Vladislav Kruchinsky

Born in 1988 in Moscow. Lives in Moscow.

Specialist Degree in African and Oriental studies from Russian State University for Humanities (thesis «South African Political Cartooning and Its Impact Upon the Public Opinion»), 2010.

PhD in History, Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences («New Phenomenæ in the Socio-Political State of the Afrikaans Community of South Africa After the Abolition of Apartheid, 1994–2015»), 2016.

Languages: Russian, English, Afrikaans, Swahili, Polish.

Keywords: graphics, cartoons, ink and watercolor on paper, ultra-large-scale digital print, satire, Wimmelbuchen, political cartooning, newspapers, publishing, mystifications, anthropology, urban informality, East Europe, South Africa.

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Personal exhibitions:

Svobodny Koptevoland. The Vadim Sidur Museum and Moscow Museum of Modern Art, curated by Marina Bobyleva, 2019.

Coloured Squares Mentally Enslave the Class Enemy,
Start gallery, Winzavod Contemporary Art Centre,
curated by Arsenii Zhilyaev, Moscow, 2011.
Sharp Works From the Package, Chistka Odezhdi gallery,
Moscow, 2010.

Selected group exhibitions:

Assuming Distance: Speculations, Fakes, and
Predictions in the Age of the Coronacene, Garage
Museum of Contemporary Art, curated by Ekaterina
Lazareva, Ekaterina Savchenko and Iaroslav Volovod,
Moscow, 2021

15 minute break, All-Russian Decorative Art Museum, curated by Kristina Romanova and Nail Farkhatdinov, Moscow, 2020, Nizny Novgorod, 2021

State of Emergency, Triumph Gallery, Museum of Moscow, 2020/21.

Library, Triumph Gallery, curated by Sophia Kovaleva and Sofya Simakova, Moscow, 2019.

Mach mit, Mach's nach, Mach's besser, Ex-Embassy, curated by Marina Bobyleva and Marianna Mordvinova, Berlin, 2018.

Single Copy, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, curated by Valery Ledenev, Moscow, 2018.

Laughter in the Gallery, Gallery «Art Shabolovka», curated by Valentin Dyakonov, Moscow, 2015.

Ten Thousand Wiles and a Thousand Hundred Tricks, part of «Meeting Points 7» festival, curated by WHW Collective, Institute for African Studies, Moscow, 2014.

White Cube «Minsk» (with Varvara Gevorgizova), Moscow, 2013.

>10 (Overten)/XL Gallery, All–Russian Decorative Art Museum, Random Gallery, CCI Fabrika, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, The Rodchenko School of Photography and Multimedia, The Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow, Laboratoria Art&Science, 2013.

Art After the End of the World, Contribution to
Discussion Platform Catalogue, I Kiyv Biennial of
Contemporary Art, curated by Ekaterina Degot, 2012.

P.S. How it is done, II Ural Industrial Biennial of

Contemporary Art, curated by Maria Kalnina, Ekaterinburg, 2012.

Employment Record Book, curated by Arseniy Zhilyaev, CCI Fabrika, Moscow, 2011.

Choose by Heart, XI Krasnoyarsk Museum Biennial, curated by Aresniy Zhilyaev, 2011.

Arthouse Squat Forum, Exhibition Newspaper, IV Moscow Biennial, curated by Katya Bochavar and Andrey Parshikov, 2011.

My name is Vlad Kruchinsky.

I'm an African Studies scholar by training, with a PhD in history. For 15 years I worked as a researcher and lecturer in various academic institutions in Russia and South Africa. I've accomplished many research projects and developed numerous teaching courses on the history of the African continent, its peoples and other life forms.

I've been drawing cartoons since I was 5. I have no formal education in the arts. As an undergraduate student, I was part of a restoration crew working on Mikhail Roginsky's large-scale oilcloths. My understanding of painting comes mainly from this very intimate work. Concerning watercolours, my medium of choice, I am completely self-taught.

When working on my thesis dedicated to South African political cartooning, I became involved with the Capetonian cartooning scene. It was a very inspiring experience. Back in Moscow, I decided to do a bit of cartooning on my own. My ambition was to become a 'proper' political cartoonist and to gain employment at a respectable newspaper. All my endeavours in this respect were futile. The year was 2009.

In 2010, I held my first solo exhibition in a basement exhibition hall on Solyanka street, then a vibrant arts and cultural spot in Moscow.

