



FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL | www.fotofest.org

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For Immediate Release:

FotoFest 2012 Biennial

The 14th International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art
Seventy-five Biennial Exhibitions at FotoFest and Participating Spaces

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

Exhibitions of *Contemporary Russian Photography*

FotoFest Meeting Place Portfolio Review for Artists

International Fine Print Auction

Forums, Book Signings, Collectors Programs,
Workshops, Evenings with Artists



Olga Tobreluts, *Modernization* (detail of tryptch), 2002

HOUSTON, TEXAS, SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 – FotoFest announces the 14th International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art, with a focus on ***Contemporary Russian Photography***, running from **March 16 through April 29, 2012**. Organized in conjunction with Moscow's Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, IRIS Art Foundation and RIA Novosti, Russia's leading news information agency, the FotoFest 2012 Biennial presents over 50 years of contemporary Russian photography.

Following the success of its Portfolio Review in Moscow for 180 Russian photographers earlier this month, the FotoFest 2012 Biennial in Houston will feature the work of 200 Russian artists. FotoFest co-sponsored the Portfolio Review Russia in Moscow with the Garage Center, the IRIS Art Foundation and RIA Novosti. It was the first international portfolio review organized in Russia for Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian photographers.

“The Portfolio Review in Moscow was an opportunity for photographers from all over Russia to share their personal and collective history through photography,” says FotoFest Co-Founder and Senior Curator, Wendy Watriss. “The Biennial will allow for the rediscovery of a little-known part of Russian photographic history. It will be an opportunity for the re-examination of photography's role in documenting Russia's past and present.”

The 2012 Biennial brings together over 70 museums, commercial galleries, art and corporate art venues to celebrate photography. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) presents two exhibitions for the 2012 Biennial. *Utopia/Dystopia*,

curated by Yasu Nakamori, MFAH Assistant Curator of Photography, focuses on photography and collage by Alexander Rodchenko, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Robert Rauschenberg, and Man Ray among others. The exhibit *Snail Mail* is curated by Anne Wilkes Tucker, MFAH Chief Curator of Photography, and draws from the museum's collection of photographs used as correspondence. The Blaffer Gallery is showing Russian-born artist Anton Ginzburg's *At the Back of the North Wind*, a photography and installation work now on view at the Venice Biennale. The Menil Collection celebrates the 70th birthday of acclaimed New York documentary photographer Danny Lyon with a retrospective of his work from 1962 through the present showcasing his photographs of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, outlaw biker gangs, Texas Death Row inmates and rural China, his newest work. Other Participating Spaces include the well-known art institutions: The Station Museum of Art; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Holocaust Museum, Houston; and Houston Center for Photography as well as most of the city's commercial galleries including De Santos Gallery, John Cleary Gallery, Moody Gallery and Inman Gallery. In addition to FotoFest's own exhibitions of Contemporary Russian Photography, six Participating Spaces, are showing work by Russian artists.

The **2012 Meeting Place Portfolio Review**, which was the model for the Portfolio Review Russia and the upcoming portfolio review event in Paris, will host over 520 photographic artists from five continents. The FotoFest Biennial exhibition *Discoveries of the Meeting Place* will feature 10 artists selected as particularly outstanding from the previous Biennial portfolio review in 2010. FotoFest will award ten special artist scholarships to the 2012 portfolio review, including two Russian artists. Editing, publication and multi-media classes will accompany the portfolio review, along with artist book signings, collectors forums and public Evenings with the Artists.

The **FotoFest International Fine Print Auction** will feature 32 Russian artists alongside works by many of the world's leading names in contemporary photographic arts. The Auction is led by Denise Bethel, Director of the Photographs Department at Sotheby's in New York.

In addition to exhibiting in FotoFest's own exhibitions on *Contemporary Russian Photography*, Russian artists will also participate in the **Meeting Place Portfolio Reviews**, **Dialogues on Russian Photography** and special evenings for collectors.

The extensive network of Russian artists developed by the Russian curators for the FotoFest 2012 Russian exhibitions, sponsored by FotoFest, encompasses not only all of Russia but the Ukraine and Belarus as well.

"As we saw at the Portfolio Review in Moscow, we have important artists all across Russia," says Evgeny Berezner, co-curator with Irina Chmyreva and Natalia Tarasova for FotoFest's Russian exhibitions. "Artists came to the Portfolio Review from 39 cities. We were already aware of many of them, but there were a number of artists whose works we discovered for the first time at the Portfolio Review."

In 2012, FotoFest plans to produce a hardcover book on the Russian exhibitions, curated with the leading Russian curatorial team of Mr. Berezner, Dr. Chmyreva and Ms. Tarasova. Together, the team has curated and presented over 200 exhibitions of historical and contemporary Russian artists. Cultural historians and scholars, Mr. Berezner and Dr. Chmyreva, have written extensively on Russian photography. They will do essays on the history of contemporary Russian photography, the re-emergence and evolution of the personal voice in Russian photography in the late 1950s and the end of Stalinism through the Perestroika years into the present time. The book will be done with Schilt Publishing in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In addition to the English edition, Russian and German editions of the book are planned.



Gregori Maiofis, *Politics Makes Strange Bedfellows*, 2006

FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL SPONSORS (as of September 27, 2011)

The Brown Foundation, Inc; The William Stamps Farish Fund; JP Morgan Chase, The Wortham Foundation; City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Doubletree Hotel Houston Downtown; Texas Commission for the Arts; HexaGroup; Iland Internet Solutions; Vine Street Studios; arts>Brookfield/Brookfield Office Properties. Russian Organizers include the IRIS Art Foundation, ROSIZO State Center for Museums and Exhibitions of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture and RIA Novosti.

ABOUT FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1983 and based in Houston, Texas, FotoFest is a non-profit organization promoting photographic arts and education. 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 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. FotoFest has pioneered the format for the international portfolio review program for photographic artists that have been emulated around the world. It is the basis for the 2011 Portfolio Review Russia.

MEDIA CONTACTS

For further information on FotoFest International and the FotoFest 2012 Biennial, please visit www.fotofest.org.

For Further information, interviews and visuals, please contact:

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Top Left: FotoFest 2010 Fine Print Auction, Houston

Top Right: FotoFest 2012 Russian Curators Evgeny Berezner and Irina Chmyreva, Moscow Portfolio Review Press Conference

Bottom Left: FotoFest 2010 Meeting Place Portfolio Review, Houston

Bottom Right: FotoFest 2010 Biennial Exhibitions, Houston

