



For Immediate Release:

# FotoFest Announces Theme and Dates for their 2012 International Biennial

**CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY**  
***Post-war Avant-garde to Today***

**March 16 – April 29, 2012**  
**Houston, Texas, U.S.A.**



FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL CURATORS:

Wendy Watriss  
Fred Baldwin  
Evgeny Berezner  
Irina Tchmyreva

**HOUSTON, TEXAS - JANUARY 18, 2011** - Frederick Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, Co-founders and Creative Directors of FotoFest International announced today the theme and dates of **FotoFest's Fourteenth international Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art, the FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL – Contemporary Russian Photography: Post-war Avant-garde to Today**. The theme will be explored through five photography, video and multi-media exhibitions of works by contemporary Russian artists.

The Russian exhibitions will be accompanied by the non-thematic, biennial **Discoveries of the Meeting Place** exhibit of works by 10 artists selected by multiple curators from the 2010 portfolio review, The Meeting Place.

“Russia’s long and important history in photography is known primarily through the famous avant-garde period of Russian constructivism of the 1920s and early 30s, with names such as Aleksander Rodchenko and El Lissitzky. But very little is known about the avant-garde photography that continued after World War II in the shadow of socialist realism,” says Wendy Watriss, FotoFest Co-founder and Senior Curator. “This largely unknown work is the link to the strong creative photography that emerged almost immediately under *Perestroika* in the 1980s and 90s and continues to this day. Today, contemporary Russian photography is very strong but few of its artists are known internationally.”

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The FotoFest 2012 Biennial will showcase contemporary photo-related art and video in Russia as well as important examples of post WWII photographic art from the late 1950s to 1990s.

FotoFest Co-founders and Creative Directors Wendy Watriss and Frederick Baldwin will collaborate with the internationally known, independent Russian curators **Evgeny Berezner** and **Irina Tchmyreva**, and their media partner, **Natalia Tarasova**, in curating the Russian exhibitions for the FotoFest 2012 Biennial.

Evgeny Berezner is Deputy Director General in charge of photography and multi-media projects of the ROSIZO State Museum and Exhibition Center of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. He has curated more than 250 shows of contemporary and classical Russian photography as well as exhibits by non-Russian artists. His writing on Russian photography has been widely published. He is a co-editor from Russia of the international photography magazine, *IMAGO*.

Irina Tchmyreva, Ph.D is a senior researcher of photography at the Department of Russian Art of the 20th Century in the State Research Institute of Art History of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts. She has written widely on Russian photography. She is a member of the editorial boards of *European Photography* magazine in Germany, *Fotografia Kwartalnik* in Poland and *IMAGO* in the Slovak Republic. She was the invited guest editor for the Russian issue of *Ojo de Pez* publication. She has co-curated many exhibits of Russian photography with Evgeny Berezner, and she is the art director of the international festival of photography, *PhotoVisa*, in southern Russia.

FotoFest has an active history of collaboration and exchange with Russian artists, curators and art institutions. In 1992, FotoFest organized an exhibition of the leading avant-garde Soviet magazine publication, *USSR in Construction*, with the original magazines from private collections. The striking and biting critical works by contemporary Russian photographers of the late 1980s and 1990s were featured by FotoFest in *Soviet Manifesto*.

For the FotoFest 2002 Biennial, Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin worked with Evgeny Berezner and Irina Tchmyreva to organize and present the first comprehensive exhibition of Russian Pictorialism since the 1930s. In 2002-2003, they worked together to take four FotoFest-curated exhibitions and the exhibit *Here Is New York, 9-11* to three Russian cities - Moscow, Samara and Togliatti. The FotoFest exhibits included a selection of international works curated by FotoFest from its first Biennial in 1986 through its 2002 Biennial; a selection of works from the *Discoveries of the Meeting Place*, FotoFest's international portfolio review; and two exhibitions by three nationally known artists working in Houston - MANUAL - Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom; and George Krause. In the FotoFest 2004-2006 Biennials, FotoFest featured nine contemporary Russian photographers in exhibitions curated by FotoFest.

In December 2010, FotoFest Co-founders did a projection and lecture for the Garage Center for Contemporary Art Center in Moscow, one of Europe's best known new contemporary art venues.

At the FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL in Houston, over 100 independently produced exhibits by participating museums, leading commercial galleries, artist spaces and alternative venues across the city will accompany FotoFest's Russian exhibitions.

FotoFest's famous international portfolio review for artists, **The Meeting Place, will take place March 16 to April 3, 2012**. As the **world's largest and most international portfolio review**, FotoFest's Meeting Place is an innovative leader in the field for over 24 years. FotoFest's Meeting Place brings together over 500 artists and over 170 international curators, editors, publishers, collectors and agency representatives together for 16 days of one-on-one meetings.



Sergey Bratkov (Russia), Untitled from the series *Army Girls*, 2000. Courtesy of Regina Gallery, Moscow  
Exhibited at the FotoFest 2006 Biennial

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The FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL will feature **symposia on Russian photography, artist and curator talks, workshops for artists, gallery treks, films, booksignings and the international Biennial Fine Print Auction.**

### **FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL SPONSORS**

Early supporters of the FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL are JP Morgan Chase, Texas Commission on the Arts, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment, Inc., and The Wortham Foundation. For over the past 20 years, The Trust for Mutual Understanding has been a major supporter for FotoFest's Russian programs.

### **ABOUT FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL**

Founded in 1983, FotoFest is an international non-profit organization promoting photographic arts and education in Houston, Texas. FotoFest is recognized for its discovery and presentation of important talent, contemporary and historical, from around the world, its commitment to presenting important social ideas through the photographic arts, its groundbreaking exhibitions and its portfolio review program, The International Meeting Place. FotoFest has curated and commissioned exhibitions of classical and multi-media photo-based art from Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to year-round art exhibitions and programming, FotoFest's school-based education program, Literacy Through Photography, uses photography to stimulate visual literacy, writing, and analytical thinking. The FotoFest Biennial is the first International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art in the United States. Through the FotoFest Biennial and its year-round art programs, FotoFest is known as a platform for art and ideas, combining museum-quality art with important social and aesthetic issues. FotoFest curated exhibitions give priority to the works of important but little-known photographic artists from the U.S. and around the world.



*chezhin Andrey 1994*

Andrey Chezhin (Russia), Untitled from the series *Nevsky Baptistry*, 1994  
Courtesy of Nailya Alexander, Washington, D.C. and New York  
Exhibited at the FotoFest 2004 Biennial