE

After tedious Vienna the frenetic activity at New York Kennedy Airport reminded us of our native land. Our first evening in America was spent at the Murray Hill Hotel in a room with a big color TV set secured with an ancient anchor-sized chain. Accustomed only to seeing New York on postcards from a bird's eye view, we literally came upon the Empire State Building: its dusty limestone wall was about ten yards from our hotel window. The only artists we knew in New York, Komar and Melamid, met us with a joke: in America people are buried standing up, because land is so expensive.

Luckily, our first week coincided with the visit of Mirella Bentivoglio, an Italian artist and one of the organizers of the Venice Biennial. She gave us our first introduction not only to the town, but also to Jean Brown, collector of Fluxus and Dada, who has been our good friend through all these years. Sometimes the very first impressions remain truest and most memorable. Since this time we have met hundreds of people, but, as usually happens in New York, all these smiling faces appeared easily and later melted away even quicker without a trace. In New York 1980 was the last year for the Avant-Garde Festival and the beginning of New Wave and the regeneration of commercialism that dislodged the non-profit mentality, at least for a while.

Born in a vast, strategically important country, we could choose to live only in a country of similar extremes. In Moscow American art used to look the most intriguing: young, international and full of energy. It was clear that we could only go to this country, that *Pravda* criticized most. Once, the surrealist artist Dorothea Tanning, the wife of Max Ernst, told us that "New York was like a shot in the arm for European artists and intellectuals in the beginning of the forties, too. It worked both ways. But for some surrealists like Breton, it was a temporary prison." In contrast to the Europeans, Russian emigres in our time cannot either return to or even visit their country.

The art world was designated by Marx as a superstructure based on ideology; nevertheless, this spiritual superstructure has had a more indepen-

dent and longer lasting life than all transient regimes. Now in an era where ideology has replaced myth as a life concept, America and Russia despite their different make-up have become the best examples of mass consciousness. Their varied outlooks create different esthetics: the Russian is based on ideology; the American on financial hegemony.

Side by side with advanced armament and political power, both societies display a great deal of atavism. Russia revels in dictatorship and an impoverished material existence, while the USA enjoys such undemocratic elements as poor social medicine and overpriced jurisprudence, and an underdeveloped intellectual tradition.

One of the most significant problems in the structure of any society is censorship, which is inculcated in childhood. The Soviet concept is to forbid the public appearance of independent individual creativity, unless it can be defined as Socialist Realism. Wearing a horrible optimistic smile, this abstruse pseudoacademic school serves the purposes of propaganda in its own way. That is why the best art work remains underground and constantly corrodes the official school, which is slowly becoming more flexible.

In the USA everything is censored by the marketplace that permits nothing other than to "epater le bourgeois," but at the same time it offers incomparably more opportunities than in Russia. Accepted as a commodity, art must pass through the censorship of today's supermarket, which according to Leo Castelli (one of its creators) replaced the grocery store. Though many American artists are not satisfied with the concept of art as a merchandizable item, that unhappiness has not produced an antipode. Consequently, many years ago, Marcel Duchamp expressed his opinion that real art has to be underground.

Dimitry Shostakovich, when visiting the USA, was once asked whether Russian composers can write experimental music. He answered: "Yes, you can write whatever you want, but you cannot perform it." The American composer Otto Luening remarked that for his part "you can perform it here all right, but it makes no difference." *

The freedoms promised in the Soviet Constitution are far more numerous than those experienced in real life, yet for the average citizen in the USA, decent freedom starts at $100,000 a year, as an American passenger suggested to a friend of ours, an emigre artist and taxi driver. This is obviously a metaphorical exaggeration, as American personal freedom of choice can hardly be compared to that within Russia. Nevertheless, the word "freedom" has started to lose its real semantic sense in both languages: Compare Rus-

* This story was told to us by the American composer Bill Hellerman

sian "freedom of election" with the American maxi-pad "New Freedom."

Here we come to the most important question for an artist: what role does art play in society? In Russia literature and art have always had a nourishing power to influence human minds. The hungry market in Russia easily absorbs an average book of poems printed in a run of 100,000 copies. Recently, the selected works of poet Alexander Tvardovsky were published in one million copies. How many books of Allen Ginsberg's were printed to saturate the American market? American novelist Bel Kaufman, who recently visited Russia wrote: "Russians are great readers . . . I wonder if, offered our television shows, Russians would still read books and recite their beloved poets? I think they would." * The official readings by Evtushenko, Voznesensky, Akhmadulina or

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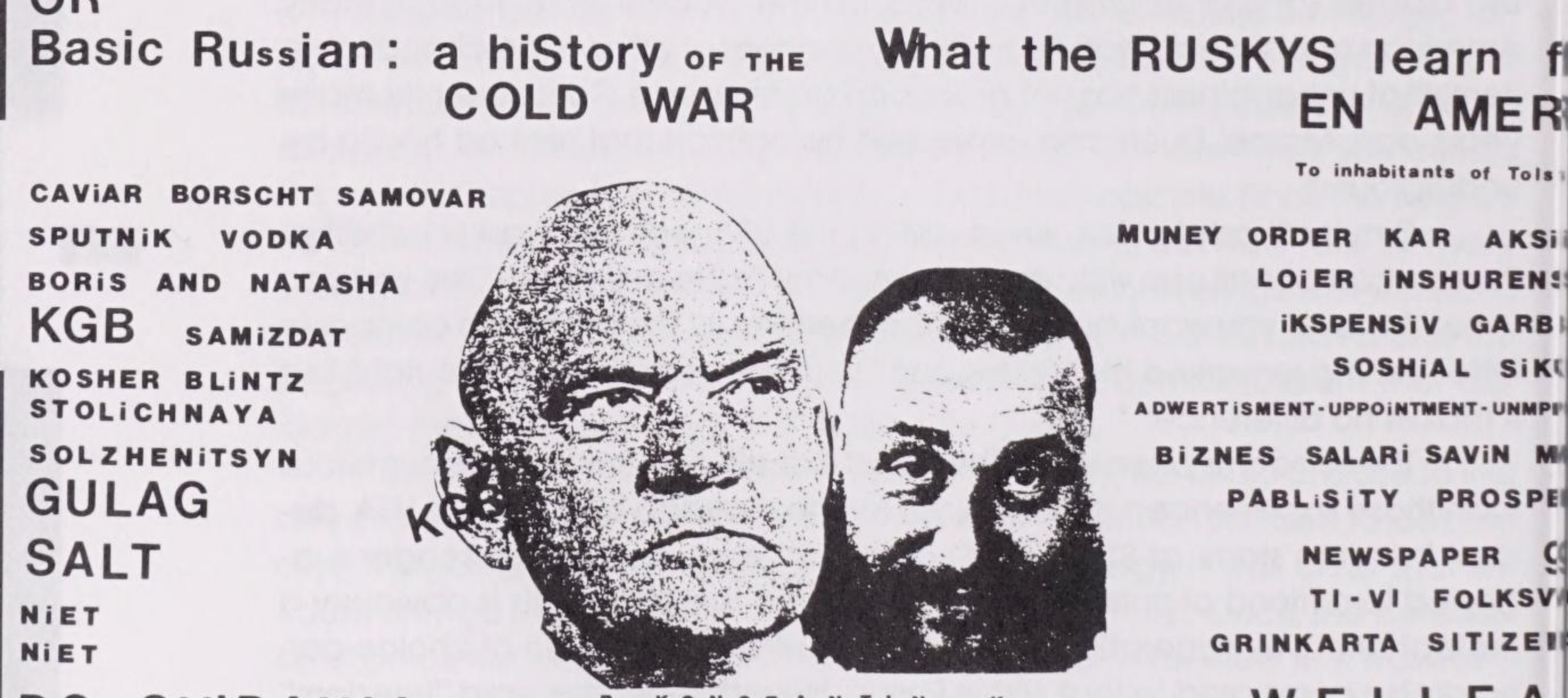
* *TV Guide*, Aug. 31, 1985 #1692, p. 7



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Konstantin Kuzminsky *Basic Russian*, poster, Austin, TX, 1979.

other well-known poets in huge stadiums still attract as many people as concerts by rock superstars here.

As Osip Mandelstam said in the thirties: "Poetry is loved in Russia; for

Anatol Ur, *Paper Man*, NY, 1984, 77" x 75" x 3", 196 cm x 190 cm x 8 cm, assemblage.

poetry people get killed." The power of the language of poetry and art stirs up the troops of severe censorship. That is why even quite innocent abstract art, which is completely apolitical, does not escape the authorities' attention. One small misstep can entail serious consequences and new demands. In spite of such pressure, art has not been converted into a factory item where, according to Marx, "the process of production disappears in the product."

In Russia historically, the tradition of icon paintings was innately connected with their painters' spiritual practice. The search for some sincerity, light or inhuman absolute could easily be discovered in Michael Larionov's theories of Rayonism, in Vladimir Tatlin's ideas for constructivist towers, or in the ambivalent neoplasticism of Vasilii Kandinsky.

