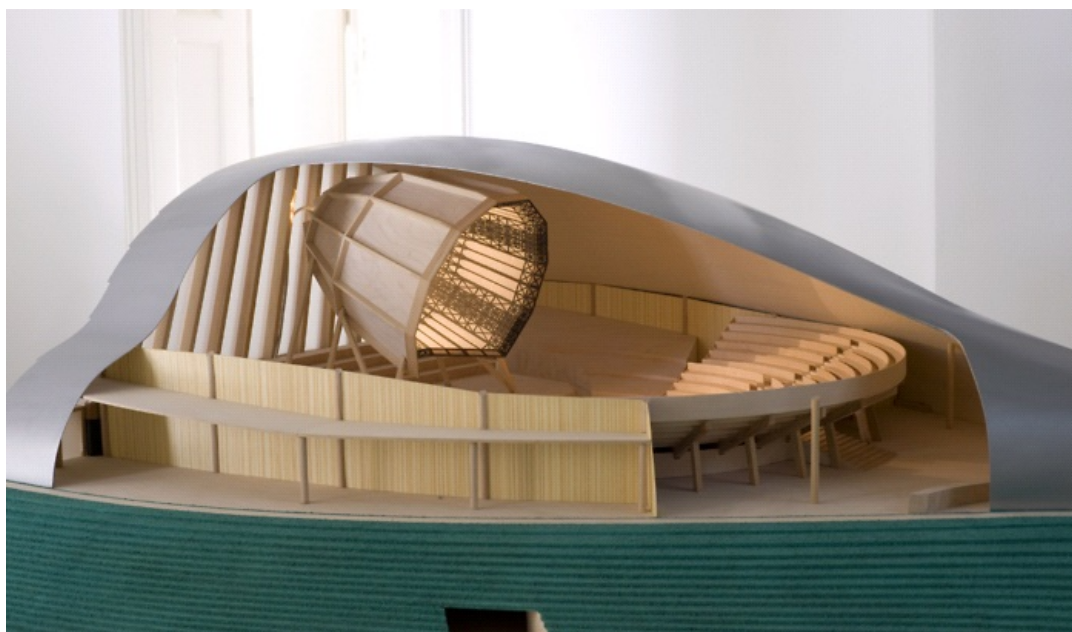


ILYA & EMILIA KABAKOV

THE CANON

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

29 Aug 2008 - 26 Sep 2008



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce the upcoming exhibition of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, *The Canon*, opening Saturday August 30 at 11:00 in the presence of the artists. This new body of paintings completed in 2007 continues the artists previous exploration of scenes from daily life, landscapes and city scales presented within the minimalist structure of white grids filling the picture plane. This is a continuation of the artists vision, as seen in earlier paintings and installations where the sense of whiteness, both as a literal and metaphoric structure, provides a platform for the articulation of other more painterly ideas.

From the beginning of his work as a childrens book illustrator in Russia, the white page has often been a fulcrum in the ideology of his work. It is both the ground upon which the artist stands to express his perception of the moment, and it has been his cloak, the fabric in which he can hide his true nature and character. It is both a place for story telling, and a place that denies this at the same time. In *The Canon* we see Kabakov in his boldest position thus far, the paintings are almost entirely white with a square grid pattern on the surface. In one of these window-like spaces we see a snowy landscape painted in pastel tones, in another three people sit on a bench looking out to sea. The prosaic aspect of these scenes is abruptly rubbing up against the rigidity of the minimalist canon. White on white. Abstraction, monochromatic painting.

Most recently in a far more romantic vein, Kabakov began working on this dichotomy between white and a pictorial memory, in his *Under the Snow* paintings from 2003-5. In these works the white was snow, and the images fleeting as they popped through the picture plane randomly, almost like elements in a fairy tale. *The Canon* is more didactic and severe. The ground is purposeful not natural, there is no reference to snow directly, although of course the color is always connected to it. But we sense the rigors of conceptual art drawn and quartered on the paintings surfaces. The images are emblems. The artist is telling us something about the richness of what is not monochrome. And it is painted with the elegance of a master. We want to see more but our vision is cut by the frame.

Three additional works, the *Broken Glass Paintings* will also be on view. These are white paintings with skewed lines across the surface like a broken window pane, in the small triangular areas where the windows might have deep holes, the artist again gives us small landscapes to look at. The colors are fanciful, merry in a way, almost a decorative palette. But the notion of breakage, of shattering is a violent one, and the bucolic imagery of these works is uncomfortable yet seductive at the same time.

The exhibition in Salzburg will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue with texts by Maria Baibakova and Norman Rosenthal.

The Kabakovs will have their Retrospective opening in Moscow September 15-18. The exhibition on Salzburg is an introduction to some of the new works that will be on view there, at the Pushkin Museum where the *Gates* will be seen, and the CCC Moscow-Melnikov Garage where the *Alternative History* and the *Red Wagon* will be presented.