On a whim, I posted my work to WInzavod's Start open-call. It was a project focused specifically on helping new artists assemble and produce their first solo show. An answer came many months later, when I have completely forgotten about this enterprise. They wanted to run my first 'proper' solo show.

Some group shows followed. I was fascinated by the openness of the Moscow art scene and soon made many friends in this completely new circle. Initially, being referred to as an artist made me laugh, but with the passage of time I somehow became accustomed to this role.

I mainly use watercolour cartoons to reflect on political and social issues. When participating in group shows, I'm drawn to meta-narratives, often humorous, directly engaging other works and the exhibition's main ideas (see *Bike Taxi, Arthouse Squat Forum, Ten Thousand Wiles* below in this portfolio).

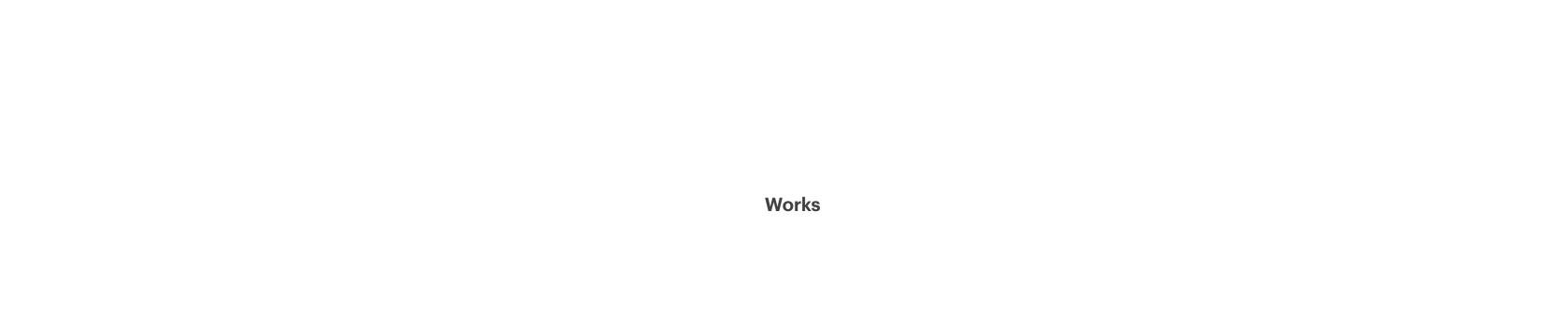
My drawings are generally on the small to medium scale — say, 15 to 55 cm on the longer side. I like to play with scale, blowing up scanned originals, so that 20×80 cm drawing becomes a 3×11 meter piece printed on gabardine or other high-quality material.

Sometimes my work incorporates a research stage, where I develop and read bibliography, so the project is executed with true academic rigour.



But more often than not I just follow my intuition and enjoy drawing and coming up with an entertaining story.

I live between Moscow and Cape Town with my beloved wife and two little daughters.



It was a large <u>exhibition</u> on the COVID pandemic, hosted by the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. It was assembled during the actual lockdown and consisted primarily of new works. My contribution had three dimensions: width (11 meters), height (3 meters) and time (3 paintings over the course of 5 months).

«The New State» is a 3-part graphic series telling the story of an East European city suffering from a novel viral outbreak. It is drawn in the style of *Wimmelbuch*: the narrative follows a fixed set of characters, each of whom embarks on their own quest for survival.

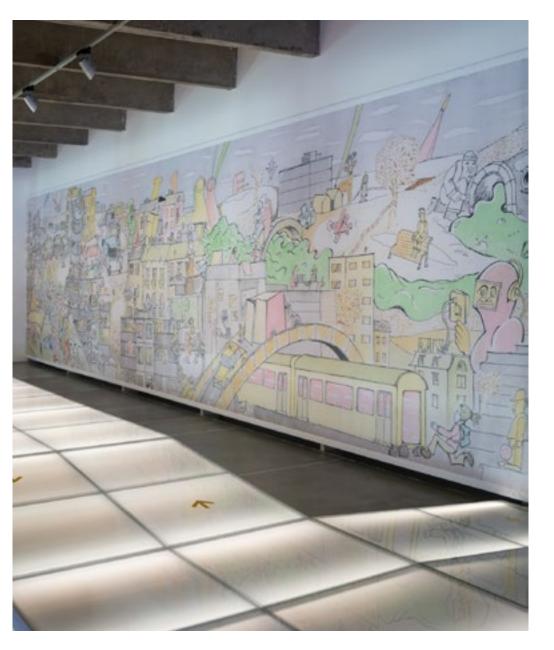
I didn't know how the story would develop when I started the first episode. My ambition, supported by the curatorial team, was to just follow the news flow and respond to the latest developments using cartoons in a monumental fashion. Original drawings were scanned and printed on single sheets of fabric.