The artist, as a member of the creative intelligentsia,* receives ambiguous treatment at the hands of the other classes: suspicion blended with interest and inner respect. The figure of the artist in society, which is structured on the profit motive, did not attract the attention of the American people until recently. Now the artist has become more and more of a public image elaborated by the mass media. At the same time the good artist has now about the same chance as a good actor in Hollywood. Sometimes, artists here choose their profession quite randomly, as if they were choosing some temporary business suitable for a particular situation in an everchanging frenetic environment. According to gallery owner John Weber, "I don't want an artist who decides to become an architect, musician, or plumber because of slow sales during his first five years." **

Russians are more involved in the concept of shaping the world, rather than commercial or esthetic values. Communications among creative people are based more on exchange, rather than consumption and self-promotion. In any case, we found that personally we have more in common with American writers, poets and composers, than with our own artist colleagues. The famous American expression "not in ideas but in things" contradicts Russian and European sensibilities–"not in things but in ideas."

Sometimes, under intense social pressure, Russian non-material values become excessive and theatrical, as the text on one Russian painter's canvas

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* In Soviet terminology intelligentsia denotes a social stratum or class consisting of those people who work in such fields as science, technology, and culture. There is no corresponding term in the English-speaking world for the intellectual community.

* * Laura de Coppet and Alan Johns, *The Art Dealers*, New York: Clarkson N. Potten, p. 203

Vagrich Bakhchanyan, *Lolita*, NY, 1978, 11" x 9"; 28 cm x 23 cm, collage. ▶

LOLITA

VLADIMIR NABOKOV

shows: "How shall I portray the life of a soul?" This question evoked similar emotions from us, several years later, but of a completely different nature. We were asked by an artist at the opening of an Eastern European group show in New York: "How do you write in Russian – from left to right or vice versa?"

Incidentally, we should say that Russians know much more about Americans, despite the unavailability and the deteriorated form of Soviet media, than Americans do about their Russian counterparts. Conservative Russian education, despite overwhelming doses of Marxism-Leninism and its avoidance of modern issues, does not leave big cultural gaps. The old Russian custom of questioning everything is at the same time a shield against political propaganda. The average Russian will display the flag on his house, only if he is asked to do so by the authorities. It is a regular European custom not to demonstrate romantic patriotism toward one's government.

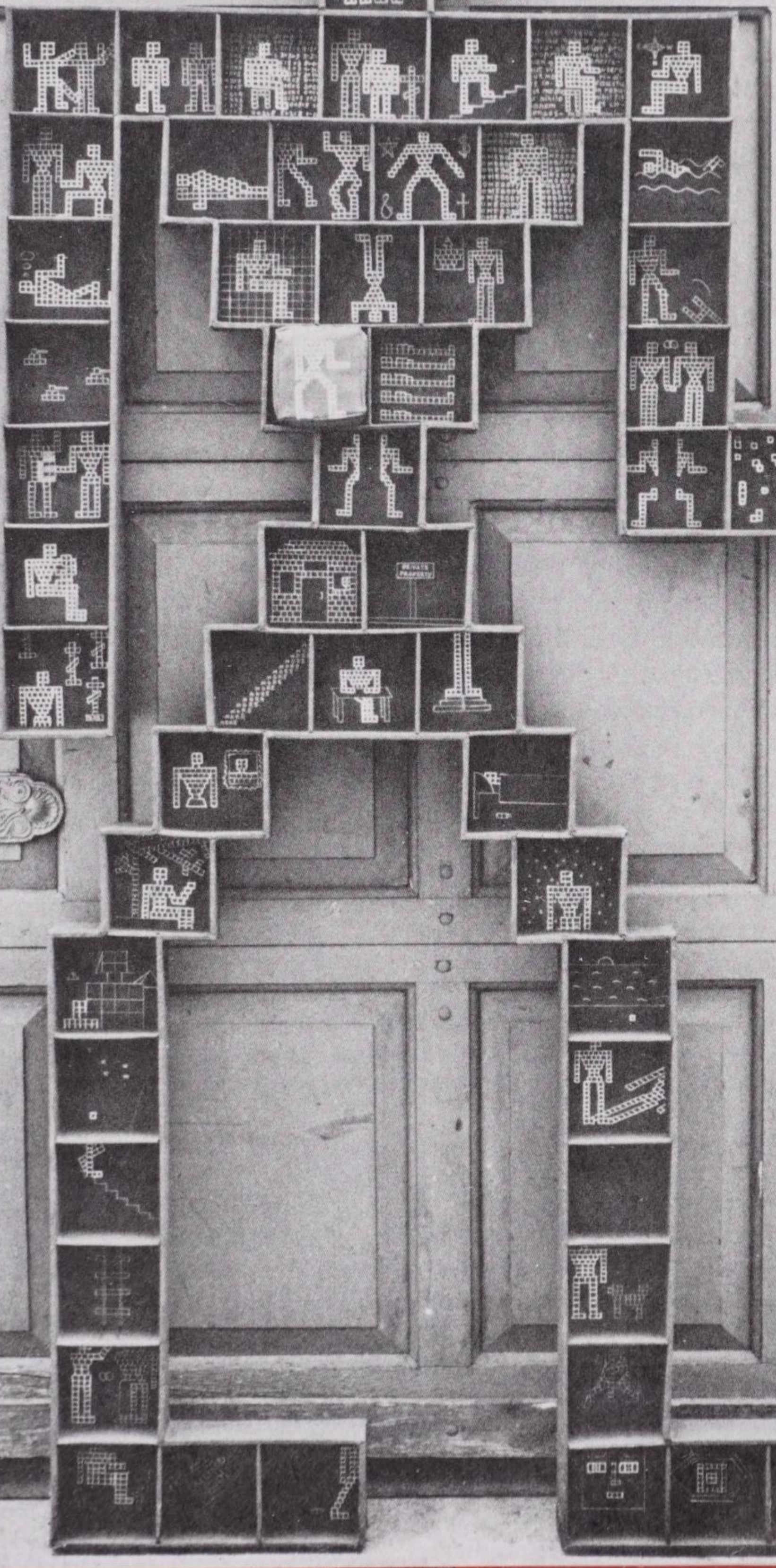
Historically, the American community is based on Protestant individualism and private property. Russian *Sobornost* (Ecumenicity) contains as its central idea the notion of the simultaneous descent of the Holy Ghost on the whole congregation; this, of course, presumes a general acceptance of collectivism. As Peter Verkhovensky in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* says, the Russian revolution will unfailingly start with atheism, but in the end Russians would make "a religion of atheism."

Now, contemporary Western artists generally refuse to harbor any nostalgia for their lost faith. Religious programs on TV look like ominous kitsch. Paradoxically enough, the failure to promote religion produced the opposite effect. The Russian Orthodox Church, restricted like modern art, led the Russian intelligentsia to hold a sympathetic and respectable view of it on the intellectual, not the dogmatic level.

The emancipation of women and gay liberation are not issues in Russia as such movements are a privilege of democratic society; Russia is a world where there exist equal opportunities for the suppression of all. On the other hand, historically speaking, women in Russian literature have always been interpreted with delight and respect. Sufficient proof will be found in the heroines of Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Goncharov or Pasternak. In the history of Russian Avant-Garde art and poetry, there are many important women who made valuable contributions to Russian culture.

The reader might ask why in fact did so many artists and poets leave Russia, this dangerous but alluring creative underworld. The constant collision with the ever vigilant eye of the authorities, the lack of a natural and open en-

Rimma Gerlovina, *Hagiography of Man*, NY, 1983, 82" x 46" x 4"; 209 cm x 117 cm x 10 cm, plywood covered with fabric, acrylic. The life story is told in a sequence of scenes from head to feet. ▶



vironment for art, a secluded way of creativity; sooner or later all these factors become burdensome. Personal fatigue and depressed imagination certainly do not happily influence the art process.* For us, that idealistic enjoyment of art that is not reflected in the surrounding reality is reminiscent of the innocent pleasures of youth that sooner or later pass. Now that we have left Russia, our memory receives images that are constantly improving.

