

МУЗЕЙ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ИСКУССТВА ГАРАЖ

GARAGE

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

**GARAGE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTS:
*BIDDING FOR GLASNOST: SOTHEBY'S 1988 AUCTION IN MOSCOW***

January 23–February 28, 2018

Bidding for Glasnost continues a series of research exhibitions at Garage devoted to various events and phenomena in the history of Russian and Soviet contemporary art.

On **July 7 1988**, Sotheby's held an auction at the Sovincenter in Moscow that would become the most controversial art event of the Soviet era. Initiated by auctioneer Simon de Pury, more than 100 lots of avant-garde and "unofficial" contemporary works were offered to international collectors flown in especially for the event, watched over by incredulous local artists and intelligentsia, who were not permitted to bid under the legislation of the time.

Bidding for Glasnost: Sotheby's 1988 Auction in Moscow features **raw video footage** of the full sale led by Simon de Pury; new interviews with the organizers and ten of the participating artists; a **virtual reality installation** that transports visitors to the original venue to witness the event; and press reviews and **archival documents** that together reveal the contradictory perspectives which shroud the auction to this day. The exhibition also includes a number of **original lots** from the 1988 sale, such as early twentieth century avant-garde works by Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova; *Fundamental Lexicon* (1986) by Grisha Brushkin, which was the highest-selling contemporary work; and a piece by Ilya Kabakov—*All About Him* (1971)—that was bought by Alfred Taubman—then chairman of Sotheby's board of directors—and presented to the USSR's Ministry of Culture as the founding artwork for a future museum of contemporary art.

The term **glasnost** has been used in Russian for centuries, to refer to or call upon a public process of justice or governance. Various translations as openness, transparency, or publicity, its closest meaning in the English language is freedom of speech. When Mikhail Gorbachev became the Communist Party General Secretary in March 1985, he introduced the term as one of three slogans in his campaign to reform the Soviet Union, calling for glasnost in public discussion, perestroika (restructuring) in the economy and political system, and *novoe myshlenie* (new thinking) in foreign policy. Signifying the changing political landscape of the time, the Sotheby's auction was the last international cultural initiative during the period of perestroika to require special approval by the Soviet government. It also ended up being the most successful example of commercial exchange through culture to ever occur in the Soviet Union, changing the outlook of the Union of Artists and other official channels of the Ministry of Culture, who quickly recognized the benefits of foreign interest in unofficial art, particularly from the surge of foreign currency it brought into the country.

The sale took the Russian and Western art worlds by surprise with its resounding sales, which established the market—albeit fleetingly—for Russian contemporary art. Taking place during perestroika—the period of restructuring Soviet economic and political policies—the event caused the collapse of the stark separation between the Soviet official and unofficial cultural systems; brought rivalry and competition into the art scene; and prompted a new wave of emigration by artists eager to benefit from the auction's domino effect. Over time, the auction has become a myth, as outlined by writer Andrew Solomon: "It was in fact so heralded an event that in the years

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that followed critics, curators, collectors, and artists variously credited the auction house with discovering a movement, inventing a movement, and destroying a movement.”¹

The Sotheby’s auction is also featured in the book *Exhibit Russia: The New International Decade 1986-1996*, published by Garage. Focusing on fifteen major group exhibitions and events—those which jettisoned Russian artists to international attention or introduced Russian publics to Western art stars—the book provides readers with a unique perspective on the dawning of the global art world. Published in 2016, *Exhibit Russia* is available internationally from www.artbook.com and www.amazon.com.²

Organized by Garage Curators Vika Dushkina and Andrey Misiano.

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 designs functional, innovative, and affordable apparel. The LifeWear line’s DNA is high quality, simplicity, longevity, and trendiness regardless of a person’s lifestyle or style.

As part of the strategic partnership between UNIQLO and Garage, a series of special events and activities is planned. Garage and UNIQLO has launched **UNIQLO Free Friday Nights**, continuing

¹ Andrew Solomon, “Mission to Moscow,” *Connoisseur*, July 1991, 56.

² ISBN 9785905110528, Paperback, 8.25 x 11 in., 380 pages, List Price: \$34.95

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the tradition of free admission for all visitors every Friday evening at such key art institutions as MoMa in New York and Tate in London. Garage visitors can enjoy free admission to all exhibitions every Friday between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. (ticket valid until the Museum closes). UNIQLO and Garage have ambitious plans for the forthcoming year—joint workshops, lectures on contemporary art and fashion, and numerous other events. Visitors to Garage Café can find out more about the brand from the UNIQLO LifeWear Book, which gives an overview of UNIQLO, its current collections, and the company's innovative methods of apparel production.

A special zone focusing on the partnership between UNIQLO and Garage opened in UNIQLO Atrium, Moscow, in September 2017. Customers can immerse themselves in the art world with books and magazines about art, fashion, and contemporary culture. The zone is also a space for free lectures and master classes, as well as special projects by Garage.

INGOSSTRAKH

Ingosstrakh has been a major player in both the Russian and international markets since 1947. The company is the national leader in Russia based on total insurance premiums in the voluntary insurance sector (not including life insurance). Ingosstrakh is authorized to handle all types of insurance services (in accordance with the insurance company's specialization) specified in Article 32.9 of the Insurance Law of the Russian Federation, as well as reinsurance services. For many years, Ingosstrakh has provided insurance services for important works of art and other valuable historical objects. The company has 149 locations throughout Russia, as well as branches and subsidiaries worldwide.

Ingosstrakh is the Official Insurance Partner of Garage Museum of Contemporary Art for the second year running. On November 16, 2017, the company celebrates its 70th anniversary, making it one of the most experienced and reliable players in the market. Ingosstrakh is a company that keeps pace with the times and is open to change. In its anniversary year, the company will undergo a major update with the strapline "Ingosstrakh 7.0: Seventh Generation Insurance," which reflects both the company's experience and its focus on innovation. Experience permits a better understanding of customers and the products they need, as well as improved interaction. Innovation is associated primarily with the development of client services and the expansion of opportunities to purchase products online. For Ingosstrakh, the partnership with Garage is an important stage in expanding cooperation with leading museums in Russia and across the world. The company insures the artworks exhibited and, jointly with the Museum, implements a wide range of special programs for visitors.

BMW GROUP RUSSIA

BMW Group has had a presence in the art world for many years thanks to its BMW Art Car project that lists artists like Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, and César Manrique among its participants. Since racing driver and art enthusiast Hervé Poulain invited Alexander Calder to paint the first car in 1975, some of the world's biggest artists have created nineteen unique designs based on the company's models. BMW Group is also a long-time partner of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and has organized long-term projects in collaboration with Tate Modern in London and the National Gallery in Berlin.

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Garage helps to promote art and culture and inspire millions of people to discover new things. For BMW Group, which celebrated its centenary in 2016, the partnership with Garage is a wonderful opportunity to support contemporary art. Starting from 2017, BMW Group supports one of the Museum's main programs, offering Art and Technology grants to contemporary artists.

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