Installation view









I started off with blank spaces for second and third episodes: descriptions were updated as I kept developing the project







In addition to the main piece, I also designed some paraphernalia in collaboration with the museum.

Key element here is a deck of playing cards featuring some of the characters involved in the 'main' narrative.





The Briefest History of Labour

15-minute break — a group show on labour and leisure was conceived back in the pre-pandemic era, and here I tackled somewhat more theoretical matters related to the field of work. I merged a recent reading which impressed me — How Nature Works: Rethinking Labor on a Troubled Planet and the classic The Abolition of Work by Bob Black — a piece that I read back in my student years and which greatly influenced my thinking on these matters. F.W. Paps, a character regularly appearing in my work is depicted here having a phantasmagorical vision during his midsummer nap: the whole history of work, from the first activities of organised agriculture to AI-supervised digital monotony, self-harvesting fields and flagellar motors performing their own highly efficient collective labour.

This piece was originally drawn with ink and watercolours on paper, scanned and later printed large-scale on gabardine cloth with final dimensions of 3,5 by 15 meters. It was installed alongside a wooden sculptural composition from the collection of the All-Russian Decorative Art Museum, which hosted *15-minute break*. The exhibition later travelled to Nizhniy Novgorod's National Centre for Contemporary Arts.











Original drawing and installation views



2020

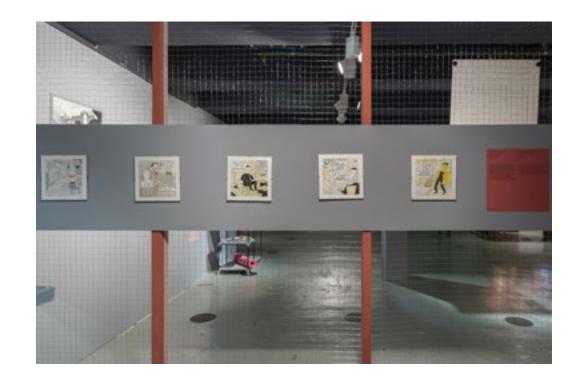
Department of Research Arts invited me to run a series of cartoons covering COVID lockdown in Moscow. Working against a fixed weekly deadline—like a classic newspaper cartoonist — was a huge pleasure and privilege.

I dispatched F.W.Paps into Moscow forests and underground art openings, got him to work as a food courier and of course to constantly zoom.

The series later became a part of **State of Emergency** exhibition at Triumph Gallery.

Since the pandemic is not quite over, the project remains a work in progress...

Exhibition catalogue











Original drawings and installation view

Svobodny Koptevoland (Free Koptevoland)

2019

My first museum solo, a project which took more than 6 years to develop. It is a story of Svobodny Koptevoland—a social mutation comprising several adjacent regular city districts and informal settlements in Northern Moscow. Known as the Liberated Communities of Svobodny Koprevoland (after Koptevo, an actual nondescript district), these areas have unanimously left the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation to start an autonomous social mutation in December 2012.

After a year of social experimentation, both egalitarian and autocratic, Svobodny Koptevoland physically elevated itself and disappeared into the clouds.

The story of this universe is told through Toxik Komsomolets Weekly, which followed developments in the Liberated Communities throughout their existence—first as a Sunday SMS list, and later as email circulation.

