

## GALLERIA CONTINUA / Le Moulin

### Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, *The Tennis Game*

27th June – 4th October 2009

#### **Opening night Saturday 27th June at Le Moulin, 6pm to midnight:**

- o At 6pm: exhibition visit and cocktail
- o From 9pm to midnight: rustic banquet and Dj set beside the river

Ilya Kabakov (born in Dnepropetrovsk in 1933, Ukraine), worked in the Soviet Union as a children's book illustrator until 1988. This context did not allow him to work as a 'free' artist. He left the Soviet Union, first of all staying in Germany and then moved to New York.

Emilia Kabakov (born in Dnepropetrovsk in 1945) studied music then experienced being a curator and gallery owner in New York from 1975. She has worked with Ilya Kabakov since 1989. They both live and work on Long Island (United States).

As Kabakov himself defines, their works of art are part of a 'Total Installation', which signifies putting art and life in contact. His works are as much progressive, as they are romantic, and invite the spectator to concentrate on their own life, on the possibilities, the problems and the solutions with regard to their personal reality.

The main work of art presented at Galleria Continua / Le Moulin is *Tennis Game, A conversation between Ilya Kabakov and Boris Groys*, which re-stages the medieval custom of a philosophical argument, a type of intellectual tournament between two rivals. With a discussion of this kind, a preliminary subject was established and discussed by the two partners. The two rivals belonged to sides with different traditions and the joust was rich with abrupt movements.

Here, a tennis court is surrounded by fourteen black paintings unwinding the thread of a conversation between the artist and Boris Groys: the sports game gives way to the dialectic and the sports ground becomes the scene of a re-transcribed verbal joust. The match was played by Ilya Kabakov and Boris Groys. The spectators can watch past action on television screens. True, the players don't have the same level as Boris Becker or Marat Safin, but the principal after all, is to love the game. At the same time, the spectators can contemplate the result of another game, written on the black painting. The dialogues between the philosopher Boris Groys and the artist Ilya Kabakov are presented like five rounds of a tennis match in which a question is served and then followed by a return shot.

Before *Tennis Game*, there was a preliminary study: 'Strangers in the Arctic', a travelling group exhibition in which the Kabakov participated in 1996, like the classic position of two players. The subject of this exhibition serves as a structure for the installation. The theme of a 'stranger on foreign territory' is similar to the situation between two match opponents.

What is the result of this match, who is the winner? Here, let's quote he who resuscitated the tradition of the modern Olympic Games and pronounced the following words: "It is more important to participate than to win". This is applied to the participants themselves. What is the position of the reader/observer in such a case? It is not so obvious and everyone must judge for themselves.

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov's work has been exhibited in many museums like the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), the Hirshhorn Museum (Washington DC), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), at the Documenta IX, at the Whitney Biennial 1997, at the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg) and in several Venice Biennials. In 1993 for example, they represented Russia at the 45<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial with their installation *The Red Pavilion*. In 2008, a large retrospective: *Alternative History of Art and Other Projects* – and first exhibition in Russia since leaving at the end of the 1980's – took place in four exhibition spaces in Moscow (State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Center for Contemporary Culture Garage, Moscow, Contemporary Art Center, Winzavod, M&J Guelman Gallery). The Kabakov's works of art feature in many public collections across Europe. They have also won a large number of honorary prizes, like the Oscar Kokoschka Preis (Vienna) in 2002, and they were made Chevaliers des Arts et des Lettres in Paris, in 1995.

## **GALLERIACONTINUA / Le Moulin 46 rue de la Ferté Gaucher, Boissy-le-Châtel (Seine-et-Marne)**

From Paris, by car or train, allow an hour.

- Saturday 27th June, courtesy bus from Paris: leaves Paris at 5pm, meeting in front of the entrance of Jardin des Plantes, Place Valhubert 75005 Paris. Metro Gare d'Austerlitz, lines 5, 10 or RER C. Return to Paris around midnight. By prior booking only: [lemoulin@galleriacontinua.com](mailto:lemoulin@galleriacontinua.com)

- By car:

> Toll motorway: East motorway A4 direction Metz / Nancy. Take exit 16 Coulommiers, then the N34, go through Coulommiers. Follow Boissy-le-Châtel on the D222 and turn right onto the D66 towards Chauffry until Le Moulin.

> Main road: the A4 motorway towards Metz / Nancy. Take exit n°13 and continue on the D231 (the road to Provins). Then follow the D231 (road to Coulommiers) for 25 minutes and go over four roundabouts: 1<sup>st</sup> roundabout, take the 2<sup>nd</sup> exit; 2<sup>nd</sup> roundabout, go straight over taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> exit, carry on for 10 minutes; 3<sup>rd</sup> roundabout (known as the Obélisque) go straight over taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> exit, carry on for 15 minutes; 4<sup>th</sup> roundabout, take the 3<sup>rd</sup> exit on the left, towards the road to Coulommiers, on the D402.

Follow the signs for Coulommiers. Go past the Moulin de Mistou and go through Mauperthuis. Carry on for 5 minutes. At the 5<sup>th</sup> roundabout, carry on towards Coulommiers on the D402 (bypass southeast of Coulommiers). On arrival at the 6<sup>th</sup> roundabout, take the D934, 2<sup>nd</sup> exit. Go into Chailly-en-Brie. At the traffic-lights by the church, turn left into rue Saint-Médard (D37). Go past Chailly-en-Brie. Go into Boissy-Le-Châtel. Take the rue des papeteries and go past the level crossing and the former Moulin de Sainte-Marie paper-mill on your left. At the stop sign, take the D66 on the right (rue de la Ferté-Gaucher) until Le Moulin, situated on the right.

- Public transport: train from Gare de l'Est, to Coulommiers. Then bus exiting the station towards La Ferté Gaucher, stop: Moulin de Boissy / Chailly Boissy-le-Châtel.

The Moulin is open from June 27 to October 4, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from 12 midday to 7pm.

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