



Via Vecchio Arbat, agosto 1998

IGOR MUKHIN

La mia Mosca / My Moscow

curated by *Elio Grazioli*

Opening on May 8th 2013, at 18.30
The exhibition will run until July 6th, 2013

Opening times:
Tuesday – Saturday, 15.00 - 19.00
Mornings by appointment

Laura Bulian Gallery is pleased to present the solo exhibition by the Russian photographer Igor Mukhin, *My Moscow*, which will be inaugurated on Wednesday, 8th May, 2013.

On show will be presented black and white pictures, including a selection of works recently published in the book *My Moscow. Photographs 1985-2010*, publ. Thames & Hudson and exhibited at *European Photo Festival 2012* in Reggio Emilia, *Common Life*.

“Look at the gleaming white mosque (*Piazza Rossa, I comunisti celebrano la giornata della morte di Lenin, 1998*) - a cross between a ghost from the past and the castle of an imaginary Disneyland looming over the faces of Lenin and those of the protesters in Red Square. It is a wholly different situation and atmosphere. Here we really are suspended between the specter and the real, whatever it is, in all its unfathomable contradiction. This tone of all the images, before which we often ask: are we dreaming? Or rather are they dreaming? Mukhin’s Moscow is a simmering melting pot, everything is co-present, everything is possible.

Faces with indefinable expressions, bold smiles or elusive thoughtfulness. The upper edge of the photographs is often cropped, cutting heads off bodies. Mukhin is within the scene but at the same time estranged from it. He is part of the group and the city but he looks at them as if he were seeing them for the first time. He seems to be asking himself: what do they think? What do they feel? Why?

My Moscow is the extension of his previous project, significantly titled *Being Young is Difficult* (*editor’s note*). Here, you might say, it’s hard to be any age. Or it’s hard to be young photographers. How to look at and capture a reality and a society so complex and layered, mingled and changing? Above all how to represent them without moralism and sociological reduction, commonplaces about the post-perestroika, nostalgia, freedom and loss of bearings?

The answer lies in Mukhin’s position, so classical from a certain point of view, and at the same time new precisely because of his attitude, his gaze. Transformation means he still bears within him the traces of the past and yet he is already different, another. But he also feels strange, evolving, and sees the world as suspended between actual being and unfinished, open to unpredictable outcomes. There is no irony in Mukhin, rather acceptance and sharing. When

people are happy Mukhin clearly conveys this joy. When they are sad he also becomes dreamy. He, too, is suspended between nostalgia and enthusiasm, he, too, is changing.

In his case, again, the documentary dimension is wholly superseded by the poetic. Rather than events, here we have the anthropology of the very reasons for living. There are the strong contrasts between the earlier communism and neo-capitalism, between those who are nostalgic for the Soviet regime, for Nazism or for mysticism. There are punk youth behaviors and the more naive kinds of gatherings and parties. There is work and leisure. There is the street and there are the places where people hang out. There is transgression and conformism. But everything has an unconventional air; everything seems common and yet unusual, never dramatic but rather unresolved.

The image that seems to be the key is *Giorno in Città, 1988*, the one, moreover, that opens the book, embodies the whole project: clearly dominated by the white stripe in the middle of the road. Above are the headless bodies of the people walking, one of them ostentatiously along the line. The wet road surface reflects the black shapes that are not those of people but seem again to be the towers of the mosque in Red Square, this time dark black and inverted. It is the origin and at the same time the goal of the those walking, their fate, real and imaginary at the same time. “

Elio Grazioli , 2012

(Extract from “Communities in Trasformation”, in *Fotografia Europea: Vita Comune*, catalogue of the exhibition of the same name in Reggio Emilia, publ. Electa, Milan 2012)

Igor Mukhin was born in Moscow, in 1961. He lives and works in Moscow , Russia.

Selected shows since 2005:

2012: *Igor Mukhin. Vita Comune*, Fotografia Europea 2012 Reggio Emilia, curated by Elio Grazioli, Chiostrì di San Pietro, Reggio Emilia, Italy – solo show

In an absolute disorder, Russian Contemporary Art, Kandinsky Prize (2007-2012), Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona, Spain

Accomplices, XL Gallery, Moscow, Russia – solo show

I Am Who I Am - Junge Künstler Aus Moskau Im Kit, KIT - Kunst im Tunnel, Dusseldorf, Germany

Underground: Russian Photography 1970s-1980s, Nailya Alexander Gallery, New York City, NY, USA

2011: *FotoSkulptur. Die Fotografie der Skulptur, von 1839 bis heute*, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland

Seeing through a glass darkly, Anya Stonelake / White Space Gallery, London, UK

2010: *The original copy:photography of sculpture, 1839 to today*, MOMA, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Moscow-Paris, Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art, *Photobiennial 2010*, Moscow, Russia

Being young is difficult, Laura Bulian Gallery, Milan, Italy – solo show

Photographie de la nouvelle Russie, 1991-2010, Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP), Paris, France

Resistance, XL Gallery, Moscow, Russia – solo show

2009: Kandinsky Prize Nominee, Moscow, Russia

New Old Cold War, Red October, Moscow, Russia

2008: *KievFotoCom. International Festival of Photography*, Kiev, Ukraine

Frictions and conflicts - cultural influences and exchange in Northeast Europe, Kalmar Art Museum, Sweden

2007: *Sots Art. Political Art in Russia from 1972 to today*, La Maison Rouge, Paris, France

2006: *Photography from the collection*. MOMA, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

Hundert Küsse sind besser als einer (Hundred Kisses are better than one) - Krinzing Projekte, Vienna, Austria

2005: *The Russian vision on Europe*, Le Centre d'Art de Rouge-Cloître, Brussels, Belgium

Street, Art and Fashion. FotoMuseum Provincie, Antwerpen, Belgium

Public collections: MoMA, New York; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., The Museum Moscow House of Photography, Moscow; The Moscow Museum of Modern Art; National Centre for Contemporary Arts(NCCA), Moscow; National Centre for Contemporary Arts(NCCA), Nizhni Novgorod; Museum of Fine Art, Santa Fe; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (FNAC), Paris; Denver Art Museum, Denver; Latvian Museum of Photography, Riga; Wien Museum, Vienna; Bank UBS Collection.