

# what's to be done?

# REVOLUTION IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

by Jo Anna Isaak

From the height, Moscow appeared to me a swarming anthill. Below, the crowds were seething in the square and pointing up at me with mocking laughter; and I became ashamed and terrified.— *Pushkin, Boris Godunov*

The Russian workers will have to undergo trials immeasurably more severe; they will have to take up the fight against a monster, compared with which anti-Socialist laws in a constitutional country are but pygmies.— *Lenin, What's To Be Done?*



**WE** are all suffering from a hang-over; after the three day carnival we are experiencing the after-effects of a party. This was the

first post-modern revolution, a revolution according to Baudrillard. From the first day we watched this revolution on T.V. CNN played a key role here. Each person had the possibility of playing a role. We played with all possible stereotypes from Prague in 1968 to Hemingway's Madrid to Santiago. During these three days we (artists and art critics) had a lot of discussions about what kind of performance art this reaction was because the barricades were no more than decorative. They were very expressive as installations, but were completely useless against tanks. People drew on the stereotypes they received from countless movies about the first Russian revolution because probably against cavalry these barricades could play some protective role, but not against tanks. Even this defence of the Russian White House was a kind of fancy dress ball; everybody tried to select some costume suitable for these events. It was not more than a performance and as result we received not more than a very bad Hollywood movie with Yeltsin starring as Batman. Now, aside from the couple of days we spent in front of the White House, it is not very good for us to say that we took part in this because the defence of the White House was performed by our mass media as a kind of new stereotype. They made a success out of this putsch. Everyday we have on T.V. countless programs about the event. Now it is not more than a new myth of perestroika. For us it is not as heroic as it could be. This feeling of the postmodern value of the affair was strong from the start. From the first moment it was not very serious, it had more of the elements of comedy than tragedy. It was a new thing because this country usually tries to be very serious at any historical event; this mask of seriousness was a symbol of the Soviet Union. Now without this mask we lost our stability, our structure. We understood that for so many years we fooled ourselves, but no more.—Konstantin Akinsha, art critic, in conversation with the author.

Russians have a highly developed "smechovaja kul'tura" (laugh culture). This is the culture that produced Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* which argued that laughter and the carnivalesque are potent catalysts for popular explosions. Many of the artists and intellectuals who took part in the resistance at the barricades were revolutionaries in the school of Rabelais and knew, in theory, how emancipatory collective laughter could be. Yet there is growing concern that this "ludic" revolt has been inscribed into somebody else's canonical text—the monolithic mechanism of mass media. In listening to Akinsha's account of the influence of the media upon these events, I was reminded of the joke about the Soviet journalist who visited America and was amazed that all the major American TV networks reported exactly the same news—all without any coercion! An important shift in the function of ideology has taken place; an obvious system of manipulation has been replaced by one offering seductive, constitutive identification. Marginalized people, artists, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, prostitutes, and members of the new "mafia," the whole Rabelaisian cast that gathered at the barricades, are having difficulty recognizing themselves in their new, made-for-TV stereotypes. In an amazingly brief period of time, they have been transformed from the overlooked into the overdetermined.

The awareness of being watched was a common enough phenomenon in the Soviet Union. Those who went to defend the White House knew the KGB would be recording their actions, but they also knew there was another gaze upon them—the gaze of Western media. For many Soviets, holding the attention of Western media has historically functioned as a form of life insurance—the physicist Andrei Zakharov is perhaps the most famous example of someone who stayed alive by living in the public eye. Many artists had learned to utilize the presence of Western journalists; it gave them an opportunity to be far more transgressive than they could be otherwise. In 1988 during the Sotheby auction in Moscow, artists had put up what, at the time, was a highly controversial exhibition at Kuznetsky Most. I was taken to it before it opened as the organizers were

sure the censors would close it down. (Inspectors come to every exhibition before it is opened to the public.) Three days later I went back. The controversial pieces were still up; they remained, according to my friends, because so many foreign journalists were in Moscow. Now, however, there is a growing sense of unease with this formerly benign and permissive gaze. It has taken on the dynamics of a new system of surveillance with the power to provide internalized censure or externalized approval and legitimacy. Those who once engaged in a critique of Soviet ideology understand that again they are being asked to "perform" an identity. Some are experiencing a form of *déjà vu*.