Instead of realizing a classless society, the Soviet system has placed absolute ownership of the entire property of the state in the Communist Party, something that the Rockefellers and the Morgans cannot get in the most unbridled capitalism. As Sidney Hook predicted: "The fundamental conflict of our age is not between capitalism and collectivism, but between democracy and totalitarianism." * *

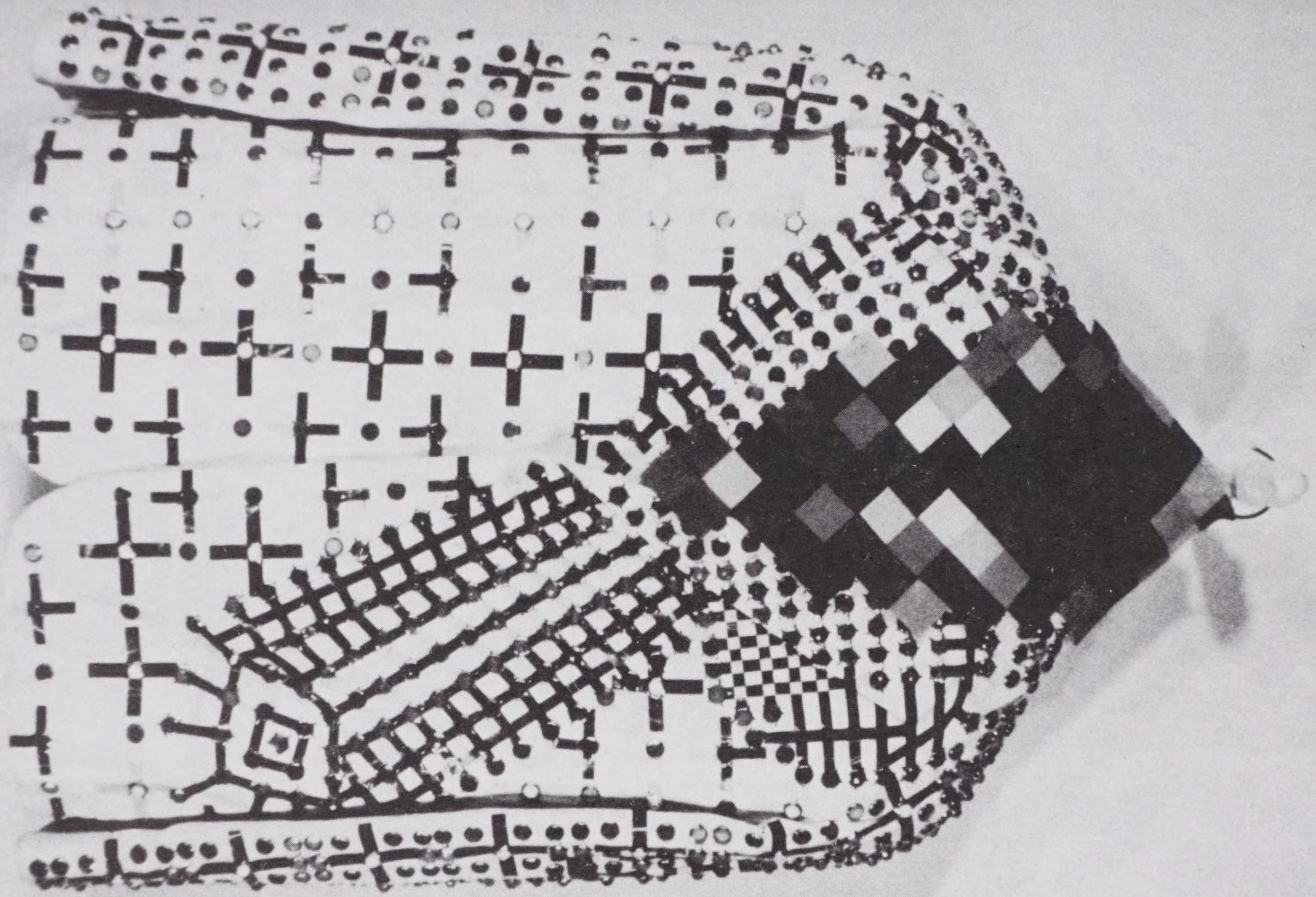
The lack of an art market in the USSR has two sides. The positive one is that unofficial art is much more independent and survives not through dealers' merchandizing and promotion, but through pure art itself. There are no curators or dealers, namely no middlemen, who have become practically a cultural form in the West. Official Soviet art criticism is too elusive and dogmatic and operates within the state's imagery, to have any historical deposit, while unofficial criticism is too weak and underdeveloped. On the other hand, such a purified art can cause art to shrink into itself, thus slowing growth and fostering megalomania.

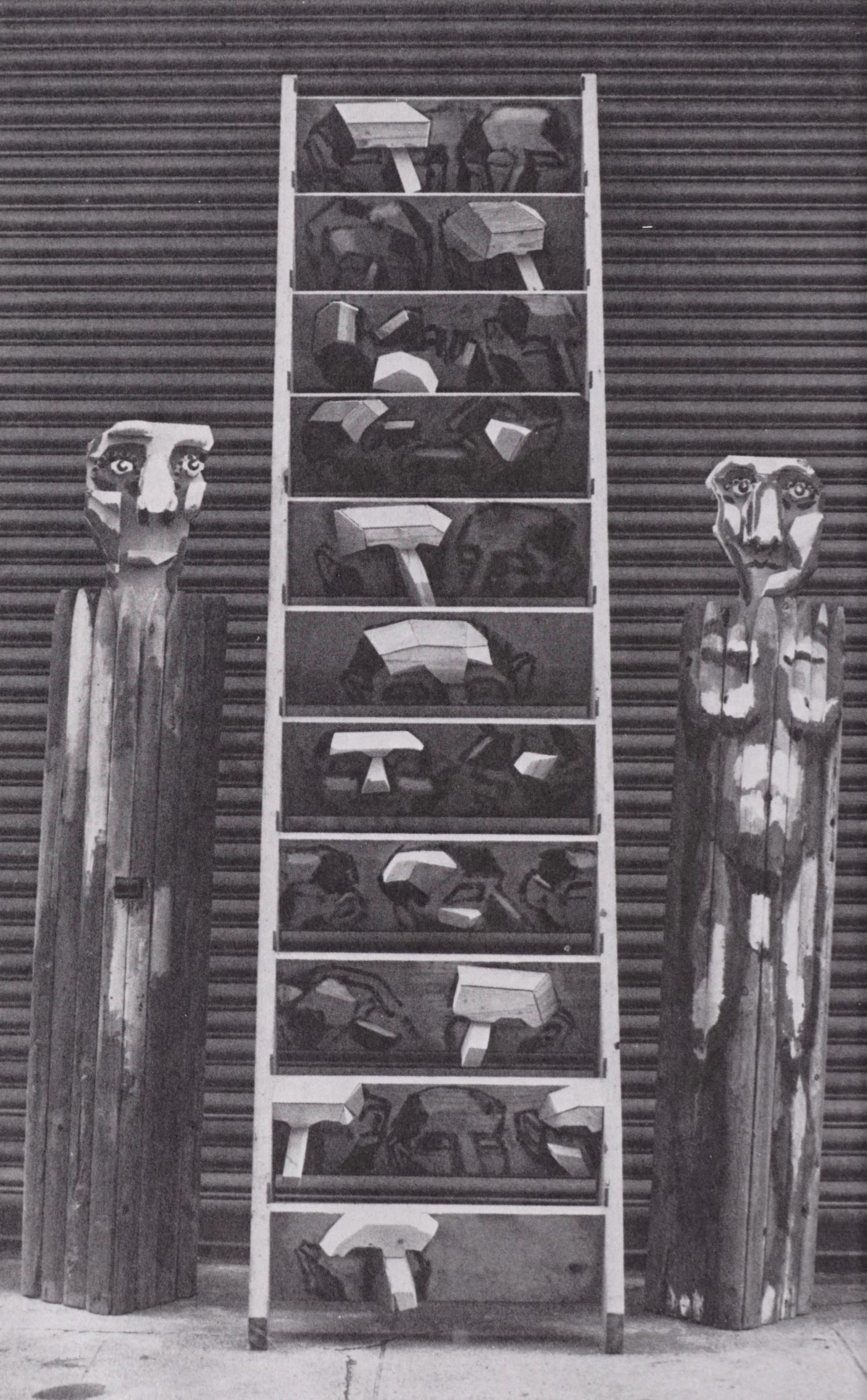
Art competition in the West has a dynamic power that influences esthetic standards and enjoins self-discipline. Boisterous American business energy is a permanent vehicle for progress, with this by-product: the mass media devalue and trivialize culture. The market happily consumes all secondary goods: from the impersonators of rock stars to the imitators of last season's

* For example, the talented Russian artist Alexander Kosolapov, who did lively Soviet pop art in the seventies, padded his resume by including such imaginative fictitious group exhibitions as "Black Square" and "Blue Rider" in 1973-74 in Moscow, and especially his one-man exhibitions in the major official galleries *Kuznetskii Most* and *Begovaya*, although he was not a member of the Artists' Union (catalog of the Bochum Museum exhibition *20 Jahre Unabhaengige Kunst aus der Sowjetunion*, 1979, p. 108). In contrast, Soviet artist Dmitry Zhilinskii, member of the Directorate of the Russian and Soviet Artists' Union and member of the Academy of Arts, had his first one-man show in Moscow only in February of 1985.

* * Political Power and Personal Freedom, *Criterion*, 1959, p. 75

Henry Khudyakov, *Day Time I Love NY Jacket*, NY, 1979-81, plastic and handmade studs, mystic tape and colored cloth on white coat, photo and collage.





slick art success. But despite this chaotic environment and sham standards of judgment, a sense of discovery still goes through the bubbles. Years ago Dylan Thomas bitterly remarked in his *Collected Letters* (MacMillan, 1986): "I went on all over the States, ranting poems to enthusiastic audiences that, the week before, had been equally enthusiastic about lectures on Railway Development or the Modern Turkish Essay; and gradually I began to feel nervous about . . . the job of writing."

