

AUTUMN 2014

sleek

FASHION NOW - ART FOREVER

YOUTH/TRUTH

AND THE 21st
CENTURY CONDITION

DOUGLAS COUPLAND POLLY MORGAN THOMAS RUFF
WU TSANG & BOYCHILD NEW SCULPTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY
YOUTH CONFESSIONALS RYAN TRECARTIN

P L U S
SEVEN NEW FACES

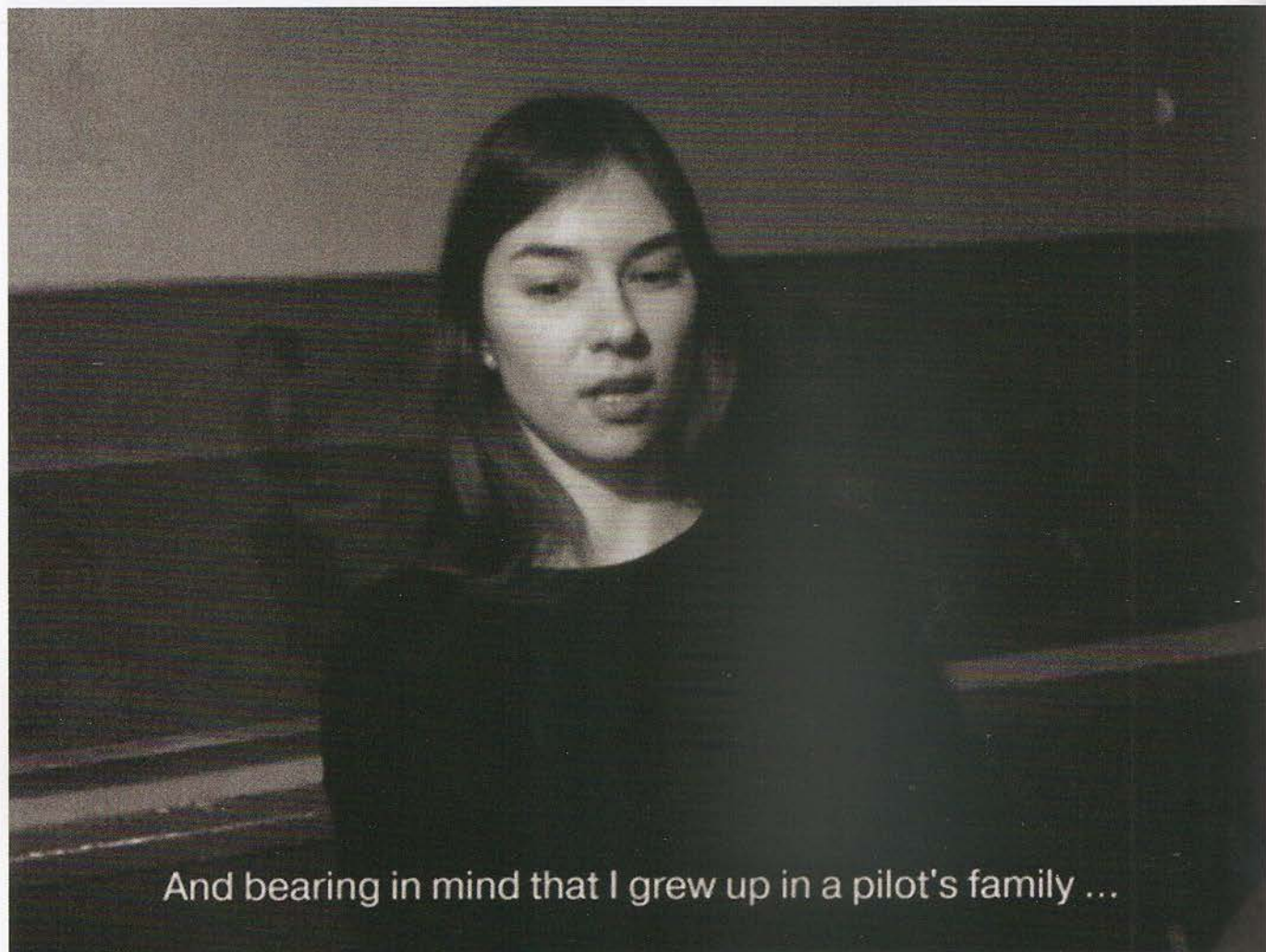
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This year, as Artistic Director of the 4th International Moscow Biennale for Young Art, "A Time For Dreams", I was asked to take the temperature of young art in Russia today. This meant visiting galleries, artists' studios and alternative spaces from Ekaterinburg to Samara. I found a number of as yet unformed but dynamic, reflec-