The replays of the "barricade tales," as they are now referred to, range in genre from fairy tales to horror movies or B-grade Westerns. In each case there is some overwhelmingly powerful evil that the protagonist, by virtue of having Right on his side, is able to overcome. For example, this is the account given in a popular newspaper: "A small group of people around the White House withstood the gigantic machine of repression which had the ability to annihilate millions, just as Saint George withstood the fire-spitting Dragon" (L.Ionin, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Sept.12,1991). In reports by the commanders of the KGB hit squad "Alpha" (who boasted about how easily they could have wiped out the democratic defenders had they chosen to obey orders) the description of invisible, omnipresent, omnipotent, well-trained secret killers is borrowed from Ninja turtle movies. The topos of the horror movie has provided the most fertile metaphors for the event, perhaps because there is a lingering sense of the uncanny in the way "the forces of evil" were overcome. The minister of defense, E. N. Shaposhnikov, spoke of his "feeling of the diabolic" at work during the plotting of the coup. The leaders of the coup, by the logic of the genre, are constructed as nonhuman or alien forces plotting in the dark. On the day of the coup numerous hand-made posters appeared in the streets. In one poster Pavlov's face is painted on the head of an animal that looks something like a bull; the caption reads: "You won't take us by fear." The Russian word for fear contains the let-



ters "pugo" (painted in red) - another instance of the uncanny in that Pugo is the name of one of the plotters. The failed coup has become known as the "The Nightmare on Yazov Street," due to a play on the sound of Yazov, the military minister's name, and the Russian words for "on Elm." (I am indebted to Irina Sandomirskaya for bringing these "barricade tales" to my attention.) The general inability to think clearly about contemporary events is frequently linked to the bad American movies currently flooding Russian theaters. Ironically, one woman still blamed the former Soviet government for this—she thought the ministry in charge of imports lacked either the money or the taste to select good American movies. As a character in a Wim Wender's movie warned Germans many years ago -- "The Yanks have colonized our sub-conscious." The colonization has now spread to Russia. An enormous discursive shift has taken place, but who has appropriated it is not clear. What is also not clear is the relationship between these narratives and the formation of determining social structures. The hangover so many people are experiencing may be vertigo, the result of their precipitous plunge into what Julian Dibbell of the *Village Voice* called "this ever exponentially expanding hell-hole of American mass culture."

### The Worldbackwards

**Regression is not origin but origin is the ideology of regression.**

**Theodor Adorno,**  
"Perennial Fashion-Jazz," *Prisms*

**Roll away the reel world, the reel world, the reel world.**

**James Joyce**



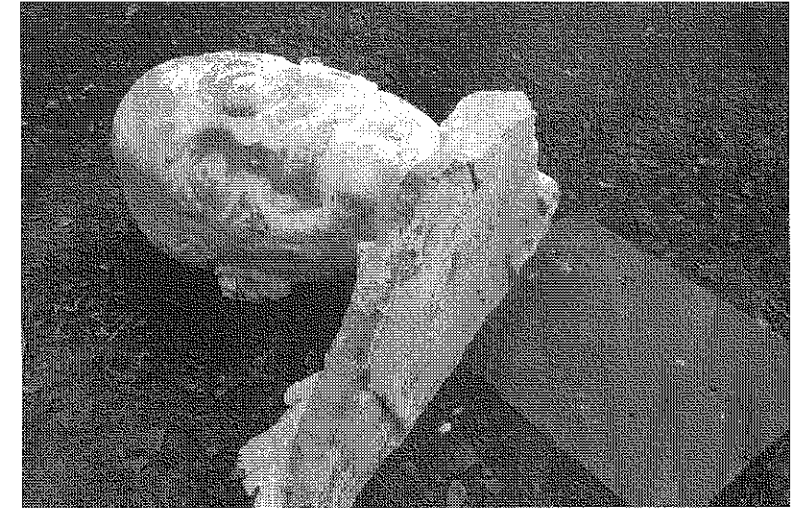
Even Kruchkov, former head of the KGB and one of the plotters of the coup, invoked a cinematic metaphor during his interrogation. He admitted to having made mistakes and, as if hoping for redemption via the media itself, wished he could have the chance to play the film backwards. His statement was picked up by Russian TV and provides the prefatory comment to a short clip in which the reel of Russian history, in the form of old film footage, is played backwards. Bombed buildings magically reassemble, missiles return through the nozzles of cannons, erect artillery guns go limp, columns of marching men march backwards and vanish into the distance, crosses fly up in the air and settle on the tops of church domes, Romanov monuments lumber back onto their pedestals—the war, the revolution, all "mistakes" are undone. This replay is hard to distinguish from the fast-forward of contemporary events. Both seem to be parodies of the opening scenes of Eisenstein's *October*.

