

# GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

## ILYA & EMILIA KABAKOV

### THE FLYING PAINTINGS

PARIS DEBELLEYME

17 Wednesday - 17 Saturday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibition of paintings by Ilya and Emilia Kabakov: The Flying Paintings, opening on Wednesday the 17th of March in the presence of the artists. This new body of paintings continues the work the Kabakovs have developed in the past decade with the notion of whiteness as a ground upon which fleeting images of the past appear like leaves floating in the wind across the surface of the paintings.

These large new works in both the horizontal and vertical format appear almost filmic in their dimension. The artists present us with a world gone white, a blank page of history or imagination upon which the Kabakovs catch - like frames from a home movie or photographs, moments of lost time, - scenes recreated from bits of propaganda from their Russian childhood. On the one hand, we have everyday life portrayed with a pictorial memory of someone looking back at family photographs, or posters from another era on the other.

We see a group of women students, on a trip standing by a river heads turned together in conversation, but the image is falling into the painting like something that exists by accident, and the randomness of its placement in the upper left hand side of a big white canvas, implies that as much as the emotion of the day can be caught in memory, the world around this, and the feelings therein, are gone. The Kabakovs show this world with a distance and objectivity of a filmmaker and the distance is something that adds a nuance of emotion in every vignette, no matter how quotidian. There are men at work, a veterinarian and his nurse coaxing a young cow up the path, a beekeeper dressed in his cloak and mask, is pulling the honey combs out of the hive, but this image is stretched along the lower part of a large horizontal canvas, it appears almost mannerist because the Kabakovs have let this elongated image slide into the frame at an oblique angle. So that it is bigger on one side than on the other. We feel like we are caught in a visual moment somewhere between the distortion of early Futurist films and later the every-dayness of the Russian Cinema of Eisenstein. Work is noble, daily life has its rhythms and joys, there is a humor and sentiment laced through these paintings that very much reflects the sense of utopian idealism that filters through much of the Kabakovs' world view. These are paintings about time, space, the pictorial tradition of Russian painting, and how radical painting can often take the subliminal route to entice and satisfy the eye.

During the month of February, Ilya & Emilia Kabakov will bring Peter Eötvös's opera to life with their imaginative installation of sculptures for 'The Tragedy of the Devil', at the National Theatre in Munich. They will be showing the preparatory drawings in the gallery's Project Space.

The Kabakovs have been working together collaboratively since 1989. They have worked on large scale projects and ambitious installations throughout the world including the Russian Pavilion of the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993, a solo exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, 2004; major group shows have included Magicians de la Terre at the Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1989, Documenta IX Kassel, Germany 1992 and a large-scale historic exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum New York, 2005. They were awarded the prestigious Praemium Imperiale in 2008. In September 2009, they had a major retrospective in Moscow, in the Pushkin Museum and the CCC Melnikov Garage. They live and work in New York.

An exhibition catalogue designed by the artists with an essay by Rod Mengham of Jesus College at Cambridge University will be published in conjunction with the exhibition. The entire series of The Flying Paintings will be reproduced in this color catalogue.