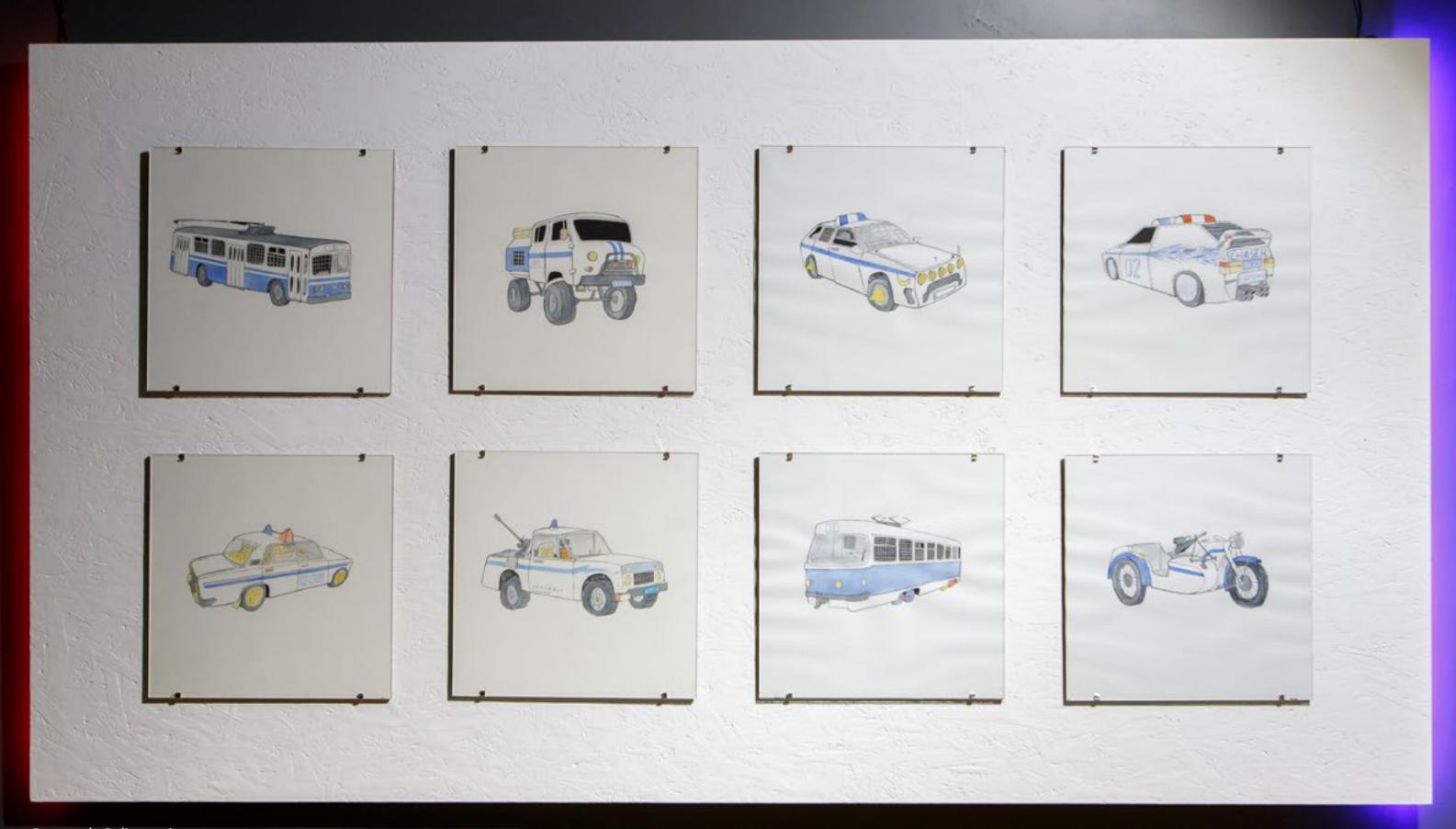
Koptevoland's universe is animated with bizarre elements: the Bubbling Flesh, a colossal blob of gurgling living mass, stretching sometimes to cover up to 3 hectares and capable of morphing its body to mimic forms of foreign objects, Renegade Police, cut off from Russian mainland after the Liberation and terrorising locals, and many more.

Graphic pieces were mounted into e-money terminals, ubiquitous in Moscow of the late 2000s. Koptevoland's existence was possible due to large scale electricity theft — hence the exposition is built around a 'hijacked' transmission tower, evoking images of South African *izinyokas* — illegal electricity connections in the townships and informal settlements.