In this contest of symbols, statuary everywhere is toppling. Behind the Dom Khudozhnika there is a rapidly expanding cemetery for statues of the ideologically out-of-step: Stalin, Kalinin, Sverdlov, and the head of what looks like the particularly unpopular General Ordzhonikidze, its face smashed, lie on the ground. Towering above them all is the huge statue of the KGB founder Dzerzhinsky who still looks overbearing and oppressive. There has been a long history of storage problems for white elephant art in the Soviet



Union. The equestrian monument of Alexander III has sat for over seventy years on a pile of cement blocks in the back courtyard of the Russian Museum. This statue was toppled from its pedestal in Znamenskaya Square in St. Petersburg when the Revolution began and rescued by the staff of the Russian Museum because Alexander III founded the museum. The artist Sergei Bugaev (a.k.a. Africa) has made it his project to rescue discarded art from the Soviet period. His apartment is filled with Soviet paintings, books, china, street and metro signs, statuary, building markers, etc., which are all being jettisoned. His greatest success is saving the last statue of Lenin cast by the Leningrad Plant of Art Casting. The statue had been commissioned by the city of Krasnodar in 1990, but Krasnodar no longer wanted it. With the help of Paul Judelson, a gallery director in New York City, Africa has had this fifteen foot, four ton, bronze statue shipped to New York. The problem once again is where to store it. At the moment it is sitting in a warehouse in Chelsea. As I write this, another Lenin statue has just arrived in Brooklyn harbor. . . .

Whole sections of the past are being eradicated in a manner familiar to Soviet citizens, not just because they have lived in a totalitarian regime, but because they have been so deeply marked by the pathos of utopian desire. Libraries and museums devoted to Lenin and the Soviet period are being closed. Names of streets, squares, and metro stations are being altered.



History is being revised so rapidly that schools no longer issue history textbooks; teachers use newspapers and periodicals. "The names are changed," one woman explained, "to protect the innocent." She was not referring to reruns of *Dragnet* (although numerous early American T.V. series are now being aired on Russian television and a whole generation of Russian children will grow up with Donald Duck); instead she was referring to the children who will be taught only the new history. Utopias require a protective narrative. It is a question of purity—the young, the future, cannot be contaminated with old errors. Utopia is also a question of time; even during the period of "heroic communism," which was full of accounts of success, Soviets lived with the sense of the "not yet" of a future utopia. Now utopia is being sought in the past, through a return to origins. November 7th, the planned celebration of the communist victory over capitalist exploitation and tsarist rule, was quickly converted in Leningrad to a celebration renaming the city St. Petersburg. Mayor Anatoly Sobchak promised to "return" the city to capitalism and to its former splendor as the "City of Czars," while his economic advisor expressed his concerns in a strange variant of an old theme: "We cannot build capitalism in just one city."

**What is the robbery of a bank compared to the founding of one?**

**Bertolt Brecht, Threepenny Opera**

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of Free Trade the most predatory wars were conducted . . . The term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood.

