

МУЗЕЙ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ИСКУССТВА ГАРАЖ

# GARAGE

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

**GARAGE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTS:  
*KHOLIN AND SAPGIR. MANUSCRIPTS***

May 20–August 13, 2017  
Free Admission

This summer, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art presents an exhibition of documents relating to the poetry of Igor Kholin (1920–1999) and Genrikh Sapgir (1928–1999), offering fresh insight into the work of two pioneers of Soviet nonconformist literature. Their names are often encountered together: in literary analysis, in publications on Russian contemporary art, and on children's book shelves.

Kholin and Sapgir met in 1952 and became close allies. Both were members of the first postwar unofficial community of artists and poets, known as the Lianozovo group, and pupils of its leader, artist Evgeny Kropivnitsky. They worked alongside some of the key names in Russian postwar art, including Oskar Rabin, Lydia Masterkova, and Vladimir Nemukhin. Bohemians of the 1960s and 1970s, their avant-garde poetry was unpublishable until the advent of perestroika. They were heroes of the literary underground, pioneers of samizdat, and featured in the first issue of the samizdat poetry journal Sintaksis, published by Alexander Ginsburg in 1959. Both combined an innovative style of writing with a strong commitment to truth, and a genuine interest in the life of ordinary people. They fused expressionism and realism, with an acute sense of the tragedy of the everyday and the poetics of the absurd. Their funny and moving "barracks poetry" quickly became part of Soviet folklore, often quoted by people who had never read the original texts. Kholin and Sapgir led a double life typical of nonconformist writers and artists of the post-Stalin era: showing their work only to a small audience of friends and admirers, they took odd jobs to make a living. Kholin worked as a waiter at the Metropol Restaurant, while Sapgir was an engineer at the Sculpture Studio of the USSR Arts Fund. Both became famous as authors of children's poetry, which was read by generations of Soviet kids. Sapgir also wrote scripts for a number of classic animated films.

Featuring recent acquisitions from Garage Archive Collection, at the heart of the exhibition are manuscripts and samizdat publications donated by artist Viktor Pivovarov, some signed by the authors and many including previously unpublished poems. These are exhibited alongside Pivovarov's illustrations for Kholin and Sapgir's unpublished works, and his sketches for the album Kholin and Sapgir Triumphant. The exhibition also features typewritten texts from the archives of Leonid Talochkin and Igor Makarevich, as well as photographic portraits of the poets by one of the chroniclers of the Moscow underground scene of the 1960s and 1970s, Igor Palmin. To provide a broader picture of the Soviet nonconformist literary scene and the lives of the two poets, the exhibition includes newspaper articles and journal clippings from Garage Archive Collection and photographs from the poets' family archives, as well as recordings of Kholin and Sapgir made in the late 1980s by German researchers Sabine Haensgen and Georg Witte, which were featured in the multimedia collection Lianozovo School (1992).

Garage Library presents its collection of books featuring works by Kholin and Sapgir, including collections of poetry and prose published in the 1990s and 2000s; Kholin and Sapgir's children's books with illustrations by leading artists such as Viktor Pivovarov, Erik Bulatov, and Oleg Vassiliev; and animated films from the 1960s and 1970s scripted by Sapgir.

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*The exhibition is organized by Sasha Obukhova, curator of Garage Archive Collection, with the assistance of assistant curator Ekaterina Lazareva and archivist Antonina Trubitsina.*

**Igor Kholin** was born in Moscow in 1920. In 1927, he was put in an orphanage. After running away, he lived on the streets until he was sent to a children's work camp in the early 1930s. In 1934, he started work at a glass factory in Kryukov, near Moscow, and then became homeless again. In 1936, he was admitted to a military school in Kharkov. From 1937 to 1940, he was assistant engineer at a power plant in Novorossiysk. In 1940 and 1941, he served in the army's music corps and later studied at a military school in Gomel. He saw active service in World War II from 1941 to 1945, and was wounded several times. In 1949, he was sentenced to two years in a labor camp for an administrative offense. During his time at the camp Kholin met poet and artist Evgeny Kropivnitsky and his family, who lived in the neighboring village of Dolgoprudny. He soon became part of the Lianozovo group. Although he started writing poetry in 1949, it was only after meeting Kropivnitsky that Kholin developed his own poetic style and wrote the cycle of "barracks poems" for which he is best known. In the late 1950s, he started writing poems for children and was published officially. His nonconformist works were published only in samizdat, or outside the Soviet Union. In the 1970s, he stopped writing for children and switched to prose, going on to write short stories in the 1980s and 1990s. Kholin died in Moscow in 1999.