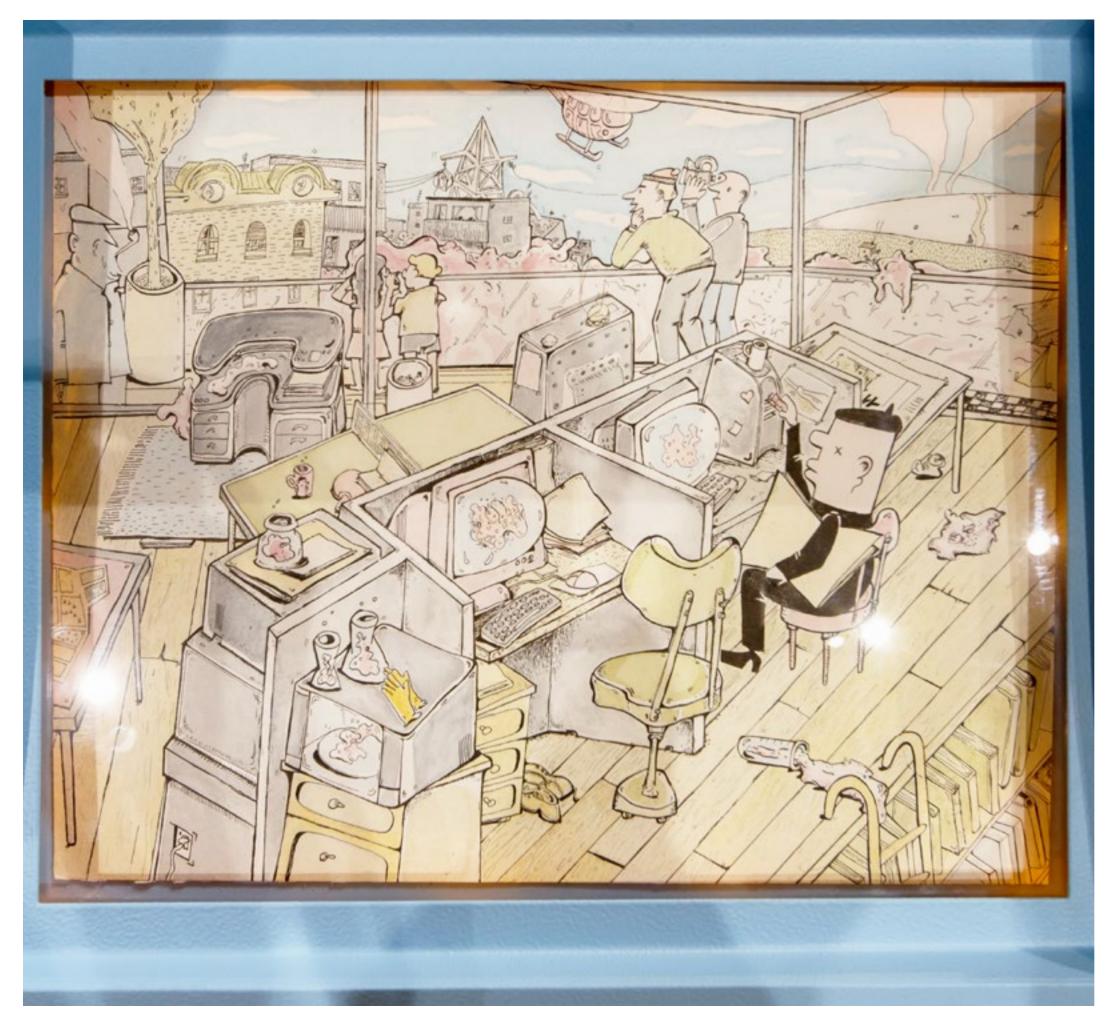
↑ The Hijacked Pylon. Metal, welding, RAL coloring, 175x50x50 cm