status quo, which can therefore be appreciated within a much broader context. Themes include gender, sexuality, revolution and identity – topics that the current government would prefer to keep under wraps. In addition, a vast number of new art schools, studios and collectives have started to supplement, and in some case

show "She Owes" (2013), in which elderly women instruct their youngsters in how to please and keep their worthless, boorish men – and a more intimate, subjective, hand-made approach as in Evgeny Granilshchikov's 11-minute-long video "Courbet's Funeral" (2014), filmed on a mobile phone, which is poetically

Russia and the importance of energy in the economy. The ludic sense of carnival is continued in a collective work, "Agricultural Studies" (2013), made by four students of Moscow's Rodchenko School, in which they use their bodies to "re-enact" in photographs the forms of obsolete agricultural



tive and critical young artists who are redefining the clichéd Western concept of Russian art.

The most significant change was the repudiation of the seemingly interminable state of being post-Soviet. The anodyne ironies of Socialist Realism and the terminal paradoxes of Conceptualism have been replaced by a more open sense of enquiry into and critique of the

revolutionise, the work of the established academies.

A similar openness can also be seen in the range of work being made. Painting is still strong, but so are photography, installation art and performance. Video is finding its own way and, making no reference to the grand narrative of Soviet cinema, moves between parody of reality TV – as in Anastasia Vepreva's nightmare

reminiscent of classic French cinema.

In "The Triumph of Fun" (2013), an unruly fountain constructed out of oil barrels, St. Petersburg artist Ivan Plusch makes ironic references to the Russian taste for grandiosity (expressed in such Soviet monuments as the "Friendship of Nations Fountain" in Moscow), as well as to the wealth of New

equipment, their absurdity transforming them into a dance or a sculpture.

In her extended photo study "True Self" (2013), Natalie Maximova, a graduate of the same school, travelled throughout Russia interviewing men and women who had decided to embark on difficult and painful sex change procedures, documenting her findings in a series of portraits. In "Administration"

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RUSSIA: THE NEW REVOLUTIONARIES

YOUNG ART IN RUSSIA ENQUIRES INTO
THE COUNTRY'S STATUS QUO

TEXT — David Elliott

(2013), Oleg Ustinov posted a seemingly official notice in a number of housing blocks asking residents to report on any abnormal sexual habits or practices they had noticed among their neighbours. Some people took this at face value and rang up either to complain on this infringement of civil liberties or to report someone whom they suspected.

The four artists in the Krasnodar-based collective ZIP Group also touch on the question of authority and social control in their installation "District of Civil Resistance" (2013), while also referring back to revolutionary Soviet architecture by artists such as El Lissitzsky and Gustav Klutsis from the 1920s. Some of their structures, such as BOPs (Booths of Individual Picketing), which protect demonstrators from attack and carry banners and slogans, have been used in actual demonstrations, while a model shows how the whole system of command, demonstration – and escape – operates.

The spectre of revolution in another form appears in the nearly seven-metre-wide painting "Bandits to the Trash" (2014) by Dmitry Okruzhnov and Maria Sharova, who both studied at the extremely conservative Surikov Academy in Moscow. In the centre, a FEMEN demonstrator holds up a banner with the work's title, a denunciation of this violent, restrictive element in Russian politics and society, against a background of flaming trash, barricades and violent right-wing thugs.

These are just a few of the many young Russian artists I visited and whose work I showed in this Biennale (which also included works by artists from over 30 other countries). Innocent of the past, they do not feel bound by it. Intelligent and critical, they view their world as it is, without prescribing how anyone else should see it. This showed me that, in art at least, Russia again deserves our serious consideration.



Opposite page
EVGENY GRANILSHCHIKOV
Courbet's Funeral, 2014

Short film (video filmed on mobile phone)
 Dimensions variable
 Courtesy: the artist
<http://www.evgenygranilshchikov.com>

Top
NATALIE MAXIMOVA
True Self, 2013

C-Print
 60 x 60 cm
 Courtesy: the artist

Above
IVAN PLUSCH
The Triumph of fun 2014

Installation
 Courtesy: the artist

A TWO VOLUME FULL COLOURED
 CATALOGUE OF A YEAR OF ARTISTS
 AND ITS RELATED CONTENTS IS AVAILABLE
 FROM THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
 CONTEMPORARY ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE