



**ALEXANDRE GERTSMAN CONTEMPORARY ART**



With the drastic changes in today's world affecting the way we perceive our surroundings, one question looms over us – where can true beauty be found? Whether it's attempting to understand how the artist initially uncovered the beauty and materialized it or discussing the context behind it, art teaches us that we are part of something much larger than ourselves. But it is in our perception of art that we find beauty, therefore we are the ones not only seeking, but helping create the beauty around us. How to perceive art with the aim of further illumination has always been a hot topic in the society of a fast-paced city like New York. As the perfect match of art and life, New York has been, for decades, home to the greatest artists and host city for collectors and art lovers from all around the world. Situated in the heart of Manhattan's artistic quarter, AG Contemporary Art Gallery proved 2017 to be a year of true art networking!

2017 was an exciting year for AG Contemporary Art: we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Alexandre Gertsman promoting art from the former Soviet Union in the United States! He was Founder and President of INTART – International Foundation of Russian and Eastern European Art since 1993, as well as Founder and President of the American Friends of the Tretyakov Gallery Foundation since 2002. In 2009, Alexandre Gertsman Contemporary Art Gallery opened its doors. As an independent curator and savant of Russian contemporary art, Mr. Gertsman has successfully



**Valentin Rodionov, General Director, National Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; Thomas Krens, Director, The Guggenheim Foundation; Alexandre Gertsman, Founder and President, INTART Foundation**

# RUSSIA!



**Closing reception of the RUSSIA! exhibition at The Guggenheim Museum: Irina Dvorovenko, Principal dancer, ABT; Alexandre Gertsman, Founder and President, INTART Foundation; Lisa Dennison, Director, The Guggenheim Museum; His Excellency Andrey Denisov, Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN**

orchestrated numerous traveling museum exhibitions throughout the United States, Europe, and Russia, including such locations as the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., the National Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, the Yeshiva University Museum in New York, the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art in Aachen, Germany, the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, and the National Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. – before bringing his expertise to his own gallery in SoHo/NoHo.

A special group exhibition of 35 artists was curated in November to celebrate our anniversary. Works by such world-renowned artists as Komar & Melamid, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Natalya Nesterova, BM Babak-Matveev, Rimma and Valery Gerlovin, Boris Orlov, Oleg Dergachov, Leonid Sokov, Alexander Kosolapov, Mikhail Roginsky, Tatyana Nazarenko, Andrey Volkov and

others were on display at the gallery. This exhibition project was covered by *ARTUKRAINE Magazine* ([Read full article here >](#)), *INTER TV Channel*, *Voice of America*, *Prymoi TV Channel* ([Watch video here >](#)), *Telegraf*, *Fashion of Diplomacy*, *Segodnya*, *Vgolos*, *Ukrinform*, *Lux FM*, and *Dniprograd*, among other media outlets.



**Alexandre Gertsman, Oleg Nikolenko, Policy Adviser, Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the UN, and His Excellency Vladimir U. Yelchenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN**



**His Excellency Vladimir U. Yelchenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations**

There was a special chapter as part of the exhibit, showcasing the works of Ukrainian art-tandem BM Babak-Matveev (artists Mykola Babak and Evgene Matveev) – a preview of the artists' solo exhibition, to be held at the AGCA Gallery in Spring of 2018. With participation in the Venice Biennale and the Shevchenko National Prize (the highest state prize in Ukraine in culture



**Donald Kuspit, art critic and art historian**

David Margolick, a four-time Pulitzer Prize nominee and a longtime contributing editor at *Vanity Fair* and *Newsweek*, noted the mystical beauty projected by the artworks, and Donald Kuspit, one of America's most distinguished art critics, who is also an art historian and philosopher, acknowledged that some paintings by BM Babak-Matveev are real "tours de force". Both Alla Rosenfeld, a famed Russian-American art historian, author and editor of many art books and former Director of Russian Sotheby's, and Jayne Kuchna, an art historian who has contributed to a number of major books for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, emphasized the high museum level of artworks at the gallery and their enjoyment of attending the gallery's exhibitions. Oleg Spitsin and Alexander Altshul, Founders and Directors of MOMA Panama, appreciated Mr. Gertsman's art expertise in consulting their new museum.



**Artist Vitaly Komar**

and the arts) among the artists' achievements, the 2018 exhibition will be the first large-scale presentation of the artists' works in the United States. His Excellency Ambassador Volodymyr Yelchenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations, who attended the opening reception with his wife Iryna, emphasized in his interview with the top-rated Ukrainian TV channel INTER ([Watch video here >](#)), that the art of the BM Babak-Matveev shown at the gallery is precisely that "soft power" which represents the culture and heritage of Ukraine in the United States.



**Oleg Spitsin and Alexander Altshul, Co-Founders and Directors of MOMA Panama**

One of the most intriguing projects of 2017 was a solo-show by the duo Komar & Melamid *DOUBLE REVELATION*. Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid are considered as some of world's major post-modern artists. They are included in the *100 Best Artists of the XX Century* (Editions Hazan) and have participated in such major world art events as the Venice Biennale (several times), Documenta (Kassel), and Sydney Biennale. Their works are in the collections of such major museums as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Whitney Museum, all in New York, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and Musee d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris.

*DOUBLE APOCALYPSE* or *DOUBLE REVELATION* series reflects Komar & Melamid's interest in religious images and concepts and showcases "the contradictory relationship between Apocalyptic images and texts of various times with post-revolutionary folk mythological beliefs; for example, beliefs in tyrants, such as Stalin, being an embodiment of Anti-Messiah/Anti-Christ and hastening the end of the world", as Vitaly Komar described it in his artist-talk held at the gallery. The Q & A session turned into an exciting philosophical panel discussion with participation of Vitaly and the guests!