← The Spillage of the Bubbling Flesh, ink and watercolor on paper, 56x62,5 cm

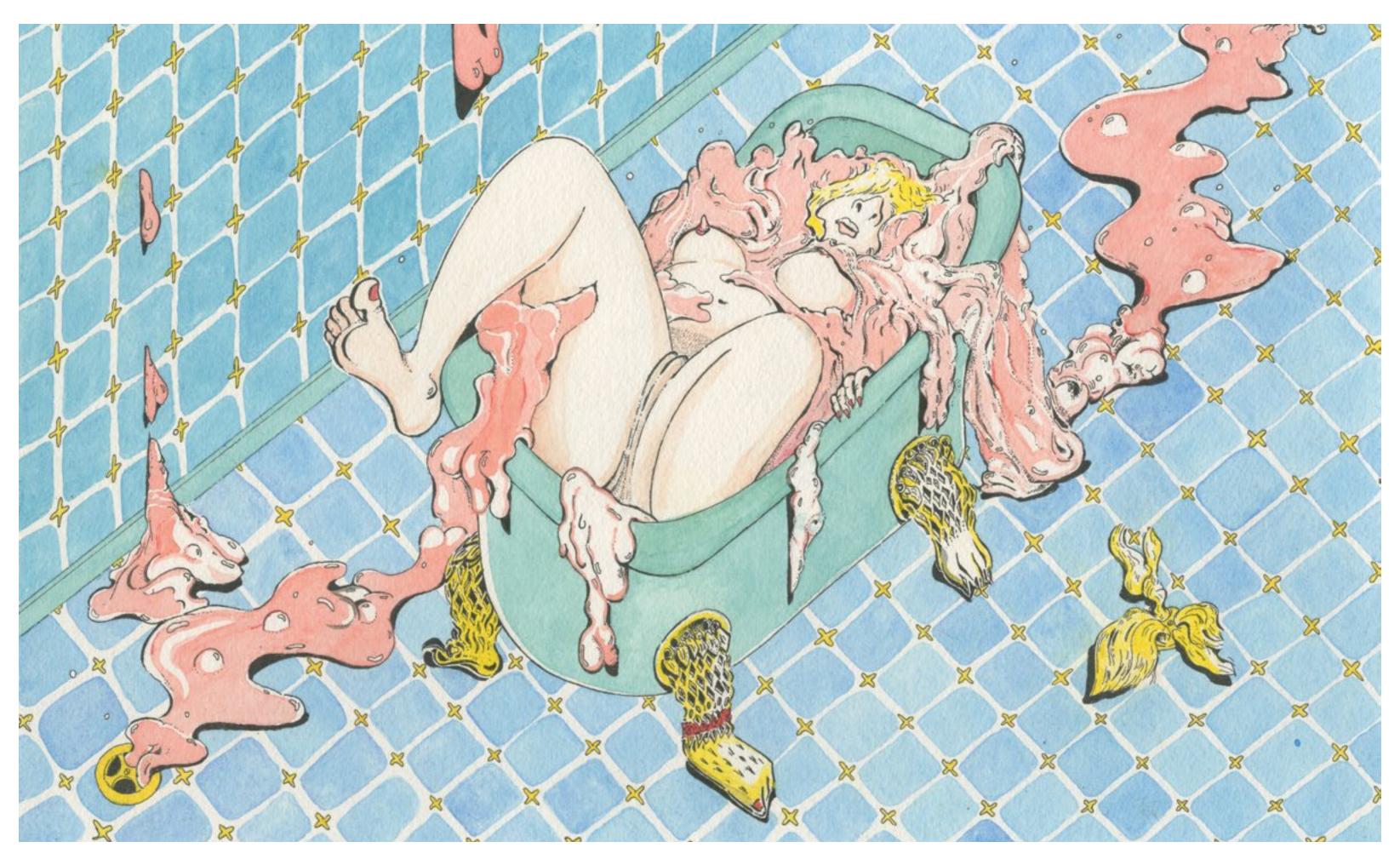












The Origin of Svobodny Koptevoland, ink and watercolor on paper, 26x36 cm

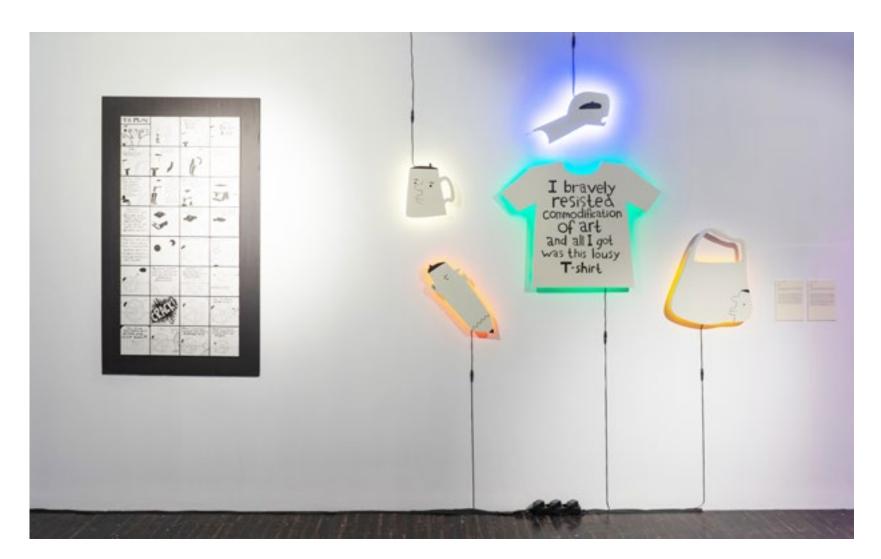
The Library 2019

This exhibition was dedicated to the genre of the artist's book, and my contribution was pondering different narrative strategies in fine arts.

