

a pedagogical poem

the archive of the future museum of history final exhibition

6 November 2012 – 6 January 2013

Presnya Historical Memorial Museum

Bolshoi Predtechenskii pereulok, 4, Moscow

The project «Pedagogical Poem» conceived by Arseny Zhilyaev and Ilya Budraitskis and organized by V-A-C Foundation is a unique interdisciplinary research conducted at the intersection of the history, contemporary art and pedagogy. A series of over 100 meetings took place between March and November 2012 at the Presnya Historical Memorial Museum. These series consisted of lectures and seminars led by Russian and international artists, historians, cultural theorists as well as master-classes of various artists. The project led to the formation of a group of permanent visitors and auditors of the series who had diverse professional interests. They were united by their interest in this project and common practices of creative cooperation.

The project culminates with the final exhibition «The archive of the future museum of history» devised by the participants of the «Pedagogical Poem» series. It takes place at the museum as an outcome of the educational program and independent research work at the archive.

A museum as an institution is the most important educational instrument of disseminating knowledge about culture and civilization, and it is vital for the development of personality capable of interpreting the cultural heritage of society, producing contemporaneity and acquiring an active civic position. A museum of history is a place that represents memory; it always enters into unique and essentially important relations between the past and the present. On the one hand, the collective experience of the previous generations represented at the museum highlights the similarities between then and now and the knowledge of history based on the way history develops. On the other hand, it is an institution created by the state with the purpose of realizing its cultural and educational politics that limits and frames the visitor's experience. This paradoxical position of history museums can either be a distinguishing factor that illustrates their own historical time or, on the contrary, it can be a sign of continuity that purifies the museum of the passions of its contemporaries.

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That is why museums do not always become spaces for open discussions; despite the considerable democratization that took place in the last century, the level of freedom and the competency of the exposition curators is still limited. The role of museums of modern history – the former Revolution Museums in Eastern European countries - is even more ambiguous. At the start of the XX century, they demonstrated to the world an unprecedented example of democratization and innovation – the formerly limited access for the public has been removed, workers have participated in creating museum expositions, private collections have been opened to the public and, at the same time, scientific approach to history has been developed. In addition, museums have incorporated statistical data and created thematic installations devoted to the history of the oppressed. Unfortunately, during the post-revolutionary period and the years of political stagnation, the museums have turned into the dogmatic tool of expression of the official ideology of the party. But at the end of the XX century after the collapse of the «real socialism», East European museum institutions not only lacked any novel methodological bases for their work but they have been forced to deny the reasons of their own creation.



Krasnaya Presnya Museum in 1930s. Archival photograph. From the exhibition «The Archive of the Future Museum of History».

**victoria –
the art of being
contemporary**

**виктория –
искусство быть
современным**

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The final exhibition «Archive of the future museum of history» is divided into the several zones that reconstruct the atmosphere of an archive. Thus, a professional museum excursion through memorable historical locales of the Presnya district engages in a dialogue with an improvised walk through places that are important for the personal histories of the participants of the Pedagogical Poem in the form of a documentary film. Central investigations have been devoted to the history of the transformation of the Presnya Museum. One important part of the exhibition is a public library, where anyone can get to know the lecture material and a collection of books connected with the central themes of the project. As a supplement to the exposition materials, dedicated to the event of the beginning of the 1990s, a miniature museum has been created of opposition print materials from 1991 to 2012.

We are aware that, most probably, these proposals would never be implemented due to the objective limitations of the activity of contemporary museums. However, we can discuss them through the concepts of contemporary art and will continue to do so.



A modelling class. From the exhibition «The Archive of the Future Museum of History»

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Contributors to the exhibition:

Alena Artasheva, Katerina Beloglazova, Gleb Napreenko, Konstantin Novikov, Alexandra Novozhenova, Alexander Povzner, Elizaveta Slavina-Mirskaya, Pavel Bulgakov, Yakov Kirillov, Yegor Koshelev, Valeria Dobrokhotova, Irina Melnikova, Paraphrase theatre, Katerina Chuchalina, Asya Klescheva, Isabel Makgoeva, Ilya Bezrukov

Contributors to the educational program:

Vladimir Arkhipov, Alexander Bikbov, Dmitry Vilensky, Ekaterina Degot, Olga Zhitlina, Michael Lowy, Alexander Ivanov, Nikita Kadan, Tamas Kende, Yegor Koshelev, Vladlen Loginov, Kirill Medvedev, Viktor Misiano, Andrey Oleinnikov, Anatoly Osmolovsky, Alexey Penzin, David Riff, Sergey Popov, Nataliya Smolyanskaya, Vlad Sofronov, Mikhail Ugarov, Avdei Ter-Oganyan, Evgeny Fiks, Jeanne van Heeswijk, Maria Chekhonadskikh, Igor Chubarov

V-A-C Foundation is a new institution, founded in Moscow in 2009. Its mission is to support Russian art and expand the boundaries of contemporary culture.

Arseny Zhilyaev is an artist, curator and contemporary art theorist. Born in 1984 in Voronezh, he was educated at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow (2006–2007) and Valand School of Fine Arts, Gothenburg, Sweden (2008–2010). He has been on the editorial board of *Moscow Art Magazine* since 2010, and was awarded the Innovation and Soratnik contemporary art prizes that same year.

Selected group shows: *Practice for Everyday Life*, Calvert 22, London, 2011; *Modernikon*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2010; *History Lesson*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2010; *Russian Utopias*, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, 2010; *Open House Day*, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, 2010.

Selected solo shows: *The Way of the Enthusiasts*, Casa dei Tre Oci, Venice, 2012; *Radio October*, Proekt Fabrika, Moscow, 2011; *Rational Egoism*, Regina Gallery, Moscow/London, 2010; *New Museum of the Revolution*, H.L.A.M. Gallery, Voronezh, 2009.

Ilya Budraitskis is an artist, theorist and historian. Born in 1981 in Moscow, he was educated in the history department at the Russian Academy of Education (2003–2008), and since 2009 he has been a graduate student at the Institute of General History, Russian Academy of Sciences. Since 2010 he has been on the editorial board of *Moscow Art Magazine*.

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He has taken part as a curator and/or artist in the following exhibitions: Petroliana, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Second Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, 2007; Progressive Nostalgia, Prato, Italy, 2007; Battle for the Flag, New Manezh, Moscow, 2008; European Studios, Central House of Artists, Moscow, 2009; Conquered City, Regina Gallery, Moscow, 2009; 40 Lives of One Space, Red October, Third Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, 2009; Impossible Communities, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, 2011; Main Project, Fourth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, TSUM, 2011.

Presnya Historical Memorial Museum is a branch of the State Central Museum of Contemporary History of Russia. Materials belonging to the history of three Russian revolutions are exhibited in the well-preserved memorial interiors. The museum's centerpiece is Heroic Presnya: 1905. Created by artist Yefim Deshalyt in 1977–1982, it is one of the largest dioramas in Europe: its painting is over two hundred square meters in size. The diorama depicts the culmination of the armed revolt – barricade fighting in the Presnya district in 1905.

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Excursion. Video still. From the «Archive of the future museum of history»

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