**Genrikh Sapgir** was born in Biysk (Altai krai) in 1928. His father was a Moscow engineer who later returned to the capital. In 1944, Sapgir began attending classes at the House of Pioneers and met the poet and artist Evgeny Kropivnitsky, the leader of what later came to be known as Lianozovo circle. Sapgir became part of the group after completing his army service and soon, influenced by Kropivnitsky, switched from traditional to experimental poetry. In the Soviet Union he was well-known as an author of children's poetry and a translator, but his experimental works were published only in samizdat and outside of the Soviet Union. In 1979, his poetry was featured in the samizdat journal *Metropol*, of which twelve copies were initially published, which would later be reissued by Ardis Publishing in the USA. In 1988, Sapgir joined the Moscow Union of Writers and, in 1995, became a member of PEN International. He died in Moscow in 1999.

## GARAGE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Garage Museum of Contemporary Art is a place for people, art, and ideas to create history. Through an extensive program of exhibitions, events, education, research, and publishing, the institution reflects on current developments in Russian and international culture, creating opportunities for public dialogue, as well as the production of new work and ideas in Moscow. At the center of all these activities is the Museum's collection, which is the first archive in the country related to the development of Russian contemporary art from the 1950s through the present. Founded in 2008 by Dasha Zhukova and Roman Abramovich, Garage is the first philanthropic organization in Russia to create a comprehensive public mandate for contemporary art and culture. Open seven days a week, it was initially housed in the renowned Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage in Moscow, designed by the Constructivist architect Konstantin Melnikov. In 2012 Garage relocated to a temporary pavilion in Gorky Park, specifically commissioned from award-winning architect Shigeru Ban. A year later, a purpose-built Education Center was opened next to the Pavilion. On June 12, 2015, Garage welcomed visitors to its first permanent home. Designed by Rem Koolhaas and his OMA studio, this groundbreaking preservation project transformed the famous *Vremena Goda* (Seasons of the Year) Soviet Modernist restaurant, built in 1968 in Gorky Park, into a contemporary museum.

Garage is a non-profit project of The IRIS Foundation.

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## About UNIQLO and Fast Retailing

UNIQLO is a brand of Fast Retailing Co., Ltd., a leading global Japanese retail holding company that designs, manufactures and sells clothing under seven main brands: Comptoir des Cotonniers, GU, Helmut Lang, J Brand, Princesse tam.tam, Theory, and UNIQLO. With global sales of approximately 1.7864 trillion yen for the 2016 fiscal year ending August 31, 2016 (US \$17.31 billion, calculated in yen using the end of August 2016 rate of \$1 = 103.2 yen), Fast Retailing is one of the world's largest apparel retail companies, and UNIQLO is Japan's leading specialty retailer. UNIQLO continues to open large-scale stores in some of the world's most important cities and locations, as part of its ongoing efforts to solidify its status as a truly global brand. Today the company has around 1,800 stores in 18 markets worldwide including Japan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, U.K. and the U.S. In addition, Grameen UNIQLO, a social business established in Bangladesh in September 2010, currently operates several Grameen UNIQLO stores in Dhaka. UNIQLO manages an integrated business model under which it designs, manufactures, markets and sells high-quality, casual apparel. The company believes that truly great clothes should be supremely comfortable, feature universal designs, are of high quality and offer a superb fit to everyone who wears them. With a corporate statement committed to changing clothes, changing conventional wisdom and change the world, Fast Retailing is dedicated to creating great clothing with new and unique value to enrich the lives of people everywhere. For more information about UNIQLO and Fast Retailing, please visit [www.uniqlo.com](http://www.uniqlo.com) and [www.fastretailing.com](http://www.fastretailing.com).

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