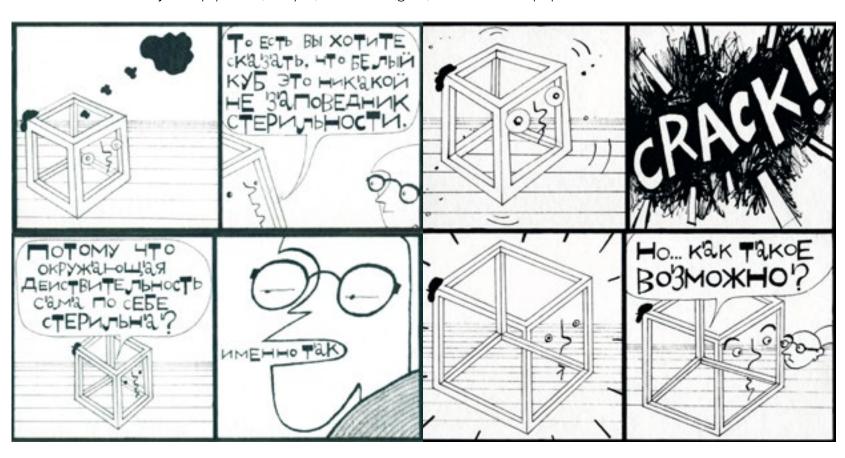
Here Paps, barrette-sporting trickster, gets entangled in white cube sophism and ultimately trapped in museum shop paraphernalia...

Exhibition catalogue





Installation views. Objects: plywood, acrylic, LED-backlights, comic: ink on paper.



Mach mit, Mach's nach, Mach's besser

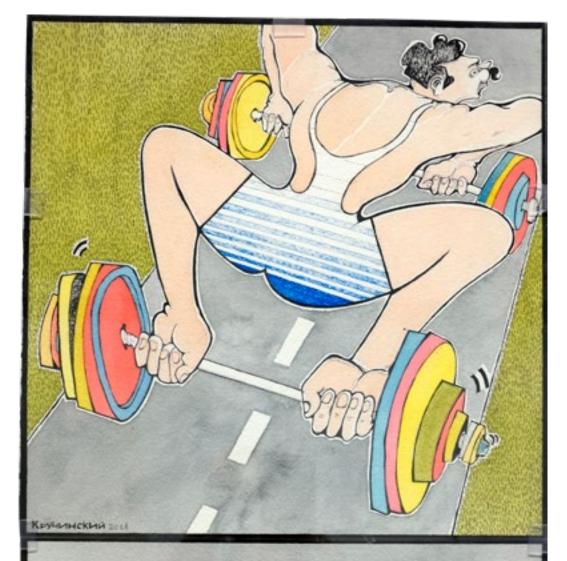
Named after an East German children's TV show, this exhibition took place in a Brutalist building that used to host Australia's embassy to DDR. The TV program was light and sporty, so I thought why stand apart?

This work assembled itself in my mind during a 200 km brevet bike race, in a trance-like state: a narrative about an amateur athlete who was used to inventing his own sports but had to sacrifice this liberty in order to «professionalize». This, I thought, was an apt allegory of what we face today as artists...

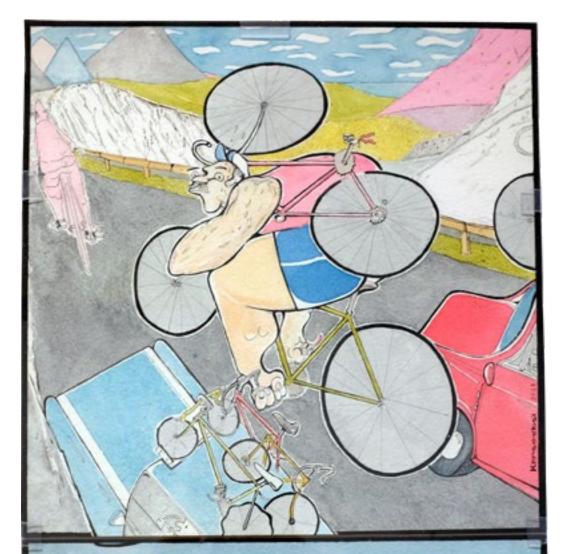
We could never understand our fathers' indifference towards dominoes. He seemed to always attract doubles and would have made a great domino player...



nstallation views. Pictures: 50x70 cm, ink and watercolor on paper



Tourniketow knew he was destined for a career in sports the moment he discovered his rare bodily alteration. In a sense, our father was an embodiment of an amateur athlete. He was able, he had what we believe was an extreme form of O.C.D., and he combined it with a strong passion for movement



In search for recognition he gradually begins to adapt to existing disciplines instead of pursuing his own athletic inventions. He competes in the Tour de France as an independent racer — only to land himself in trouble with local authorities. Tourniketow works persistently, but his performance is hampered by infrastructural limitations.