However, an environment of unstable luck and confused pluralism cannot ensure that many serious American artists will become part of their national history. The Russian feeling of historicity raises more profound hopes in artists' hearts. The American mentality has quite a mixed and momentary historical sense like a snapshot. Warhol's idea about everybody being "famous for fifteen minutes" does not make any sense in Russia, because the notion of fame is not so accidental, and when it arrives, it stays. America, a young optimistic nation, is still building its history and mythology, in which television plays a very important role. That is unfortunately noticeable also in its contemporary art language too. Superman is still younger than Heracles.

Once Paul Zelevansky, an American book artist, told us that the contemporary artist always has to struggle as an advertising office. The extreme competition in the art world aggravates this situation. According to *The New York Times*, there are about 90,000 artists in New York. This leads one to believe that we live in a flourishing "beaux art" atmosphere. In spite of all its difficulties this New Babylon attracts thousands of artists from all over the world, including Russia.

The USA is the only country in the world that provides equal rights and opportunities for all newcomers. Americans' friendly attitudes help emigrants overcome many psychological difficulties and become a part of this colorful multilingual world.

Usually, newcomers with simple materialistic aims can adjust much easier. For example, one of our friends, a Russian sculptor, feels completely at home here, despite the fact that he does not speak English. When questioned about this he said: "I do not need to know any language, if I can make a contract for $30,000." The idealistic part of the Russian character, which does not appear in the previous example, is usually the reason for nostalgia.

Often the dogmatism of the new emigrants, even of the bohemians, contrasts with the flexibility of the American lifestyle and different democratic traditions based on Western individualism. As a matter of fact, the Russian emigrant's

◀ **Valery Gerlovin, *Two Totems*, N.Y., 1985, each 75" x 12" x 11" and *Staircase*, N.Y., 1986, 120" x 30" x 9", wood, acrylic, syringes.**

aggressive anti-communist feelings are often nurtured by his homeland's collectivism and totalitarian methods. "The Republican Party is able to hit the Soviets with its big fist of missles," says one of the former members of the Russian unofficial art movement, who is simultaneously confused by the paradox, that American intellectuals congenial to him support the political left. The Russian fear of democratic methods comes from their desperate life experience under the totalitarian type of socialism. Even the word "socialist" has a different connotation in our language. This situation reminds us of the famous song by Russian bard Bulat Okudzhava, who symbolically played on the signs over subway escalators: "Stand on the right; move left."

Sometimes our barbaric customs mixed with passion are repeated here on American soil. It is no secret that the ideological, esthetic and moral contradictions in Russia are frequently resolved by physical brawls, like the one between Malevich and Tatlin, or the cruel escapades of Russian Futurists. In 1982 there was a quite eccentric performance during a ball devoted to the 100th anniversary of David Burliuk, the founder of Russian Futurism, in a luxurious house on Long Island. Several Russian artists, dressed in carnival costumes, excited by the festive atmosphere beat up one of their compatriots.* Meanwhile on the floor, completely naked and drunk, poet Konstantin Kuzminsky was sleeping embracing his wife and his Russian borzoi. Currently expensive paintings by Russian Futurists observed the new generation's "Slap in the Face of Public Taste."

Sometimes we are surprised by the visual similarity of some situations–between, for example, group underground exhibitions in Moscow apartments and East Village galleries where small-scale works mingle with good and amateur pieces. There is an ideological contrast here. Russian artists show in

* The injured party, Victor Tupitsyn, several weeks before, had inspired a letter to *The Village Voice* (April 13, 1982), signed by his wife Margarita, who emigrated from Russia in 1975 when she was only 19 years old. She wrote: "A new possibility to exhibit publicly appeared and the artistic life in Moscow showed markedly new vigor, a micro-revolution of sorts. All that repeated history, since it is well known that the Russian Avant-Garde of the '20's also reached its apogee when it was supported by the authorities and had access to the public." Three months earlier, she gave a different account of contemporary Russian art: "In Moscow in the mid-seventies (there were) two open-air exhibitions in September 1974 (one of which was stopped by bulldozers). It was precisely at this time that the artistic life of Moscow showed markedly new vigor, a micro-revolution of sorts. The two September exhibitions themselves were in a sense happenings with elements of risk and adventure, during which the artists came in conflict with the authorities . . ." (*High Performance*, Winter 1981-2, p. 17)

Invitations for the exhibition *Samizdat Art.* ▶

Reception Wednesday, February 24, 1982
6-8 pm
"Transplantation of Russian spirit"
Opening 8-10 pm
1960 – 1982
Russian samizdat art
Exhibition will be followed by the Gerlovins
works by
Nussberg,
Prigov, Rubinstein,
Sokov, Yagodkin,
Yuditsky, Ilyin, Zlotnikov,
etc.
FRANKLIN FURNACE
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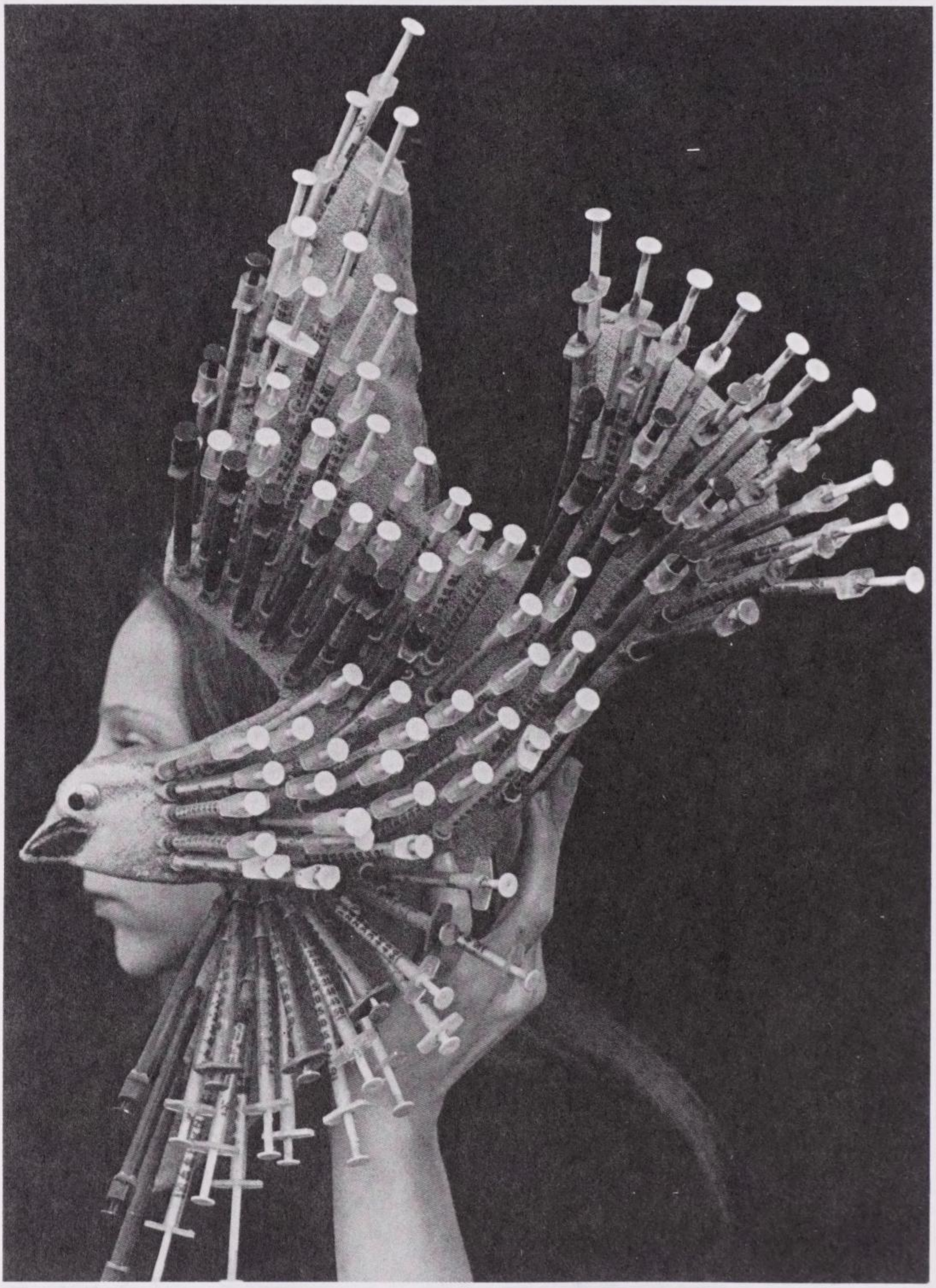
RUSSIAN SAMIZDAT ART
CURATED BY THE GERLOVINS
1960
1982
EXHIBITION AT WPA
DECEMBER 3 – JANUARY 17
EXHIBITION AT VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 17 – OCTOBER 30

RUSSIAN SAMIZDAT ART
CURATED AND DESIGNED BY THE GERLOVINS
JUNE 9 THROUGH AUGUST 11, 1984
OPENING: JUNE 9, 3-5 P.M.
LACE
Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Inc.
1804 S. Broadway Los Angeles, CA 90012



Valery Gerlovin, "A Dove (After Arcimboldo)", from the series *Ancient NY Mosaics*, 1983, 24" x 24" x 8"; 61 cm x 61 cm x 20 cm, syringes painted with oil on polystyrene covered with canvas. Photo by Francis Hauert.

this way, not only because of the lack of other opportunities, but ideally in opposition to the official culture and always with a great deal of risk. East Village galleries appeared first in contrast to commercial Soho, and almost immediately became fashionable entertainment and trendsetters.

