



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA

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ILYA & EMILIA KABAKOV

The Eminent Direction of Thoughts

Opening Saturday 26th January 2019, via del Castello 11, 6pm-midnight
Until 7th April 2019, Monday to Sunday, 10am-1pm, 2-7pm

With *The Eminent Direction of Thoughts*, Galleria Continua is delighted to welcome back to San Gimignano the internationally acclaimed artistic duo, Ilya & Emilia Kabakov.

At the heart of the Kabakovs' works lies a subtle interrelation of visual and verbal elements. Objects and images associated with everyday life are interwoven with personal experiences against a backdrop of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union and the living conditions of post-Stalinist Russia, culminating in what is ultimately an analysis of the universal condition of man, where the more dramatic aspects of existence are mediated by the filter of irony.

In the exhibition spaces of Galleria Continua, Ilya & Emilia Kabakov present the installation entitled, *The Eminent Direction of Thoughts* (2011). In a dark room is a seat, to which are attached coloured strings that stretch upwards; from the ceiling hangs a bare, transparent light bulb.

The Kabakovs' work is infused with a poetic dimension which is both fantastical and melancholic, capable of communicating shared and universal meaning. "*Ilya's world and work are built on fantasy and on the history of art. I, on the other hand, very early in life, learned to combine reality and fantasy and to live in both. Our life is very much based on this combination (...) Our life consists of our work, dreams and discussions. We are very lucky: we have managed to transform reality into fantasy and to reside there permanently.*"

Ilya Kabakov (Ukraine, Dnipropetrovs'k, 1933) and **Emilia Kabakov** (Ukraine, Dnipropetrovs'k, 1945) live and work on Long Island, New York, United States. Their works are to be found among the permanent collections of prestigious museums, including the Pompidou Centre, Paris; MoMA, New York; the Kunsthalle, Bern; and the TATE, London. They have exhibited at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; the Sprengel Museum, Hannover; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, amongst others. In 1992 they participated in the IX edition of Documenta at Kassel, Germany; in 1993 they represented Russia at the 45th Venice Biennial; and in 1997 they took part in the Whitney Biennial, New York. Additionally, the artists have carried out numerous public commissions all over Europe and have received great recognition and many awards, such as the Praemium Imperiale Award in Tokyo, 2008; the Oskar Kokoschka Preis in Vienna, 2002 and the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in Paris, 1995. In 2004, they became the first living Russian artists to have their works exhibited at the Hermitage in St Petersburg. In 2012 the Sprengel Museum, Hannover hosted an important retrospective of their work; in 2014 they showed at the Grand Palais for Monumenta; and in 2015 they participated in the Echigo Tsumari Art Triennial at Niigata in Japan. In 2017 the TATE Modern, London dedicated a broad-ranging retrospective to the artists' work which was realised in collaboration with the Hermitage State Museum. The exhibition then transferred to St Petersburg and on to the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow in 2018. Installations, drawings, paintings, prints, architectural models of utopian projects and gigantic public sculptures which retraced the various stages of the artists' lives: from the first works created by Ilya Kabakov in his Moscow studio in the Sixties, to the move to New York at the end of the Eighties. This latter was an important turning point in his career, as it signalled the beginning of his collaboration with Emilia and the production of large-scale installations.