Poet Anna Halberstadt

Anna Halberstadt, a poet and Vitaly's wife, was reading a few poems on Conversations with God. Anna has published many works in the field of psychology but has found poetry to be a more adequate and condensed way to expand on the same themes -growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors in Lithuania, a country still struggling with past trauma – and living later in Russia and the United States. Halberstadt is a member of American PEN Centre and an author of such poetry collections as *Vilnius Diary* and *Transit*. In 2016 she received the Merit Award in Poetry from the Atlanta Review. As a translator, Anna has collaborated, to a great success, with Eileen Myles, an American literary icon. Events such as Ms. Halberstadt's poetry reading are an example of how the Alexandre Gertsman Contemporary Art Gallery has continued its tradition of hosting cultural and social events and fundraisers, often converting the gallery into an art salon or a concert hall.



Art collector Alexander Lev



Victoria Kupchinetsky of VOICE OF AMERICA, and Alexandre Gertsman



**Masha Gessen, journalist and winner of 2017 USA National Book Award**



**Elena Goltsman, Founder and Co-President, RUSA LGBT**

Masha Gessen, a Russian and American journalist, author, translator and activist, the winner of the 2017 USA National Book Award in Nonfiction and a contributor to *The New Yorker*, who also writes for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *U.S. News and World Report*, introduced her new award-winning book *THE FUTURE IS HISTORY: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia*, followed by a book signing. As Russia's leading LGBT rights activist, Ms. Gessen was part of art and literary event benefiting RUSA LGBT's asylum seekers. A silent auction of selected artworks from the Alexandre Gertsman Contemporary Art Gallery as well as art and services provided by asylum seekers accompanied the benefit.



**Sergei Dreznin, Pianist and Composer**

We were excited to welcome the return of pianist and composer Sergei Dreznin to New York, with whom AG Contemporary Art and Alexandre Gertsman have enjoyed a long-lasting collaboration – starting with Mr. Dreznin premiering his *VICTORY OVER THE SUN* musical at the Cultural Festival, organized by Mr. Gertsman at the Center for Jewish History in New York. A graduate of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow (as a composer) and the Russian Academy of Music (as a pianist), Sergei has many awards and prizes and has become well-known through his collaboration with violinist Gidon Kremer, his unusual interpretations and new version of classic piano works, and his own highly original approach to music theater with 14 shows

produced, ranging from musicals on original Shakespeare texts to revival of *Cabaret from Ghetto Terezin*, with the CD of his Off-Broadway production released in 2016. Sergei has been enjoying a successful international career: his blockbuster *CATHERINE THE GREAT* – a Russian musical epic – is in its 10th sold-out year in Russia and was nominated for the Golden Mask – a Russian Tony

award - in 7 categories (and won 2); his *24 HOURS IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN* based on a Stefan Zweig classic novella was originated in 2015 in Paris in Theater La Brouyere, and now is being produced in Spanish, while his directorial debut – the children’s musical *GELSOMINO!* will be presented at The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow in January.

Eva Novoa, a jazz composer and pianist, gave her annual recital at the gallery. She performed several of her own works from her last album, as well as compositions by such jazz and Broadway classics as Cole Porter, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, Benny Golson and Billy Strayhorn. Novoa has received international media acclaim for her previous CD *BUTTERFLIES AND ZEBRAS*, which was recorded in collaboration with the Ditmas Quartet and GRAMMY Award winning producer Jeremy Loucas. In her own rights, a classical pianist Masha Tyshkov dazzled the AG Contemporary’s guests with her musical trademarks: works by Tchaikovsky, Piazzolla and Gershwin, culminating her performance by Russian humorous folk-songs to everybody’s delight. A soloist and chamber musician, Masha performed at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Concert Hall in New York, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.



**Jazz pianist and composer Eva Novoya**



**Pianist Masha Tyshkova**



**Art collectors Robert Holtzman and Marianna Trofimova**

In support of new entrepreneurship, AG Contemporary Art Gallery hosted a marketing event organized by V Startup Agency, a consulting company that provides a wide-range of public relations and communications services to tech startups, helping them to establish and strengthen their presence in the media, and Starta Ventures, whose first cross-border project was Starta Accelerator, a three-month New York program for Eastern European founders to break through traditional venture capital barriers and empower the next generation of tech



entrepreneurs. The project came to its last stage at the gallery. John Varoli, the Vice President of the V Startup Agency, co-founded by Victoria Zavyalova, is an American public relations practitioner, who worked as a journalist in Russia in the late 1990s and 2000s. He has written for *The New York Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *Bloomberg News*, *The Art Newspaper*, *Art & Auction Magazine*, *Art Khronika*, *St Petersburg Times*, and worked for *Radio Free Europe*, *Russia's Kultura Channel* and *Reuters*, while Ms. Zavyalova herself is an international media professional, with extensive experience working for various media in Europe, including the *Financial Times* and *BBC*.

**Victoria Zavyalova, Co-Founder and CEO, V Startup Agency, and John Varol, VP, V Startup Agency**

In 2017, Alexandre Gertsman kept his tradition of showing appreciation for his clients, colleagues and close friends by hosting private dinners and cocktail receptions at the gallery, where guests were surrounded by artworks by some of the most celebrated world artists – while chef Gerry Kong took wining and dining to another level!



**Design: Vlada Reznikova**  
**Photos: Annie Watt, Olga Yelchenko, Alisdja, Yuriy Sandulov**  
**Editorial: Olga Yelchenko**