

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

LONDON PARIS SALZBURG



Ilya Kabakov, *Concept Drawing*, 1995

Watercolour, coloured pencil, felt pen, collage and correction fluid, 25 x 33.1 cm (9.84 x 13 in.)

Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac London · Paris · Salzburg. © Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, DACS, London, 2017

ILYA AND EMILIA KABAKOV ***CONCERT FOR A FLY (CHAMBER MUSIC), 1986***

15 SEPTEMBER – 11 NOVEMBER 2017

Opening

In the presence of the artists

Thursday 14 September 2017, 6 - 8pm

37 Dover Street, W1S 4NJ London

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PRESS RELEASE

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present the installation *Concert for a Fly (Chamber Music)*, 1986, by pioneer conceptual artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. Russian-born and American-based, today they are recognised as among the most significant international artists to have emerged in the late 20th century.

Concert for a Fly (Chamber Music) is a historic installation, first exhibited in 1986 in Switzerland at the Neue Galerie, Dierikon, then in 1992 at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art and at the Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne. It forms part of an overall series of ten installations, where each represents a character. Exhibited in the gallery's 18th century Ely Room, the work, with a musical arrangement by Joseph Morag, is given renewed relevance. Emilia Kabakov states that this installation: 'is about a person who cannot escape fears, problems, the oppression of everyday life. We do hope that today, in London, despite all the fears and innuendos of politics, this work, being so poetic, will be accepted once again and enjoyed.'

In the centre of the room, a paper fly hangs from the ceiling. Twelve empty chairs and music stands are arranged in a circle around it. Each stand holds a white sheet with colourful drawings and Russian texts, translated into English. Some also include musical scores. Everything seems to point towards the immobile fly, which acts as a focal point, directing our gaze upwards and orchestrating our movements. A continuous sound of classical music surfaces from an undefined source. It contains abstract notes, conjuring the viewer into a state of anticipation, as if waiting for a concert to begin.

A fascination with the parasitic nature of the fly and its corresponding anthropomorphic qualities has long gripped the artists; the fly is a reoccurring *character* and *concept* throughout their oeuvre. For them the concept of the fly is as volatile as the fly itself. *Concert for a Fly (Chamber Music)* is an example of a 'total installation', a term coined by Ilya Kabakov. Art historian Oskar Bätschmann, in the artists' *catalogue raisonné*, describes these as encyclopaedic constructions that can be entered, inviting and tempting the spectator to become an active participant. Even if the space is completely occupied by the installation, the viewer is left with a sense of illusion and lingering feeling of void. This hovering state is a recurring theme throughout their work.

London has been of critical importance for the Kabakovs: 'When *The Palace of Projects* was shown at the Roundhouse organised in 1998 by Artangel, we were told that in this complex neighbourhood we should expect some objects to be vandalized. Instead, people started to leave money and written notes for the "homeless person". *The Palace of Projects* was exhibited five times in different locations and never was there as much compassion and empathy as in London. *The House Of Dreams* at the Serpentine in 2005 saw an even more emotional public that had a very personal response. We are therefore very much looking forward to show *Concert for a Fly (Chamber Music)* alongside the retrospective opening at Tate in October 2017.'

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While their work is deeply rooted in the Soviet social and cultural context in which the Kabakovs grew up, their work has achieved universal importance. Their large-scale projects include the Russian Pavilion of the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993, documenta IX Kassel, Germany in 1992 and *Monumenta 2014 The Strange City* at the Grand Palais, Paris.

This autumn in Paris, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac will present an exhibition of new paintings by Ilya Kabakov from 19 October 2017 to 6 January 2018.

The artists' upcoming museum exhibitions are at the Hirshhorn Museum *Ilya and Emilia Kabakov: Utopian Projects* (7 September 2017 – 4 March 2018) and at Tate Modern, their first major museum exhibition in the UK, *Ilya and Emilia Kabakov: Not Everyone Will be Taken Into the Future* (18 October 2017 – 28 January 2018), travelling to The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg and the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow in 2018.

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OPENING HOURS

TUESDAY – SATURDAY 10 AM – 6 PM

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