

**MICHAEL  
TOLMACHEV**  
“BEYOND  
VISUAL  
RANGE”

CENTRAL  
ARMED  
FORCES  
MUSEUM  
OF  
THE  
RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION

24.4 –  
1.7.2014

129110  
MOSCOW,  
SOVIET  
ARMY,  
2

*Opening times:*  
Wednesday to Sunday,  
from 10 AM to 5 PM

*For further information  
and images:*  
HELEN WEAVER  
helweaver@gmail.com  
helweaver.office@gmail.com  
TEL. +44 (0)7772 159219

v-a-c@v-a-c.ru  
+7 (495) 643-19-76

**V-A-C Foundation** is a not-for-profit private institution founded in Moscow in 2009, committed to supporting contemporary art in Russia. The Foundation's focus is directed towards contemporary art and cultural practice with the aim of providing a platform for creativity in the wider sense of the word. They strive to be actively engaged in artistic production, rather than the patronage or sponsorship of ongoing artistic processes. V-A-C is deeply committed to the growing importance of art made in Russia as well as the new generations of artists from around the world.

V — a — C

V-A-C Foundation presents the first exhibition of the work of young Russian artist Michael Tolmachev. The exhibition project is the result of Tolmachev's studies in media arts at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig, made possible through the Olga Lopukhova Grant programme established by V-A-C Foundation to help young artists who are actively engaged in the Russian art context. The show, which will take place at the Central Armed Forces Museum in Moscow, is part of V-A-C's long term programme to introduce contemporary art to non-art museums, as a way of dialoging with the structure, exploring its identity and contents, and of encouraging many different audiences to engage with contemporary art.

This unique exhibition sees the artist utilize the museum as his medium, looking first and foremost at its role as a monument to wartime and then as a vehicle for the preservation and display of items that aim to provide for the understanding of the history of war and wartime experience. For the exhibition, Tolmachev has been granted access to the museum's entire contents and archives and has therefore been able to examine the politics of the museum from the inside. He explores many areas including the selection process for the permanent displays, how space distribution works and the museum's inventory.

Beyond Visual Range illustrates Tolmachev's interaction with the museum, in which he has reinterpreted its permanent displays and objects, presented never seen before archive material and remixed a small part of the museum's collection by putting his own works among it. The artist's selection from the collection and archives for display includes: military equipment, state commissioned paintings made in Afghanistan and Vietnam and drawings from the Nuremberg trial, juxtaposed with found footage and propaganda films. The museum's inventory cards become the art works in one part of the exhibition project: a series of inventory cards describe photographs taken during the second world war and Tolmachev showcases them as an additional verbal interpretation to the already subjective and ideologically filtered statements.

Other works include a large site-specific installation inside one of the museum's rooms where the original vitrines have been removed and replaced by unusual-looking replicas designed by the artist. The room is lit only by a single light inside each vitrine, leading the viewer to four different audio zones playing news broadcasts and soldiers' conversations over walkie-talkies during the war conflict in Georgia. Another work brings together a series of slide shows of images and conversations between the artist and the war photographers who produced them. In the interviews, Tolmachev isn't interested in asking about the subject of their photographs or what they represent, instead he asks the photographers to describe the experience that led them to the creation of the image, what was happening around them at the time this image was taken.

Tolmachev looks at the ways in which war is represented in the media, and in this case in a museum environment in particular. And, as suggested in the title of the show, *Beyond Visual Range*, digs deeper into the context behind objects, images, documents that one might see on display in a museum vitrine and he

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119021, Россия, Москва,  
Олсуфьевский переулок, дом 8, строение 2  
+(495) 643 1976  
Olsufievskiy side-street, 8, bld. 2,  
Moscow, Russia, 119021

questions the role of the interpreter (such as the war photographer, the painters who were once sent to the battlefields to portray conflicts with a brush and canvas, the soldier who today might take his own pictures or make his own video of what is going on around him on his mobile phone). He also compares the responsible participation of someone looking down a gunsight with someone who might look at an image of war displayed in a museum.

### Central Armed Forces Museum of the Russian Federation

Founded in December 1919, the Central Armed Forces Museum of the Russian Federation is one of the largest military history museums in the world. Over its history the museum has accumulated the most prominent and important military material from the Soviet period. More than seven hundred thousand individual exhibits are now stored at the museum. [www.cmaf.ru](http://www.cmaf.ru)

Fig. 1  
Inventory card, Central  
Armed Forces Museum  
of Russian Federation

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ МУЗЕЙ ВООРУЖЕННЫХ СИЛ СССР			
Шифр по классификации	Место хранения	<b>ИНВЕНТАРНАЯ КАРТОЧКА</b>	По главн. инв. книге № [redacted]
Отдел			По инв. книге № [redacted]
Рявдел			Фонд <i>фотки</i>
Тема	<i>1945-1948</i>		
Подтема			
Наименование и описание предмета: <i>Фотки</i>			Количество <i>1</i>
<i>Советская репродукция на доске из улиц Берлина.</i>			Стоимость
<i>Май 1945г.</i>			Размер <i>10,5 x 15,5</i>
<i>Фотки Б. Луцкого</i>			Материал <i>фотки</i>
			<i>бумага</i>
			<i>гипсокартон</i>
Источники и дата поступления в музей <i>Центральный музей Вооруженных Сил СССР</i>			ФОТО
<i>неизвестны. Репрод. № [redacted] от 6.4.1948</i>			
Осн. записи в инв. кн. <i>Регистрация № 148 от 2.6.1948</i>			
Составил научный сотрудник <i>И. Соловьев</i>			
Сохранность и изменение в сохранности. Реставрация			197 г. <i>23 октябрь</i>
			Негатив № <i>63668</i>

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*Fig. 2*  
Central Armed Forces  
Museum. Google maps.



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*Fig. 3*  
"I serve the Soviet  
Union" TV show. 1989.  
Screen shot



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