

PRESS RELEASE

Viktor Pivovarov: A Cockroach for Dinner

Prague /September 3, 2009/ **Jiri Svestka Gallery opens its fourteenth autumn season with a solo exhibition by the Russian artist Viktor Pivovarov. He was born in Moscow in 1937 and, as of 1982, has been living and working in Prague. In his exhibition named A Cockroach for Dinner, held from September 4 till October 10, he will present his newest canvases and an album of texts with illustrations which usually form a master for his works.**

The exhibition at Jiri Svestka Gallery presents Pivovarov's closed slightly satiric series named "Glamour Boys", which came to being this year and it contains 15 paintings (oil on canvas), interconnected in both theme and time. This is followed by the album "Parable", which formally connects text and image of the above genre.

Figurative motifs from contemporary life, as well as people depicted as half-animals and vice versa are the key themes of Pivovarov's newest canvases. The origins of this way of depicting go all the way to the antique days, as well as to political cartoon and satire. And, last but not least, the movie *Inland Empire* by the cult film director David Lynch was another inspiration to create the abovementioned series. *"... In one scene, two people with rabbit heads are sitting on a sofa and, behind them, a woman with the same head is ironing. It was unbelievable... After a while, I painted my first picture and then the series followed... Inspiration of every artist stems from various levels. For me, the deepest source is the collective memory, followed by individual memory, especially childhood memory when the essence of a man is created. Behind the psychical level, which is important for any artist and enables the art to come to being, there is a level of culture – where the artist was born and what environment surrounded him/her. Another level is the social one. All of this is a source of inspiration,"* Pivovarov says and describes the way of his work. *"I am very sensitive to artistic routine, I need constant changes. In order to avoid falling into a stereotype, I have the inner need to change everything – material, size, theme, simply all. This is quite paradoxical, as I hate changes in life."*

Viktor Pivovarov is considered to be a leading representative of the so called "Moscow conceptualist art school"; the members of this group have reflected the influence of ideology on the Soviet life style. Next to the unofficial and world-acknowledged Moscow artists, such as Eric Bulatov, Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Yankilevski or Edouard Steiberg, he is one of the Stretensky Boulevard Group members. Along with the most famous of the artists – Ilya Kabakov – at the break of 60s and 70s, Pivovarov created an original art genre, the so called albums, which could be perceived as a framework for multiform art concepts and speculations. Besides painting, Pivovarov also pursues literature and he has also illustrated tens of children's books. In 1999, he was awarded the Revolver Revue Prize. He has produced a number of solo and collective exhibitions around the world. In 2004, the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow featured his extensive retrospective exhibition. His most distinguished exhibition so far was held in 1996 at the Rudolfinum Gallery in Prague.

"Wise artists from the elder generation – such as Viktor Pivovarov- could very positively influence the young art scene," the gallerist Jiri Svestka explains why he included Viktor Pivovarov in his exhibition programme and ads: *"What I admire about Pivovarov is his sense of perspective, openness and non-dogmatism which reflect in his art in a special kind of satire where art meets literature."*

A discussion of Viktor Pivovarov with the Czech artist Jiri Cernicky which will take place on September 17 at 6.30 p.m. at Jiri Svestka Gallery will form a part of the exhibition.

Viktor Pivovarov: Cockroach for Dinner

4th September – 10th October, 2009

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Opening hours:

Tue - Fri 12 – 6 p.m.

Sat 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

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Viktor Pivovarov

- born in Moscow, 14th January, 1937
- lives and works in Prague since 1982

Academic background:

1951 – 1957 School of Applied Art, Moscow
1957 – 1962 Institute of Graphic Art, Moscow

Work:

- On graduation, he focuses on book illustrations (his most famous illustrations include those made for the tales of Hans Christian Andersen, for the Scandinavian Tales, for the Little black hen by Antonij Pogorelskij, for the book Annie and Hubert the Jackstraw by Vítězslav Nezval, as well as for poetry books by Genrikh Sapgir, Igor Kholin and Ovsey Driz)

- Since 1970, he has been creating free composition, using various media, such as painting, connecting painting and text, drawing, collage, installation

- In the 1970s, he develops (along with Ilya Kabakov) a new art medium connecting drawing and text which is named “an album”; between 1975 – 2009, the following albums came to being:

Tears, 1975; *Face*, 1975; *Conclusion*, 1975; *Garden*, 1976; *Erós*, 1976; *Fence*, 1977; *Sacralizers*, 1978; *Microhonus*, 1979; *Kabakov and Pivovarov*, 1982; *Wonderful acts*, 1989; *Agent in Norway*, 1993; *Mamleyev and Hypermamleyev*, 1995; *Bad mood*, 1995; *If*, 1995; *Cast*, 1996; *Engineer’s steps*, 1999; *Testimony of the contemporaries*, 1989-2000; *Yellow*, 2001; *Dante gone astray*, 2001, *Foxes and holidays*, 2005; *Cholin and Sapgir, rejoicing*, 2005; *Parable*, 2008; *Milena and spirits*, 2009.

- Most frequently, he creates conceptual series connected by a single theme; between 1975 – 2009, the following series were created:

Projects for a lonely man, 1975; *Seven conversations*, 1976; *June-June*, 1978; *Teenager’s Diary*, 1986-1988; *The time of the rose*, 1988; *Chinese leaders*, 1989; *White marbles*, 1980; *Flat Nr. 22*, 1992-95; *The unlimited possibilities of painting*, 1992, *Metempsychosis*, 1993, *Heavenly Chelem*, 1998; *Doctor Freud’s Closet*, 1999; *Eidosy*, 2001-2003; *Cut-out pictures*, 2003; *Dark rooms*, 2003, *Slashed paintings*, 2004; *Dedication*, 2005; *Lemon eaters*, 2005/06; *Atlas of fauna and flora*, 2006; *Roundness of the circle*, 2007; *Glamour boys*, 2009.

Publication activities:

- Author of numerous critical articles and reviews on the art of Russian and Czech artists
- 2004 *On the love of the word and depicting*
- 2002 *Grey notebooks*
- 2001 autobiography *Agent in love*

Represented in following collections:

- The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
- The State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg
- National Gallery, Prague
- Zimmerli Art Museum, New Jersey
- other private collections abroad

Selected solo exhibitions:

- 2006 Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow
- 2004 the State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg
- 2004 the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
- 1997 Museum of Contemporary Art, Saint Étienne
- 1997 *Sonya and Angels*, the Rudolfinum Gallery, Prague

Selected collective exhibitions:

- 2009 *14 S*, DOX Centre of Contemporary Art, Prague
- 2007 *Amaro Jilo / Our hearts*, the Brno House of Art, Brno
- 2005 *Private view (Josef Chloupek's collection)*, Dům pánů z Kunštátu, Brno
- 2005 *Impressions*, the Rudolfinum Gallery, Prague
- 1990 *Artists' tribute to Jindrich Chalupecky*, Municipal Library, Prague