



Son of the East, 1995, colour print on dibond, 50 x 50 cm

SAID ATABEKOV

SON OF THE EAST

Figlio dell'est

Opening on May 14th 2009, at 18.30

The artist will be present

The exhibition will continue until July 4th, 2009

Opening time:

Tuesday - Saturday 15.00 - 19.00

Laura Bulian Gallery is pleased to present ***Figlio dell'Est | Son of the East***, the first solo exhibition in Italy of the Kazakh artist and photographer **Said Atabekov**, opening on 14 May 2009.

After completing his artistic studies in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, Atabekov became a member of the "Red Tractor" group, the first artists' collective set up in Southern Kazakhstan after the Perestroika. Through performances, videos and installations, the artists of the "Red Tractor" group question the archetypes of Central Asian culture: myth, religion, pantheist rites, nature and shamanism.

National identity, the conflict between man and nature, the conflict between tradition and innovation are key elements in Said Atabekov's artistic output. Alternately he employs video and photography to communicate the post-modern paradox, where the symbols of globalisation insert themselves into locations that are extremely isolated and still firmly anchored in local tradition.

In this exhibition **Laura Bulian Gallery** presents the videos ***Walkman*** and ***Neon Paradise***, which tackle the themes of identity as a reaction to homologation and devotion to ancestral traditions, always living in fear of losing one's roots. In ***Walkman*** (2005), a solitary vagabond wanders slowly across the boundless steppes carrying a huge double bass. A metaphor for the artist himself, with slow and at times uncertain steps, he heads towards progress and towards western civilisation.

In ***Neon Paradise*** (2004) the artist represents modern man who bows his head to technology; on his knees, in a prayer-like manner, before an automatic door that opens and closes in response to his movements: irony, according to Said Atabekov, is the only way to survive in a rapidly changing world.

The exhibition also includes the cycle ***La strada per Roma | The Way to Rome***, Said Atabekov recalls Marco Polo's thirteenth century journey across Asia as far as China, and how he returned to Rome and became a symbol of the encounter between the East and West.

Said Atabekov was born in Bes Terek, Uzbekistan, in 1965. He lives in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

Selected major exhibitions, since 2002:

2008: "Piccoli giochi lungo la via della seta", Fortezza Da Basso, Florence, Italy

2007: "Biennale of Montreal", Montreal, Canada

"Contested space in Post-Soviet Art", Sydney Mishkin Gallery, New York, USA

"Barrel.kz", Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Almaty, Kazakhstan

"Art and conflicts in Central Asia", Haggerty Museum, Milwaukee, USA

"10th Biennial of film, video and experimental media 'Too much Freedom?'", Los Angeles, USA

2005: "51st Venice Biennale", Central Asian Pavilion, Venice, Italy

"The Tamerlane Syndrome", Palazzo dei Sette, Orvieto, Italy

"9th Istanbul Biennial", Istanbul, Turkey

"Vom roten Stern zur blauen Kuppel", IFA Gallery, Berlin-Stuttgart, Germany

"The Sacred Places of Central Asia", Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Almaty, Kazakhstan

"Kazakh videoart", Bokenheimer Depot, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

2002: "No Mad's Land", House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany