

V-A-C Live: Tunguska Event, History Marches on a Table, by Vadim Zakharov

Thursday 21 & Friday 22 September 2017

Whitechapel Gallery (Gallery 2), 77 – 82 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

T + 44 (0) 20 7522 7888

[whitechapelgallery.org](http://whitechapelgallery.org)

Press Enquiries:

Matilde Biagi

[matilde.biagi@v-a-c.ru](mailto:matilde.biagi@v-a-c.ru)

[tildebiagi@gmail.com](mailto:tildebiagi@gmail.com)

For Russian media:

Alexander Belyakov

t. +7 (495) 980 97 60 ext. 104

[alexander.belyakov@v-a-c.ru](mailto:alexander.belyakov@v-a-c.ru)

V-A-C-Foundation and Whitechapel Gallery are proud to present the second edition of the V-A-C Live performance series.

Renowned Russian artist Vadim Zakharov (b. 1959) presents two evenings of exhilarating and subversive performance, taking inspiration from the book *Incomplete & Utter History of Classical Music* by Stephen Fry. Titled *Tunguska Event, History Marches on a Table*, the performance coincides with the centenary of the Russian Revolution.

Each evening, spectators are invited to take a seat at a large rectangular table, which acts as the stage and spans the length of Gallery 2. A cast of actors and dancers appear on the table-stage and take the audience back a hundred years, presenting some key events from the first half of the 1900s, with a ballerina, a dog, a couple in love, an accordionist and garbage collectors featuring among the characters. They present fragments of Fry's book dedicated to the history of music, celebrating Russian music and culture of the time through theatre, performance and cabaret.

References range from Hubert Parry's anthem, *I was glad* (1902), traditionally sung at the Coronation of the British monarch, composer Igor Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka* (1911) to Marcel Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914) in this humorous journey across time and history. Songs associated with war and military action are also referenced, including British music hall song *It's a Long Way to Tipperary* (1912), which was popular among soldiers in the First World War.

Vadim Zakharov said: "Sitting around a table with friends is one of the greatest achievements of mankind. However, in this case, history marches on the table in dirty army boots, barefoot and even in pointe shoes. The absurd thing is that some of humanity's most iconic work is created against a violent backdrop. In Fry's book and in my performance, unusual and unpredictable historical and cultural events absurdly collide, causing a cultural explosion of sorts in our own minds. I needed a strong yet absurd image to describe this phenomenon. The Tunguska meteorite, which exploded 100 years ago over Siberia, became this image. The crater left by the explosion was about the size of London. You might ask what the two have in common. Well, almost nothing, apart from the fact that explosions on a much bigger scale often take place in people's minds and the consequences are seen in the history of mankind."

Vadim Zakharov was born in the USSR in 1959. He is an artist, editor, archivist of the Moscow Conceptual art scene and collector. Since 1979 he has participated in exhibitions of unofficial art and collaborated with such artists as: V. Skersis, S. Anufriev, A. Monastyrski, Y. Leiderman. From 1982–1983 he participated in the AptArt Gallery, Moscow. Since 1992 he has published *Pastor* magazine and founded the *Pastor Zond Edition*. In 2006 he edited book *Moscow Conceptualism*. In 2008 he founded the website [conceptualism-moscow.org](http://conceptualism-moscow.org). His retrospective *25 Years on One Page* was held at the Tretyakov Gallery in 2006. He represented Russia at the Venice Biennale in 2013 with the project *Danaë*. He lives and works in Berlin and Moscow.

Visitor Information:

Doors open at 7.45 pm

Performance starts at 8.00 pm

Admission tickets £20.00/£15.00 concessions, available from the Whitechapel Gallery website: [whitechapelgallery.org/events/v-a-c-live-tunguska-vadim-zakharov/](http://whitechapelgallery.org/events/v-a-c-live-tunguska-vadim-zakharov/)

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V-A-C Foundation is dedicated to the development and international presentation of Russian contemporary culture – across a multitude of forms and within the framework of a joint exhibition, educational, and publishing programme. V-A-C Foundation considers artistic production as central to its activity and essential for understanding contemporary cultural processes and stimulating new answers to its challenges.

The opportunities V-A-C Foundation provides, to engage with and interrogate international cultural practices, aim to expand the platform for homegrown talent and encourage an independent artistic language. As a key speaker for contemporary Russia, V-A-C Foundation establishes new cross-cultural dialogues and incites an exchange of ideas through new collaborations and alternative settings for bringing different artistic practices together within a single vision for arts and culture.

V-A-C Collection is a constantly developing body of works including sculptures, paintings and photographs from leading, internationally recognised artists such as Francis Bacon, Alighiero e Boetti, Liz Deschenes, Natalia Goncharova, Wade Guyton, Wassily Kandinsky, Lucy McKenzie, Amadeo Modigliani, Sigmar Polke to Mike Nelson, James Richards, Gerhard Richter, Bridget Riley, Egon Schiele, Dayanita Singh and Christopher Wool.

Following the success of Kabaret Kultura in 2016, Tunguska Event, History Marches on a Table is Whitechapel Gallery's third collaboration with V-A-C Foundation. A series of four displays from the V-A-C Collection were shown in a dedicated Collections Gallery from September 2014 – August 2015 as part of the Whitechapel Gallery's ongoing programme of opening up rarely seen public and private collections from around the world.

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger. With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see. It is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter. The Whitechapel Gallery does not own a Collection, but has a dedicated gallery for opening up public and private collections, including five displays from the British Council Collection from April 2009 – May 2010; four displays from The D. Daskalopoulos Collection, Greece, from June 2010 – May 2011; five displays from the Government Art Collection, from June 2011 – September 2012; four displays from the Collection Sandretto Re Rebaudengo from September 2012 – September 2013; four displays drawn from member museums of the Contemporary Art Society from September 2013 – August 2014; four displays of works from the V-A-C Foundation collection from September 2014 – August 2015; four displays from the Barjeel Art Foundation collection from September 2015 – January 2017 and a new series of exhibitions drawn from the ISelf Collection which launched in April 2017.

**Whitechapel  
Gallery**