



famous

**100 CONTEMPORARY
ARTISTS**

WORLD OF ART

THE CONTINUITY OF BECOMING

In an era such as our own, where we are constantly faced with infinite transitions, we are often tempted to wonder if it isn't possible to codify the different phenomenologies of contemporary art in a sort of cinematic ritual that would make it comprehensible in its totality, in its unitary globality.

If we start with the concept that all art (and not only art) is matter, then it is only natural to reflect on whether it is right to bring matter back to a level that transmits pure energy. All this derives from the fact that, alongside the external world, there is also an interior world. As there are always two sides to every coin, we would therefore have to find the right, but certain, balance. And man, dealing with art, has, as it were, the possibility to re-design his own role, along with his limits and boundaries.

The meaning of all this lies in the fact that art, metaphorically, reveals itself as a travel companion able to accompany us towards new dimensions of life. It asks us questions about which and how many resources we are harbouring, about what we are able to mobilise in order to reach new horizons. If we want to undertake this journey, we need bridges. And

Art is one of these: it allows us to get to the other side, it leads us back to a situation which is in any case consubstantial with man. A situation in which thought begins once again to logically restructure a new grammar and language. New in the sense of re-found.

All contemporary art, in fact, is nothing other than a reflection of the idea or philosophy of a transversal, complex and at times even incomprehensible (if superficially interrogated) cultural era. This is why it seems ever more willing to provide innovative spatial dimensions, new temporal dynamics. It attempts to represent the interior world of man. It simulates the feelings, sensations, emotions that he would be experiencing if he were faced with his own thoughts and wanted to completely traverse these thoughts.

A work of art is thus the end result of a specific process – possessing a specific form and aesthetic, it serves no purpose except that of channelling a very specific form of energy. It is always a sort of communicative performance. It allows man to plumb his own conscience and to void it. In fact, it is only

within empty spaces that energy is able to unleash its own creative force. Consequently, by asking how to develop this energy in the face of the complexity of the world, questioning the need for free mental space, man is experiencing a journey where reality and the virtual go hand in hand: two dimensions which are no longer disjoined, in that the virtual is nothing other than an “as-if” reality.

Now, the contents aspect of any work of art lie in the presupposition that the artist is in fact able to explain the most concealed of man’s movements and desires. Once this clarity has been acquired, the artist can purposefully use the talent he has been given. His raw material will always be the conscious awareness of his own energy, his mental resources. His aim will therefore be to develop forms where his energy can be liberated and from which, at the same time, he will receive new energy. In fact, the artist is nothing other than someone who gives form to something. He shapes new images for values and then speaks of form once again. His is a continuous process as he is constantly interrogating himself on what is really important in his life. Regardless of the variety and multiplicity of his products (whether

they are beautiful, ugly, weak, strong, sensual, cold), he none the less follows an extremely progressive path: energy always needs direction, otherwise it is lost. If the artist didn’t have any energy, he would not be able to define any form for himself, that is no behavioural form, and he would thus lose his own energy. All of this, however, provided he doesn’t undertake this as an act of will; if he did, then he would inevitably sacrifice his own happiness.

Considering what we have just said, this volume would therefore like to present and promote the understanding of just how important it is to go from an artist’s notoriety to the importance of his work, in an attempt to bring together different experiences within a possible product level, trying to create a tangible, and an equally subtle and ineffable, link between these.

If art is put forward as the locus of communication, then it is also the locus of self-reflection, in that everything is inevitably related to everything and everyone.

Andrea Pagnes,
curator, artists, Venice

GALINA MANIKOVA

Lives and works in Horten, Norway



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Galina Manikova's art begins with a fundamental understanding of photography's rootless, hovering nature. She does not believe one can look at a photograph, but rather one must look through it, into it, beyond it, always with the possibility of seeing something more, of discovering oneself superimposed on the world. One of her favorite devices is to print a photograph on plastic or glass then hang it in a window, where it can alter the view of the outside - and for those on the other side of the window, of the inside. Other artists genuinely sought to add to photography's resonance. They recognized that a photograph acquires meaning not just from its subject but from its framing, process, and deployment. They intervened at all four levels. This is the task Manikova has taken up, and she is in brilliant company, with Argentina's Graciela Sacco and France's Christian Boltanski, among the most notable. These artists are not photographers per se. For them photography represents a way of making images that can be marshaled in a broader investigation of reality. Of the three,

Manikova is the least political, the most concerned with exploring individual identity, the most "expressionist," a tendency that Pop artists thought photography would eliminate in favor of facts. Each of her projects can be looked at as an attempt to create metaphors for experience using photography. In her work, the photographic image becomes the reference point for what is common to us all, the meeting point of artist and audience. Manikova, the reluctant Norwegian, the Russian outsider, knows that a portrait cannot be coaxed from reality but first must be imagined, then evoked. I am thinking of many of her installations, but particularly "Climax Values" (2000) a painful and inclusive exhibition. Its rooms contained mirrors, photos on glass, videos, light, shadows, projected text - the sum total of woman's psychic life at a moment of raw reflection. And that sum total of identity included the visitors who found themselves washed by her images. To display the evidence of things unseen requires transgressing the boundaries of photography. [Moving Pictures]

▼ **THE CUBES**, PRODUCED SINCE 1997 IN DIFFERENT SIZES AND COLORS, FROM 4X4 IN. / 10X10 CM. TO 24X24 IN. / 60X60 CM.
PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES ARE TRANSFERRED TO PLEXIGLAS AND MOUNTED IN SEVERAL LAYERS, WHICH CREATES AN ILLUSION OF SPACE AND VOLUME



PRIZE OF EXCELLENCE. **REAL-TIME** ONLINE GLOBAL ART ANNUAL 30.06.05 - 30.06.06 **ARTOTEQUE.COM** (LONDON)

29

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