**Lenin, What's To Be Done?**

PHOTOS: SUSAN UNTERBERG



I was speaking with the artist Andrei Khlobystin about the effect the onslaught of the Western art market had on artists. "We resisted totalitarianism," he assured me. "We can resist capitalism." I wasn't so sure. I was afraid the Soviet notion of capitalism was derived from one of those old posters of Mayakovsky in which the capitalist, depicted as an enormous pig in a top hat, is about to devour the globe as if it were a big cookie, the cautionary caption saying something like "Capitalism can eat anything."

On the flight over I was again reminded of those old agit-prop posters. There, literally unable to fit his girth into the passenger seat, was a metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox church. No doubt he was returning from a visit to the Russian Orthodox church in America; a new rapprochement has been achieved of late between the two branches. The metropolitan was exactly as Mayakovsky and Cheremnykh had depicted him. In the cartoon version, however, the fat metropolitan was pushed off the globe, skirts flying. The figure in front of me looked like he was here to stay, his importance underlined by his enormous gold necklace and gold scepter. The scepter he used effectively to clear a space for himself in front of the baggage conveyor, which delivered to him four shopping carts of luggage. The church is emerging as one of the wealthiest sectors of Russian society, but is not considered a reliable venue for the distribution of Western aid to the needy. Other signs of freedom of religion are the young American Baptists and members of numerous evangelical sects coming in groups to spread the word of God and enlist converts. There is also a growing enthusiasm for everything occult.

Many other signs of "freedom" and "progress" can be seen: a huge duty-free shopping mall has been built in the Sheremetyevo airport; buses now carry advertising billboards with happy faces advertising Colgate toothpaste; other billboards and neon signs advertise a range of Western products, from beauty aids to electronic equipment. Signs also announce Casino Moscow, Business World, the newly founded banks, and the stock exchange. A seat on the exchange

costs several hundred thousand dollars. Western franchises such as McDonald's that offer "freedom of choice" (lettuce, tomato, or onion?) are experiencing amazing successes. Queues are now even more a part of Russian life. Still, the queue that remains the longest is the one to Lenin's tomb. Graffiti have begun to appear on the streets and subways; the most radical demand "Private property now!" Private ownership of buildings has begun, and artists perform the same role for developers in Moscow and St. Petersburg that they do in New York city—they are allowed to occupy buildings fallen into disrepair. The artists pay rent and repair the buildings. Often heat is not provided, only electricity and running water. When a speculator wants one of these complexes (usually some foreign interest is involved), the electricity is turned off and the artists are forced out.

## ARTISTS

have had a head start in the shift to a market economy. In the summer of 1988 the Trojan Horse of the Sotheby's auction arrived in Moscow. I was as awed by its well-oiled machinery as were the Soviet artists. We marvelled at the fax machines, the computers, the photocopiers, the multiple phone lines that worked, the homogeneous blonde women in red jackets who glided amidst the crowds ministering to various needs. We devoured the food spread lavishly on banquet tables, stared at the exotic rich, and listened to "snap, crackle, and pop" as one Russian artist after another discovered bubblewrap. On the night of the auction we witnessed the birth of free enterprise. None of the artists in the auction became the millionaires they thought they had become that night. In spite of Pavel Horoshilov's assurances from the Ministry of Culture concerning payments to be made to the artists, it took more than a year of wrangling before any of them saw a ruble. Several weeks after the auction I happened to be meeting an artist in an old church. As I negotiated puddles of water in the dank basement, I saw the

art from the Sotheby auction sitting on dirt floors and propped against the walls—over four million dollars worth of art and not a guard or a dehumidifier around!

The Sotheby auction affected the Russian art world much the way the *Salon des Refusés* affected the Paris Salon in 1863: it incorporated art production and distribution into the system familiar in capitalist countries. It announced in the most public and powerful way possible that the criteria for judgement and the potential to make things happen could be located somewhere other than the entrenched bureaucracy of the Ministry of Culture. Not that all of those comfortable government jobs within the Artists' Union and other branches of the arts administration disappeared. Foreign museums and organizations even today still have to pander to numerous Soviet directors who do little to facilitate the project at hand, but continue to enjoy the travel and expensive hotel rooms that their position still allows them to demand. Yet their role as gatekeeper was over by the summer of 1988. The financial success of the auction meant that the Artists' Union could no longer control the selection of artists for exhibitions and sales abroad, nor could they control the activities of artists at home. Artists and critics began to arrange their own exhibitions and new entrepreneurial structures developed around them. At the time of the Sotheby auction there was not a single gallery in Moscow, but buoyed by the demand of a foreign market for Russian art, a local market has since developed and now there are close to a hundred galleries. Some of these may exhibit work of dubious taste and engage in questionable business practices, but all that was true of the old Artists' Union as well. Last fall Moscow held its second international art fair, called Art Mif at the grand Manege exhibition hall. The organizers of the fair were a mixture of the old bureaucracy as well as new art dealers and critics. The show as a whole looked as dreary as any of the past official exhibitions held in that vast space. Many of the artists were the old favorites of the Artists' Union. Nevertheless, works sold. With new Soviet banks buying art both for

investment and for public relations, this may have been more financially successful than art fairs held in Europe or America last year. The success of this fair was especially significant because it coincided with the announcement that the Artists' Union would no longer be able to meet its payroll to artists. Thus ended six decades of support for official Soviet art.

## NYMPHETS

do not occur in polar regions.

Nabokov

When I first went to the Soviet Union in 1981 I was struck by the fact that women were not "hailed," to use Althusser's term, by ubiquitous images of themselves on billboards, posters, cinema marquees, shop windows, and magazines. Images of women were not used as part of the continuous barrage of exhortation and entrapment that "a capitalist society requires . . . to stimulate buying and anesthetize the injuries of class, race, and sex" (Susan Sontag, *On Photography*). Moreover, I was conscious that women walking in the streets of Moscow are not looked at in the same way, are not the same confection of meanings as they would be on the streets of Paris, Rome, or New York. I always felt more confident, more at liberty in Moscow. When my husband came with me in 1987 he complained that the culture seemed de-eroticized. Ironically, once I learned more about how Soviet women perceive their construction within the dominant representational systems, I discovered that his response was closer to theirs than was my own. Women in the Soviet Union have invariably been depicted as heroic workers or warriors—woman as trac-

tor or combine driver, construction worker, steamroller operator, vegetable farmer, engineer—all form part of the myth of the legendary *omuzhony*, (amazon) or "masculine woman." Coming from a culture in which the image of woman signifies sale and sexual titillation, I found these images of active, strong women at work refreshing, but Soviet women, conscious of the violation inherent in so overdetermined an iconographic program, do not. They recognized in this stereotype of the all-capable and resilient Soviet woman a strategy to colonize a work force. The appropriation of the female body that in Western culture facilitated the construction of difference there contributed to the notion of the ideal collective body, to the sexual in-difference of totalitarian androgyny. Paradoxically, both representational systems serve to control women's sexuality and to guarantee manageability in the work place.

Recently in St. Petersburg I came upon a poster in which a bikini-clad



woman assuming a standard pin-up pose was juxtaposed with an image of a computer. At first I misread the relationship between the two images, thinking the pin-up was the visual gambit to call attention to the computer, but the caption read, "Shaping—It Is the Style of Life for the Contemporary Woman." This was a self-improvement poster addressed to women. Although the role of the computer was unclear, it could simply have been the signifier of all that was progressive, like the tractor in

Soviet posters of the thirties. Now the emphasis was on the appearance of the woman, not on her work. In very real terms, however, this poster was no less about women and work than were the Socialist Realist posters. As job opportunities arise in the emerging entrepreneurial sector and in Western businesses, the call is for young attractive women to occupy predominantly low-paying, decorative jobs in the service "industry." As the free market brings unemployment in its wake, the education, training, and professional skills of women will likely be sacrificed first—at the moment of writing it is estimated that eighty percent of the unemployed are women. The subliminal message of this poster aimed at women is, "Either make yourself look like this, or you'll be out of a job."