Politically conservative, the eighties has had its reflection in art as in a mirror. The reanimation of expressionism in Germany tends to show the revived nationalist spirit after WW II; in the USA this revival is connected with a resurgence of the art market. The mannerist paraphernalia of the 80s is mainly bland and borrowed. Perfect artists for Reagan's time like Robert Longo or David Salle conditionally play the role of an official Academy, which has some conservative features in common with official Soviet Art. According to Kierkegaard's epigrammatic remark, "we live forward, but understand backwards." That is, the academies recognize Cezanne usually one generation too late. According to art critic Robert Hughes, "there is no historical precedent for the price-structure of art in the late twentieth century. Never before have the visual arts been the subject, beneficiary or victim (depending on your view of the matter) of such extreme inflation and fetishisation." *

The acceleration of the rate of social change and the repetition of past patterns in art are peculiar features of our time. In the West international avant-garde theories turn to popular practice, while in Russia they again become elitist and go deep underground. Now, a relaxed derivative eclecticism, which replaced post-conceptual melancholy, sets the general mood. The comprehensive approach that addresses problems is one of the most characteristic aspects of Russian art, especially now when the search for new visual forms is far less important than before.

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* Robert Hughes, "First Harold Rosenberg Memorial Lecture," May 13, 1984, Chicago

The idea of individualism slowly becomes obliterated by time. There is a tendency towards homogenization within society and centralization of political power. Bit by bit, the European countries start to accept socialism. Even in the USA, small businesses are slowly being replaced by big corporations that function, with their special social agendas, as states within the state.

Russia was the first modern country which experimented with socialist society, though with the special feature of an imperialistic dictatorship. The Russian Avant-Garde, which the authorities kept from public view, was taken seriously in the West only recently, almost half a century later. Right now, the ideas of contemporary Russian art, which are very obscure to most Westerners because their social experience is quite different, can be increasingly understood.

We view art life synoptically as an interrelated whole: not as a random mixture, but as an organic union of parts, whose balance is important to maintain, as would be the case in any living organism. This idea became the background for the fifth issue of our magazine *Collective Farm*, which is ironically named "Five Year Plan." * To reveal the exaggerated stratification of artistic reality in a time of political tension, we have chosen artists and writers of various nationalities to illustrate the art factory system in a way essentially different from those methods which capitalist and socialist societies typically use. This is a mystification of planning, while art is a metaphorical reflection of the world's organization.

To put it emphatically, every society tends to unify the human personality. The problem of creativity is indeed closely linked with freedom and anarchy, in the true sense of the terms.

The artistic mind has the intuitive ability to understand civilization in all its syncretism. Through idea, relationship gives meaning to things, while the universal appears through the particular. To illustrate a principle one must exaggerate much and omit much.

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* *Collective Farm*, edited by Vagrich Bakhchanyan and the Gerlovins at 302 Spring St., New York, N.Y. 10013

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Russian Samizdat Art–an exhibition organized and designed by Rimma and Valery Gerlovin.

A musical overture for the exhibition and the performance was composed by Charlie Morrow.

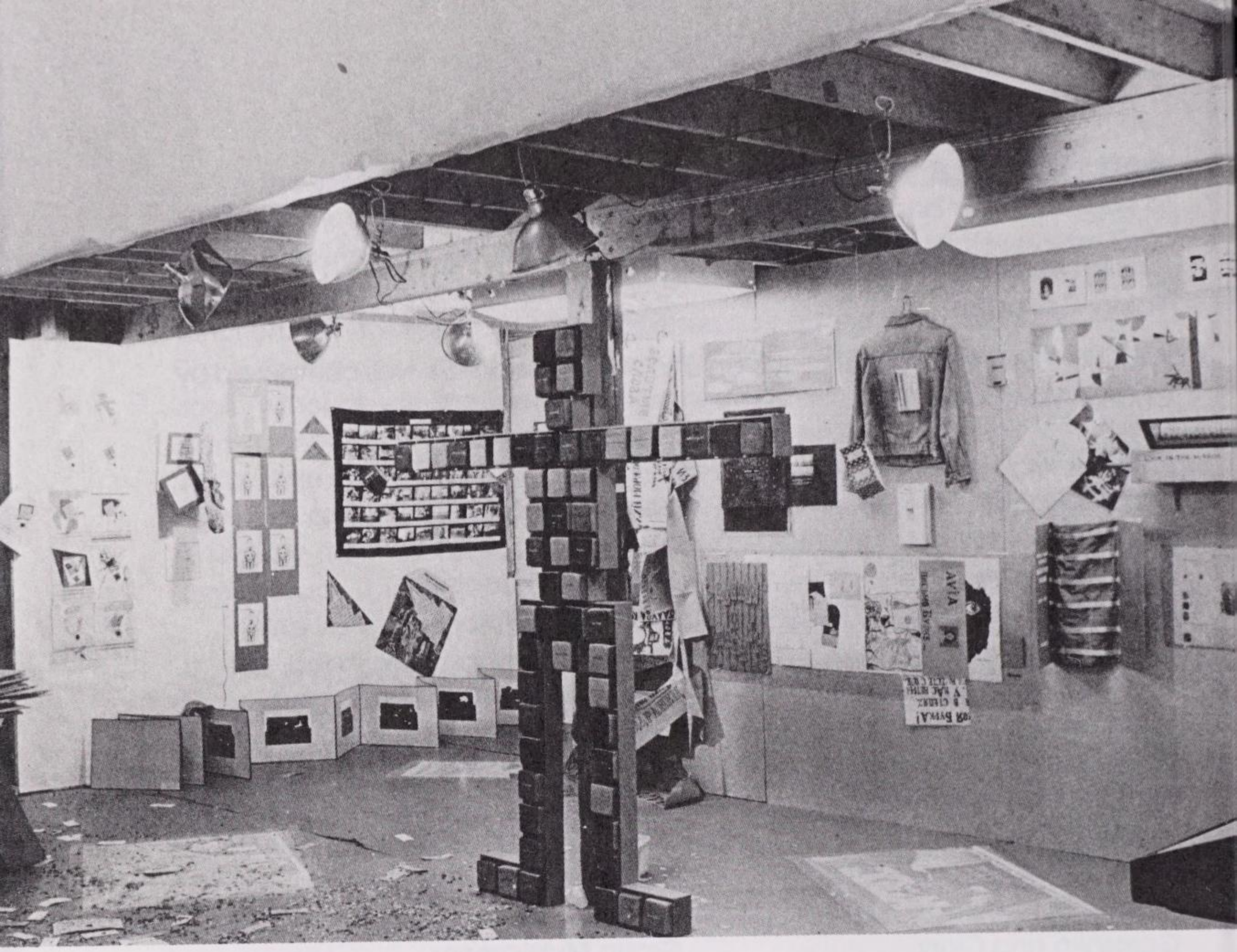
Participants:

