



OLEG KULIK

Golden Fleece

solo exhibition

9 August–7 September 2019

KIBLA PORTAL

Valvasorjeva 40, Maribor, Slovenia



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

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Exhibition opening: Friday, 9 August, at 7 p. m.

With the closing of a one-month artist residency in the frame of project Risk Change, the Association for Culture and Education KIBLA and the Association for Contemporary Art X-OP, their forces combined, are pleased to invite you to the **opening of *Golden Fleece*, a solo exhibition** by one of the greatest Russian contemporary artists, Oleg Kulik. As a visual artist, Oleg Kulik has been recognized as one of the most important figures in recent eastern European art history at the turn of the millennium. He belongs to the propulsive core of Russia's art groups and artists such as AES+F, Chto delat?, Kuda begut sobaki, and Pyotr Pavlensky, who have all exhibited in art venues across Europe and wider, as well as in KIBLA, Maribor.

The retrospective exhibition, conceived by X-OP, the fledgling Maribor-based Association for Contemporary Art, offers an **overview of the artist's oeuvre from the beginning of the '90s to this day, combined with his latest works, created during the artist's residency stay in Maribor (*Golden Fleece, Beholder, Empire*) and the work *Merry-Go-Round*, which was created this year as a production of the MSUV – Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina in Novi Sad.** The common foundation shared by numerous art critics and curators will confirm that Golden Fleece is a cross-section of Kulik's artistic practice, which has been actively capturing the zeitgeist of our era from the '90s to this day.

Kulik, the "Russian dog", as referred to by Renata Salecl, while Susan Silas wrote a *A Love Letter to Oleg Kulik, A Prince among Men, a Man among Dogs*, is an actionist, who used to promote Primal Ecology and Zoophrenia, based on radically shocking the viewer (*The Mad Dog, 1994, Dog House, 1996, I Bite America and America Bites Me, 1997, Deep Into Russia, 1997, Family of the Future, 1997, The Russian Eclipse, 1999*). The artist describes the dialogue within his practice as "a conscious falling out of the human horizon" which places him on hands and knees. His intention is to describe what he sees as a crisis of contemporary culture, a result of an overly refined cultural language which creates barriers between individuals. Thus, he simplifies his performance language to half of the basic emotional vocabulary of a domestic animal.

At the *Interpol* group exhibition in Stockholm in 1996, he performed in the gallery chained next to a sign labelled 'dangerous'. An international scandal occurred when he not only attacked members of the public who chose to ignore the sign, in one case biting a man, but also attacked other artworks within the exhibition, partially destroying some pieces made by other artists. Kulik thought this was an excusable act, as there was a warning label attached to his performance which people chose to disregard, reasoning that his intention was to divulge his angst at the current cultural crisis through the violent anger of a dog.

Throughout his creative career, Kulik has been working in various visual media, including performance, photography, film, painting, sculpting, and art installation. Apart from a photographic and video documentation of his main performances, through which the artist as a dog and a bird, a preacher and a devil with horns, explores the boundaries of the human and of the socially acceptable (in addition to the above, *Horses of Bretagne, 1998, Red Square ("The Russian" Series), 1999*), the art show in Maribor will also feature his artistic film production (*Gobi Test. Winter, 2004* and *Gobi Test. Summer, 2004*) and Ruben Östlund's film *The Square (2017)*.

Sculpture as an art form is no longer an individual work of art for Kulik, but rather a group participatory event of sculpting in quickly processed materials, such as clay or plasticine (*Merry-Go-Round, 2019*). The presence of the artist fuses with the improvisations of volunteering participants. This is actually the way in which the central piece of the art show, the work *Golden Fleece*, an assembly of dozens of figures facing the hanging flayed horned man himself, is created.

Thus, through images of recent history, contemporary politics and art, Kulik's Russia becomes materialized the "Eastern neighbor of the Enlightened West". The collective and the individual, the "ornament of the mass" and the "will for power", are presented in several variants of combinations and interactions: the President, compiled from a thousand all-seeing eyes, Lenin, surrounded by impaled heads, the golden fleece taken from the winged Ram, consisting of clay figures – the invite every visitor to be a part of the process, to ponder upon the latest issues of history and art.

The personal mythology of the artist, his unique "magic historicism", manifests a new turn in the spiral of Kulik's biography – a project of materializing actions and performances in "living paintings" with eyes and "living sculptures", collective and ultimately corporeal.