Posters of pin-up girls are still a rarity, even in the streets of St. Petersburg, which has always been the most Westernized of the Soviet cities. While Western ads and movies are bringing with them increasingly explicit representations of the female body, pornography is not yet part of the everyday sexism of this culture. Historically, Russian art has not shared the Western tradition of the nude, except, oddly enough, during the period of Socialist Realism. This winter an exhibition of Socialist Realist art at the New Tretyakov Gallery displayed more nudity in one room than can be found in the entire collection of

Russian art in the Russian Museum. Although Andrei Zhdanov, as minister of culture under Stalin, led campaigns against the representation of sexuality, images of nude women were nonetheless officially encouraged. Under a seemingly perverse strategy, desire was aroused in order to be appropriated. There were many images of female fecundity; bare-breasted harvesters or nursing mothers were very popular, as were nude female athletes or bathing scenes that enabled the artist to depict the nude in numerous postures.



Aleksandr Samokhvalov's *After Running* (1934) is a classic of this genre. It depicts a female athlete in the process of undressing and drying her body; her panties are pulled down to reveal a little of her pubic hair while she smiles at the viewer. The obsession with the healthy athletic body as a vehicle for sexual sublimation during the Stalinist period is remarkably similar to the mechanisms of libidinal alignment used on us today—twenty pounds lighter, and this girl could be in an ad for Evian water.

Although Russian artists have for the most part been much more reticent in the depiction of sexuality than Western artists, a thriving gay and lesbian community in St. Petersburg has effectively used erotically charged material in art exhibitions and performances to announce its existence, to counter stultifying assumptions of normalcy, to celebrate the body, and to allow for the articulation of an already constituted but previously repressed set of behaviours and desires. Eroticism is explored as a locus of subjectivity, a venue by which the self may be liberated from its previous incarceration in the de-erotized communal body constructed within Soviet ideology. Central to this movement is Vadim Mamyshv, a performance artist who does such convincing impersonations of Marilyn Monroe that the official newspapers reported he was an hermaphrodite. In a culture intolerant of even small deviations from the norm, this was cause for an enormous scandal, especially as Vadim's mother was a prominent party member. Bella Matveeva also explores androgyny and homoeroticism in her paintings of highly stylized, Egyptian-looking nudes in which the male and female models seem to blend into one sex. Initially these paintings seem uncomplicated offerings of visually pleasurable bodies, but installations of Matveeva's paintings include the living nudes who modelled for them. The presence of the actual people used in creating the work disturbs the viewer's passive identification with the illusion of art. Matveeva plays with the subject positions of speculation and, in doing so, ingeniously reveals how these fixed positions of separation-representation-speculation are classically fetishistic.

A number of recent exhibitions in both Moscow and St.



Aleksandr Samokhvalov, *After Jogging*, 1934, Russian Museum, Leningrad. Photo: Susan Unterberg.

*IdiomA*, under the editorship of Irina Sandomirskaya. With a grant from the Ms. Foundation for the Arts, it will publish its first issue in Russian and English this Spring. The title is a reference to the feminine sign "α" in the gender-divided Russian language. Like the French feminists, the Russian feminists are trying to find a voice for women, a language, "l'écriture féminine." To do this in the context of the powerful patriarchal syntax of contemporary Soviet culture is to undertake a much more difficult task than that undertaken by Western feminists.

Petersburg have attempted to address issues of representation and the construction of gender. The curatorial team of Oleya Turkina and Viktor Mazin have organized three such exhibitions. The first, called "Women in Art" (1989), was a retrospective with a section dedicated to female students of Malevich and Filonov, as well as work from the sixties and seventies, a liberal period in which many women artists were admitted into the Artists' Union. The second and third exhibitions focused on contemporary art. Influenced by their readings of the new French feminists, these curators attempted to address such issues as art as text, the gender assumptions surrounding textile art, fetishism, forgery, lesbian love, and hermaphroditism. The theoretical impetus for these exhibitions come from the West, and as the participants themselves note, it is not easy to organize an exhibition about feminist issues in a country where feminism is simply absent as a social or philosophical movement. In some cases the signs of this absence, particularly in the case of exhibitions which purport to be addressing the cultural construction of gender or the problems of women and art, are glaring. The exhibition "Woman as Represented in Contemporary Avant-Garde Art" (Feb., 1990) seemed to be designed to support the commonly felt assumptions that woman's artistic role is naturally that of muse. However, there are signs of an incipient feminist movement. In Moscow, a feminist collective has emerged and has managed to organize two feminist art exhibitions; the second attracted international interest and is currently on tour in Europe. This collective began the publication of the first feminist art magazine

## The Icon of Our Time

It is only over there they think  
That living means you have to eat.