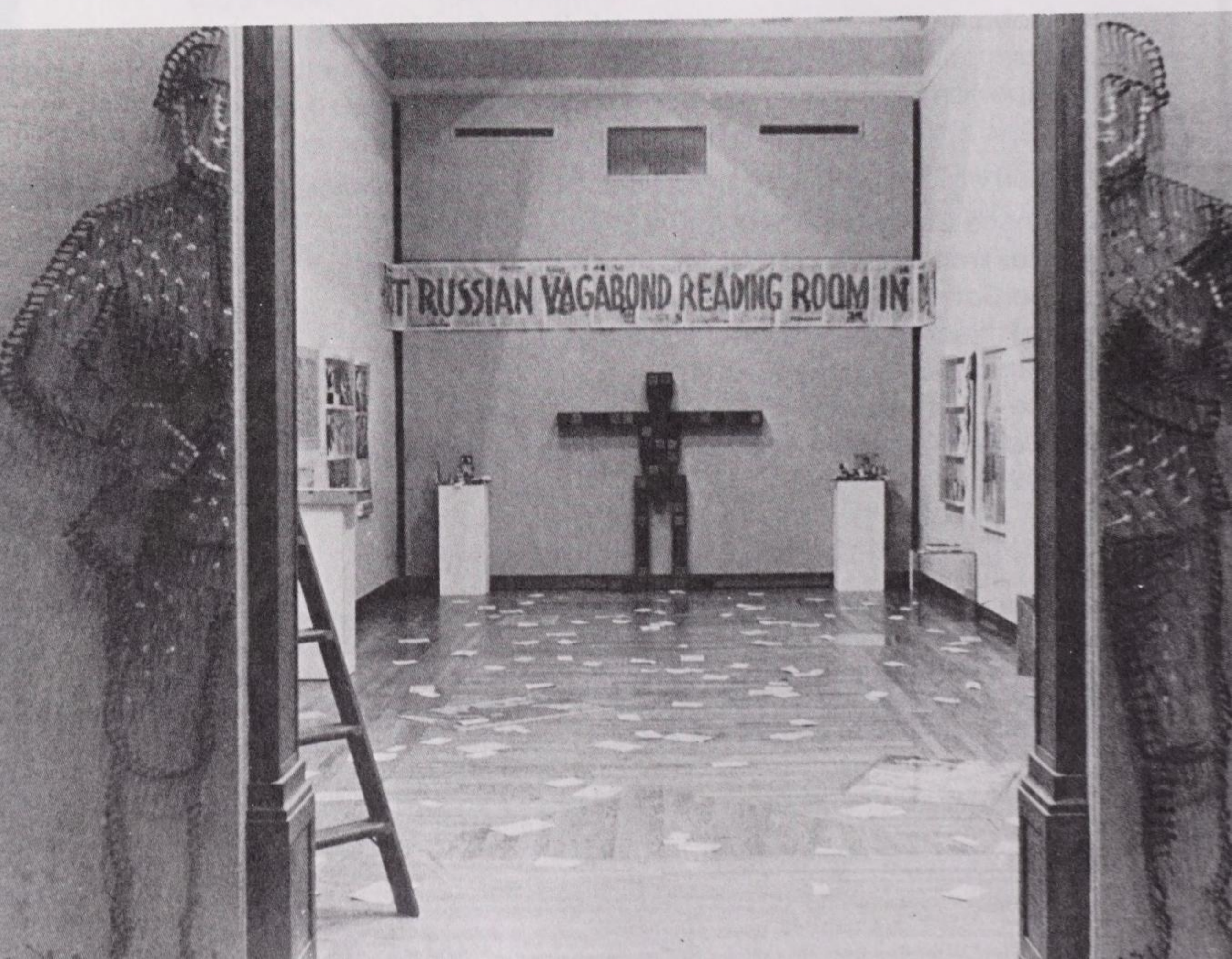
Natalia Abalakova
Andrei Abramov
Nikita Alekseyev
Vagrich Bakhchanyan
Vilen Barsky
Nikolai Bokov
William Brui
Erik Bulatov
Michael Chernyshov
Valery Gerlovin
Rimma Gerlovina
Galina Goloveiko
Goroshko and Clark
Michael Grobman
Ilya Kabakov
Gregory Kapelyan
Komar and Melamid
Henry Khudyakov
Konstantin Kuzminsky
Leonid Kuznetsov
Leo Lapin
Igor Makarevich
Andrei Monastyrsky
Vsevolod Nekrasov
Lev Nussberg
Dmitry Prigov
Lev Rubinshtein
Leonid Sokov
Group Mukhomory
Anatoly Ur
Nikiphor Zayats
Anatoly Zhigalov

The exhibition was held in the following US and Canadian galleries:

Franklin Furnace Gallery, New York City, Feb. 24-April 17, 1982.
Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, N.Y., Sept. 17-Oct. 30, 1982.
Chappaqua Gallery, Westchester, N.Y., Nov. 6-21, 1982.
Washington Project for the Arts, Dec. 3-Jan. 17, 1982-83.
Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York City
(part of the "1984" exhibition), Jan. 26-March 12, 1983.
Anderson Gallery, Commonwealth Univ., Richmond, Virginia, Feb. 15-March 3, 1983.

***Samizdat Art:* views of travelling exhibition curated and designed by the Gerlovins. On the left above: Franklin Furnace Gallery, NY, 1982; below: Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh. On the left above: Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C., 1982; below: before the opening at LACE gallery, LA, during the 1984 Olympic Games.** ▶




RUSSIAN VAGABOND READING ROOM IN

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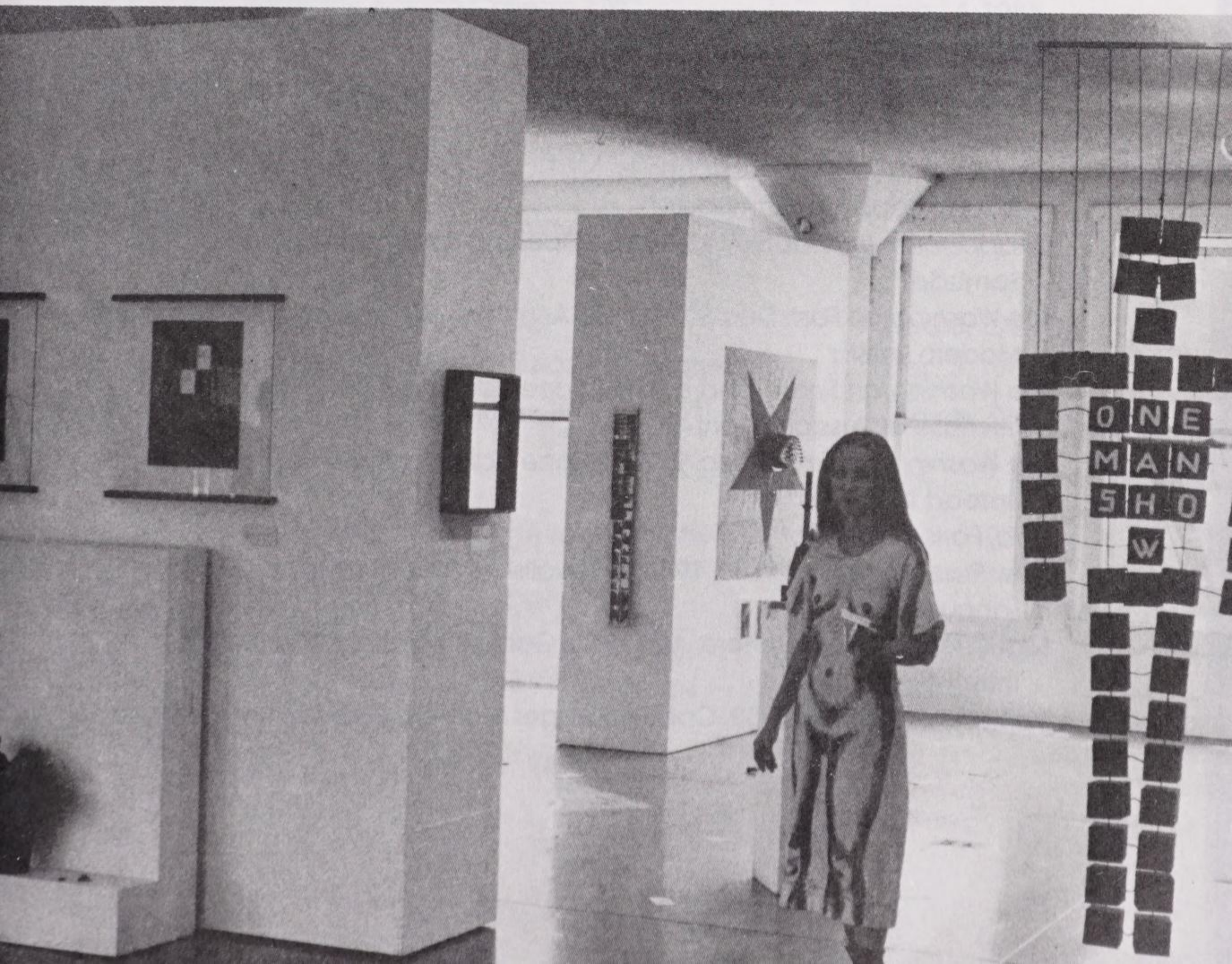
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Western Front Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, April 19-May 6, 1983.
911 Pine Street Gallery, Seattle, Washington, May 24-June 7, 1983.
Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie-Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Nov. 15-Dec. 4, 1983.
LACE Gallery, Los Angeles, California, June 9-Aug. 11, 1984.

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Artforum, Summer 1982, Ronny H. Cohen, "Russian Samizdat Art"
Umbrella, California, March 1982, Judy Hoffberg, "Russian Samizdat Art"
Ear Magazine, NY, V. 7, #3/4, Elizabeth Cook, "The First Russian Vagabond Reading Room"
Flue, Franklin Furnace, NY, #2, 1982, R. & V. Gerlovin, "Russian Samizdat Books"
The Village Voice, March 30, 1982, NY, Lucy Lippard, "Forbidden Fruits"
The Village Voice, April 13, 1982 Letters
Villager, NY, March 18, 1982, Janet Harnik, "This Underground Art"
New American, NY, Feb. 16, 1982, Natalia Sharymova, "Russian Samizdat (Russian Language)"
New Newspaper, NY, Apr. 24, 1982, V. Zavalishin, "About Two Shows (Russian Language)"
City Newspaper, Rochester, NY, Sept. 16, 1982, "Opening at Visual Studies Workshop"
Chappaqua Journal, Westchester, NY, Nov. 4, 1982, Royston Wood, "Is Chappaqua Ready for Samizdat?"
Chappaqua Journal, Nov. 11, 1982, "Opening Reception of the Russian Samizdat"
The Washington Post, Dec. 9, 1982, Jo Ann Lewis, "The Vagabond Art of Modern Russia"
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The Washington Times, Dec. 9, 1982, Jane Addams Allen, "Samizdat Artists Spread the News"
A-Ya, Paris, #4, 1982, "Russian Samizdat Art"
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Exquisite Corpse, Baltimore, Apr. 1983, George Myers Jr., "Two Mini-Interviews"
Vanguard, Summer 1983, Canada, Roger Malbert, "Russian Samizdat Art"