A group workshop in sculpting was held at the premises of Kibla Portal on Monday, 22 July 2019. It was attended by children and adults from the Sonček Association for Cerebral Palsy Daycare Center and residents of the Danica Vogrinec Retirement Home. The afternoon workshop was intended for general public.

BIOGRAPHY

Oleg Kulik (Олѐг Бори́сович Кули́к), born 1961 in Kiev, Ukraine, is a Russian performer, sculptor, photographer, painter and curator.

Kulik graduated from the Kiev Art School in 1979 and the Kiev Geological Survey College (1982), and was later awarded a Pollock-Krasner Foundation fellowship (1990). He began his career as the Art Director of the Regina Gallery in Moscow, where his unconventional exhibitions and approaches, such as putting paintings on wheels and hiring people to carry the artworks, immediately attracted the attention of the public. Kulik considers his best curatorial endeavor to be *Leopards Bursting into a Temple* by Anatoly Osmolovsky in 1992. In this exhibit, two naked people were put into a cell with live leopards walking around them. He said that he thought the exhibition was a "metaphor for everything new and lively that appears in our life". Later, in 2009, Kulik curated the Kandinsky Prize in London at the Louise Blouin Foundation.

He was awarded a scholarship by the Berlin Senate in 1995. Apart from numerous international awards, Kulik was awarded with the medal “The Worthy” by the Russian Art Academy and the french order of Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

He has exhibited at major biennials of of contemporary art, such as: Manifesta 1 (1996), São Paulo Art Biennial (1997), Venice Biennial (1997, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2011), Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art (2005, 2007, 2009), Kyiv Biennial (2012). His works have been shown in exhibitions around the world (selection): *Art Riot: Post-Soviet Actionism*, Saatchi Gallery, London, 2017; *Frames*, Regina Gallery, Moscow, 2013; *Deep into Russia*, Regina Gallery, London, 2012; *Deep into Russia*, Galleria Pack, Milan, 2010; *New Sermon. Photos and Videos of Performances 1993–2003*, Rabouan Moussion Gallery, Paris, 2008; *OLEGKULIK. Chronicle. 1987–2007. Retrospective Exhibition*, Central House of Artist, Moscow, 2007; *Russia!*, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, 2006; *Berlin–Moscow*, Historical Museum, Moscow, 2004; *Live Culture*, Tate Modern, London, 2003; *Deep into Russia*, S.M.A.K., Gent, 2001, *I Bite America and America Bites Me* (together with Mila Bredikhina), Deitch Projects, New York, 1997; Manifesta I (together with Mila Bredikhina), V-2, Rotterdam; and *Interpol*, Färgfabriken, Stockholm, 1996.

MEDIA CONTACT

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VISUAL MATERIAL

Images in high res (300 dpi) are available in the zip folder on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5suq5de>

In case of problems with downloading, please use the above contact info.

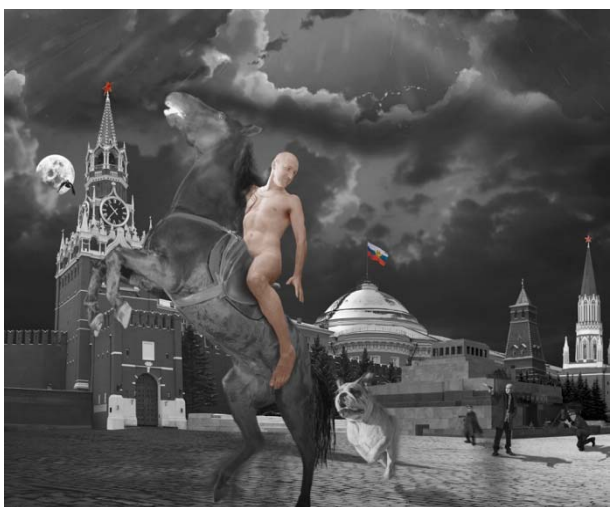


Beholder, 2019
acrylic paint on canvas
140 x 240 cm



Merry-Go-Round, 2017-2019
Polymer clay, metal
190 x 120 x 120 cm

Solo exhibition "Merry-Go-Round",
MSUV – Museum of Contemporary Art
Vojvodina,
24. 4.–20. 5. 2019, Novi Sad, Serbia.
Photo by: Marko Ercegović (MSUV)



**Red Square (from the project "The Russian"),
1999**
C-print
420 x 530 cm



Soviet Diogenes in Maribor, 2019