Dmitry Prigov

As the old order of art production, distribution, exhibition, and critical reception collapses, those with the requisite energy, commitment, and enthusiasm are finding that for the first time their projects can be realized. Ironically, the closest historical comparison is to the activities of the avant-garde just after the Revolution. When Lunacharsky went to Lenin for funds to support the avant-garde, Lenin replied that in these difficult times, artists would have to live on the energy produced by their own enthusiasm. Today, as in 1918, enthusiasm seems to be very rich fare. Currently, there are almost no government funds to support artistic activity, yet paints, paper, and building materials are gathered, exhibition sites are rehabilitated, and volunteer labour is in abundance. Making a joke of their straitened circumstances and the anxiety over food shortages, two artists put on an exhibition at the Marat Guelman Gallery which included a huge table loaded with fruit, bread, and sausages they had transported from Odessa; at the opening the audience was invited to eat the work of art.

As official art institutions flounder, independent curators and critics have been quick to take advantage of the opportunities chaos has created. At the Dom Khudozhnika or Artists' House in the New Tretyakov, Yelena Selina and Yelena Romanova were able to organize an exhibition of contemporary art unlike most previous exhibitions sponsored by that institution in that it was political, provocative, and at times very witty. Once again the recurring motif was food. Yelena Elagina raised the sausage to its appropriate place in the Russian collective consciousness—to the level of "The Icon of Our Time." The price and availability of this item is a daily topic of conversation, discussed regularly on the radio and television as



Aleksandr Samokhvalov, *Iksisos (Sausage)*, *The Icon of Our Time* 1991. Photo: Susan Unterberg.

if it were one of the leading economic indicators. In *Iksisos* (sausage spelled backwards) sausages made of wood are strung together and draped like rosary beads over a wooden cross. Where traditionally one would find scenes from the stations of the cross, one finds instead back-lit illustrations taken from a book distributed to food service employees during the 50s. The book is a safety manual instructing people on the proper procedure for the handling and cleaning of huge food processing equipment. There is an implied threat to the dwarfed humans working with this equipment and consequently something suspect about the content of the sausages.

With the abrupt collapse of various state-run publications numerous new voices are making themselves heard. The main art magazine *Iskusstvo* ceased publication because of a paper shortage. In its wake a number of small publications have started up. In St

Petersburg the first issue of *Kunstkamera International* appeared this fall. This is an illustrated art newspaper containing interviews and critical essays along with guides to exhibitions and galleries. Many small publications are now possible because numerous artists who came to the West in the last few years returned with computers and small copiers. In 1987 when I was doing archival research, I would have to take material to the xerox machine in the Canadian Embassy. Now, with the possibilities of desktop publishing, small groups of artists and critics are able to form collectives and produce their own magazines and manifestos. A lot of the publishing that is going on at the moment involves exposés of government and KGB corruption. The graphic artist Alexandra Dementieva is making the cover for a book written by Lef Khrutsky documenting the connections between the mafia and the members of the Central Committee. She wasn't sure if the book could be published even now, but if it wasn't accepted by the official publishing organs she was prepared to publish it herself. "We'll risk it!" she laughed, echoing the words of that early revolutionary Chernyshevsky.

On the plane home I sat beside a man who was working for the CIA. He had spent the last two weeks in Moscow running a workshop for the KGB on international drug control. He was an affable American, showing me all the souvenirs he had brought back for his family, but as he told about his stay in the hotel inside the KGB complex, the opulence of the surroundings, the lavish banquets held every evening, the dacha he was taken to outside Moscow, and all the privileges the KGB were still enjoying, I thought of Alexandra and I remembered that Chernyshevsky wrote *What's to be Done?* while imprisoned in the fortress.

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