Seven Days, Jan. 13, 1984, A. Batchan, "Samizdat as a Media (Russian Language)"
Novosty, 2.9.1984, V. Zavalishin, "Samizdat in Art (Russian Language)"
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Los Angeles Times, Sunday June 10, 1984, Josine Ianco-Starrels, "Art News at "LACE"
Los Angeles Downtown News, June 26, 1984, M. Teverbaugh, "Russians Part Iron Curtain"
Los Angeles Weekly, June 15-21, 1984, Hunter Drohojowska, "Samizdat Art"
Artweek, July 14, 1984, Marina LaPalma, "The Art of Opposition"

LECTURES WITH SLIDESHOW

Bookworks, an international conference of artists, writers and publishers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Nov., 1982
University of Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania)	Nov. 15, 1983
Carnegie-Melon University, Pittsburgh, PA	Nov. 16, 1983
Pratt Institute, NYC	Feb. 29, 1984
New York City University, Baruch College, NYC	March 14, 1985
Columbia University, NYC	April 30, 1985
Columbia University, NYC	Dec. 9, 1985

INTERVIEWS

Cable News Network, Washington, D.C.	Dec. 3, 1982
Voice of America for the USSR and European Features	Dec. 3, 1982
Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, video	March 1983

NOTES TO THE TEXT (Bowlt)

1. The following publications are of particular relevance to the issue of books compiled and illustrated by members of the Russian avant-garde: V. Markov: *Russian Futurism,* Berkeley: University of California, 1968; N. Khardzhiev and V. Trenin: *Poeticheskaia Kultura Maiakovskogo,* Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1970; *The Print Collector's Newsletter,* New York, 1976, March-April (whole issue devoted to aspects of avant-garde design); G. Harrison (compiler): *Ex Libris 6. Constructivism and Futurism. Russian and Other,* New York: Ex Libris, 1977 (this sale catalog carries invaluable bibliographical descriptions of the items offered); S. Compton: *The World Backwards. Russian Futurist Books 1912-16,* London: The British Library, 1978 (a readable, professional appreciation of the main trends in Russian Avant-garde book design); D. Vallier: "L'avant-garde russe et le livre eclate" in *Revue de l'art,* Paris, 1979, October, pp. 57-67; G.H. Roman: "The Ins and Outs of Russian Avant-garde Books. A History 1910-1932" in *The Avant-Garde in Russia, 1910-1930,* catalog of the exhibition edited by S. Barron and M. Tuchman, Los Angeles County Museum, 1980, pp. 102-09; G. Janecek: *The Look of Russian Literature,* Princeton University Press, 1984 (a scholarly, informative analysis of the visual poetry of the Russian Cubo-Futurists); C. Leclanche-Boule: *Typographies et photomontages Constructivistes en RUSS,* Paris: Papyrus, 1984.

2. The later period of the Urkainian avant-garde, including solid references to the art of the book, is discussed by M. Mudrak Ciskewycz in her unpublished dissertation: " 'Nova generatsiia' (1927-1930) and the Artistic Avant-Garde in the Ukraine," University of Texas at Austin, 1980. Useful information on the Georgian activities is supplied by M. Marzaduri in his book *Dada Russo,* Bologna: Cavaliere Azzurro, 1983; also see M. Marzaduri et al.: *L'avanguardia a Tiflis,* Venice: Universita di Venezia, 1982. The Ukrainians, in particular, produced some very exciting booklets such as *Serebrianye truby* by E. Bagritsky et al. with cover by S. Fazini (Odessa, 1915) and the Pan-Futurist *Semafor u Maibytie* by M. Semenko (Kiev, 1922). Mention might be made of other Cubo-Futurist booklets published outside the main centers such as *Ya. Futur-almanakh vselenskoi egosamosti* which contained the Psycho-Futurist manifesto (Saratov, 1914) and the literary-artistic parody *Neo-futurizm* (Kazan, 1913; actually, the "Kazan" printed on the cover may be a hoax and the booklet might really have been published in Moscow). We should also remember here that many Cubo-Futurist booklets were compiled and advertised, but, for various reasons, did not, in fact, appear. Among the more intriguing are the third issue of *Sadok sudei* (St. Petersburg, 1913); Kruchenykh's *Sinteticheskii bashmak i vorotnichek* with illustrations by Kulbin (St. Petersburg, 1913); Larionov's *Luchistskaia poeziia* (Moscow, 1913); and N. Burliuk's *Sbornik risunkov* (a collection of drawings by the Burliuk brothers, St. Petersburg, 1913).

3. Although the Cubo-Futurist and Constructivist books are always described as extremely rare, they do appear on the market rather often and there are impressive collections of them, both public and private, in the USSR and in the West. They are regularly included in auctions, e.g. in *Printed Books, Maps and Atlases* (London: Sotheby's, 1985, 5 and 19 February) and *Continental Illustrated Books* (London: Sotheby's, 1985, 20-21 June). There have been several exhibitions during the last decade or so that have focused attention

on the avant-garde book such as "Russian Avant-Garde," New York: Carus Gallery, 1975; "Knizhnye oblozhki russkikh khudozhnikov nachala XX veka," Leningrad: Russian Museum, 1977 (scholarly catalog by E. Kovtun); "Avant-Garde Books from Russia, 1910-1930," New York: Franklin Furnace, 1982 (scholarly catalog by G. H. Roman); "Russian Works on Paper: 1913-1927," Toledo: Toledo Museum of Art, 1982. In addition, there have been two major exhibitions devoted to Malevich's graphic work, including the book contributions, i.e. "Malevich. The Graphic Work: 1913-1930. A Print Catalogue Raisonne," Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1975 (scholarly catalog by D. Karshan); "Journey into Non-Objectivity. The Graphic Work of Kazimir Malevich and Other Members of the Russian Avant-Garde," Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1980 (scholarly catalog by J. Bowlt).

4. El Lissitzky and Hans Arp: *Die Kunstismen 1914-1924,* Erlenbach-Zurich: Rentsch, 1925.

5. Zina V. was an eleven year old girl whom Kruchenykh included as the coauthor of *Porosiata.* This was symptomatic of the Cubo-Futurists' interest in the art of children which they collected and studied (especially the Burliuks, Chagall, Goncharova, Larionov, and Alexander Shevchenko). Kruchenykh's gesture was not isolated: Mikhail Matiushin used a drawing by the seven-year-old niece of his deceased wife, the poet Elena Guro, for the cover of the collection *Nebesnye verbliuzhata* (St. Petersburg, 1914), and Khlebnikov insisted that two poems by a thirteen-year-old girl be included in *Sadok sudei 2* (St. Petersburg, 1913).

6. The first edition of the Kruchenykh/Khlebnikov *Igra v adu* appeared in Moscow in 1912 with illustrations by Goncharova; the second appeared in Moscow in 1914 with illustrations by Rozanova and Malevich. According to the bibliophile Alik Rabinovich of New York there seems to have even been a third edition published in Moscow in 1919.

7. On Chagall's in-jokes, see Z. Amishai-Maisels: "Chagall's Jewish In-Jokes" in *Journal of Jewish Art,* Chicago, 1978, Vol. 5, pp. 76-93.

8. D. Burliuk et al.: *Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu,* Moscow, 1912. Translation in Markov, op. cit., p. 46.

9. D. Burliuk: "Golos Impressionista. zashchitu zhivopisi" (1908). Translation in J. Bowlt (ed.): *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde. Theory and Criticism 1902-34,* New York: Viking, 1976, p. 11.

10. G. Tasteven: *Futurizm,* Moscow, 1914.

11. Puni's *Relief with a Plate* (1919) is in the Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. Although, by and large, the Russian Cubo-Futurists were not aware of the Dada activities in Zurich and elsewhere in 1916 onwards, many of their antics and assumptions have close parallels. Puni knew both Kruchenykh and Rozanova (they were all members of the St. Petersburg Union of Youth), although the structural resemblance between his relief and their *gook* is probably fortuitous.

12. While "bibliographically" correct, the dates of these journals are misleading. The last issues of *Mir iskusstva* actually appeared in 1905, of *Zolotoe runo* in 1910 and of *Apollon* in 1918.

13. Mention might be made of, for example, Evgenii Teviashov's *Opisanoe neskolkikh graviur i litografii,* St. Petersburg, 1903; Dmitrii Rovinsky's studies–*Nikolai Ivanovich Utkin,* St. Petersburg, 1884; and *Russkii graver Chemesov,* St. Petersburg, 1878. Vasilii Timm's *Russkii khudozhestvennyi listok,* St. Petersburg, 1851-62 provides a useful panorama of the Russian graphic arts in the mid-19th century.

14. *Le Livre de la Marquise* with Somov's galant illustrations saw several editions (some less explicit than others) in French and German. The last edition was published by Golike and Vilborg in St. Petersburg in 1918.

15. These examples of censor control are quoted in V. Botsianovsky and E. Gollerbakh:

Russkaia satira pervoi revoliutsii 1905-1906, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 11-13.

16. D. Burliuk: *Poshchechina*, op cit. Translation in Markov, op. cit., p. 46.

17. *Sokrovishcha iskusstv v sharzhakh khudozhnikov A. Radakova, Re-mi, A. Yungera, A. Yakovleva* (no author), St. Petersburg, 1912.

18. D. Burliuk, op. cit. Translation in Markov, op. cit., p. 46.

19. Malevich's oil painting, *Composition with Mona Lisa* (1914), is in a private collection in Leningrad.

20. A. Kruchenykh: *T li le*, St. Petersburg, 1914, unpaginated.

21. A. Shevchenko: *Neo-primitivizm* (1913). Translation in Bowlt, op. cit., p. 45.

22. A. Shevchenko: *Printsipy kubizma i drugigh sovremennykh techenii v zhivopisi vsekh vremen i narodov*, Moscow, p. 18.

23. N. Goncharova: Preface to catalog of one-woman exhibition, i.e. *N. S. Goncharova. Vystavka kartin 1900-1913. Katalog*, Moscow, 1913, p. 3.

24. M. Larionov: "Luchistskaia zhivopis" (1913). Translation in Bowlt, op. cit., p. 97.

25. From a prospectus by Depero for the *Chant du Rossignol (Il Canto dell'Usignuolo)* on display at the Civico Museum Depero, Rovereto, Italy.

26. Goncharova's *Airplane above a Train* (1913), now in the Kazan Art Museum, was reproduced in several sources in 1913-14, e.g. in the miscellany *Oslinyi khvost i mishen* (Moscow, 1913) and on p. 27 of the catalog of her one-woman show in St. Petersburg in 1914, i.e. *Goncharova.* It is also reproduced by M. Chamot in her book *Gontcharova*, London: Oresko, 1979, p. 53, and in Compton, op. cit., p. 99.

27. O. Rozanova: "Osnovy novogo tvorchestva i prichiny ego neponimaniia" in *Soiuz molodezhi*, St. Petersburg, 1913, No. 3, p. 21. Translation in Bowlt, op. cit., p. 21.

28. Malevich's *34 risunka*, while carrying the date 1920 on the cover, were published at the beginning of 1921. It is generally assumed that Lissitzky, who headed the lithographic workshop in Vitebsk in 1919-20, supervised the printing of the 34 drawings. See N. Khardzhiev, N. Malevich, M. Matiushin: *K istorii russkogo avangarda/The Russian Avant-Garde*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1976, p. 96. Lissitzky's folio was called *1. Kestnermappe* and was published in Hanover in 1923. The word Proun is an acronym for "Proekt utverzhdeniia novogo" (="Project for the affirmation of the new").

29. For pictorial comparisons in sequential order see Karshan, op. cit., pp. 138-77.

30. N. Burliuk: "Faktura" in *Poshchechina obshchestvennomu vkusu*, Moscow, 1912, pp. 105-06. Although signed "N. Burliuk," the text was by David Burliuk.

31. *AERO* was published in Vitebsk in 1920; *Put Unovisa* in 1921; *Unovis* in 1920-21. For information see L. Zhadova: *Malevich. Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art 1910-1930*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1982, passim. Ermolaeva, a disciple of Malevich in Vitebsk, created the sets and costumes for the studio production of *Victory over the Sun* there in February, 1920 (some costumes also by Malevich). The woodcut design in question (size of edition unknown) has often been reproduced. See, for example, *Die Kunstismen in Russland/The Isms of Art in Russia 1907-30*, catalog of exhibition at the Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne, 1977, p. 54.

32. Lissitzky worked on a number of illustrated books in Kiev, Warsaw, and elsewhere in 1918-23, using folkloristic motifs. The best collection of such books is in the National Library, Jerusalem. I am indebted to Professor Seth Wolitz for bringing my attention to these materials.

33. "The Film of El's Life" in S. Lissitzky-Kuppers: *El Lissitzky*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1968, p. 325.

34. Fine examples of Stepanova's graphic poetry are reproduced in the exhibition catalog *Rodcenko/Stepanova. Alle origini del Construttivismo,* Perugia: Commune, 1984. For reproductions and discussion see E. Kovtun: "Varvara Stepanova's Anti-Book" in *Von der Flache zum Raum/From Surface to Space. Russia/Russland 1916-1924,* catalog of exhibition at the Galerie Gmurzynska, Cologne, 1974, pp. 57-63 (Stepanova's remarkable *Gaush chaba* of 1919 is reproduced there on pp. 143-50); A. Lavrentiev: "The graphics of visual poetry in the work of Varvara Stepanova" in *Grafik,* Budapest, 1982, No. 1, pp. 46-51.

35. S. Kirsanov: *Opyty. Kniga stikhov predvaritelnaia 1925-1926,* Moscow-Leningrad, 1927.

36. Mayakovsky, for example, maintained the tradition of the erotic *double entendre* in his caption for Rodchenko's poster advertising Soviet pacifiers (1923) reproduced, for example, in G. Karginov: *Rodchenko,* London: Thames and Hudson, 1979, ill. 84.

37. A number of avant-garde painters who had been especially active in the early 1920s such as V. Kozlinsky, V. Lebedev and D. Shterenberg "retired" to the more tranquil field of book illustration (especially for children's stories) in the 1930s-50s.

38. A number of contemporary Russian artists continue to use the book as a creative medium, although they have expanded the discipline and connected it to other forms such as mail art and spontaneous performance. Of particular interest are Konstantin K. Kuzminsky's experiments such as his homage to D. Burliuk–*Titka rodiny* (Orange, Connecticut: Goloveiko, 1982). Of equal fascination are the artistic mailings of Tolsty (pseudonym of Vladimir Kotliarov, now in Paris) and the manuscript, handcolored books by Alexei Polev (now living in Jerusalem).

APPENDIX (Bojko)

The bibliography on the subject provides no full list of artists. It is known from various sources that in France in the 192Os and 193Os the following artists stayed for some time or forever. The list covers the first and second waves of emigration:

Nikita Alekseyev
Mikhail Andreenko
Yurii Annenkov
Alexander Arkhipenko
Alexander Arnshtam
Leon Bakst
Vladimir Baranov-Rossine
Victor Barthe
Alexander Benois
Ivan Bilibin
Boberman
Marc Chagall
Jacques Chapiro
Sergei Charchune
Isaac Dobrinsky
Mstislav Dobujinsky
Naum Gabo
Olga Glebova-Soudeikina
Alexandra Exter
Alexander Fasini
Serge Ferat / Yastchembsky
Natalia Goncharova
Boris Grigoriev
Hosyasson
Vasilii Kandinsky
Michel Kikoine
Konstantin Korovin
Pinchus Kremegne
Andre Lanskoy
Michael Larionov
Jacques Lipchitz
Simone Lissim
Georges Lukomsky
Anatolii Lunacharsky
Philip Maliavin
Mane-Katz
Meschaninov
Adolphe Milman
Abraham Mintchine
Vladimir Naidich
Anton Pevsner
Serge Poliakov
Jean Pougny / Ivan Puni
Alexei Remizov
Nicholas Roerich
Genia Rubin
Rybak
Vasilii Schukhaev
Konstantin Somov
Savely Sorin
Chaim Soutine
Sergei Soudeikine
Nicholas de Stael
Dmitrii Stelletzky
Leopold Survage
Pavel Tchelischev
Tereshkovich
Maria Vasiliev
Lazar Volovick
Georgii Yakulov
Leon Zak
Ilya Zdanevich

Sources: Exhibition catalogues–*L'Art Russe a Paris en 1921; Galerie La Boetie*, 1921; *Art Russe Moderne*, Paris 1928. Publications–*Les Artistes Russes a Paris*,

Centre George Pompidou; *Journees de la Culture Russe en France,* Annex for the exhibition *Salon des Independents,* Grand Palais, Paris 1985.

Acknowledgment: I would like to express my appreciation to Mrs. Valentine Marcade and Mr. Jean-Claude Marcade from Paris for the important help they have given me in this work.

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CHARLES DORIA, poet and writer, has been living in New York City since 1976. He recently completed a translation of Giordano Bruno's last published work *De compositione imaginum* (1591) and compiled *Assembling 12,* a collaborative artist-book anthology. His other publications include four books of poetry: *The Game of Europe* (Ohio Univ. Press, 1981) and three volumes in a continuing series of minimal texts: *Short* (1980), *Short r* (1983) and *Shortend* (1985), as well as two anthologies, *Origins: Creation Texts from the Ancient Mediterranean* (1976) and *The Tenth Muse: Classical Drama in Translation* (1980). Presently he teaches at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, where he edits and publishes Assembling Press.

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Russian Samizdat Art is the first book to survey the world of unofficial Soviet art, much of it self-published, often in multiple form. Interpretive essays are included on the historical, esthetic and political backgrounds of this underground art form. Profusely illustrated with photographs and documentation of arists' works.

SZYMON BOJKO is an art critic and historian residing in Warsaw, Poland.

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$19.95

WILLIS, LOCKER & OWENS

ISBN 0-930279-04-2