Our father is mostly known for his involvement in the boxing reform movement, but as family members we have very little to tell about these years. He was constantly busy, we've hardly even seen him. What we can tell for sure: while he definitely enjoyed his brief prominence, "being a bureaucrat" bothered Pá a bit.

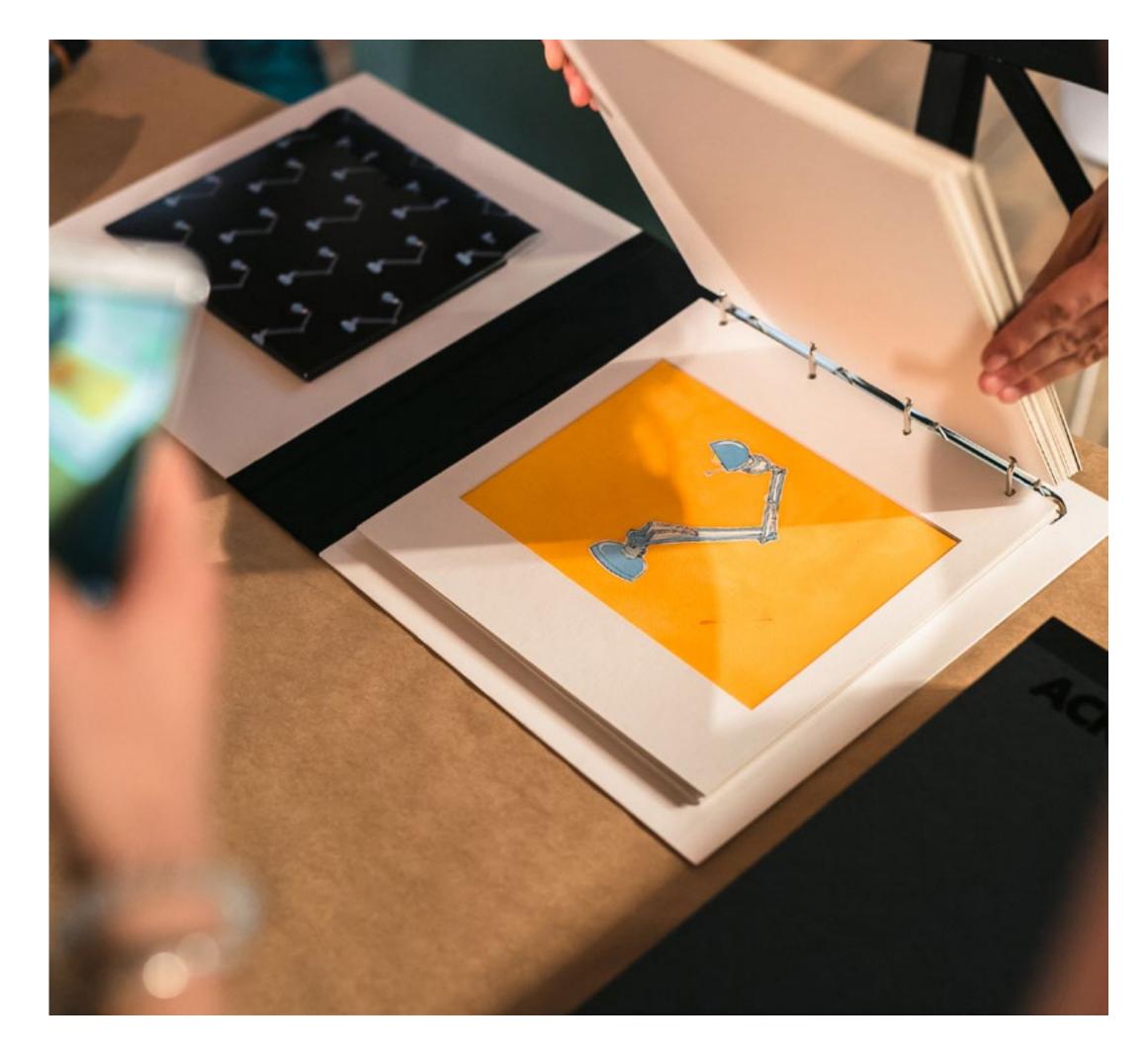
Acknowledgements

Garage Museum of contemporary art invited me to become a part of an inaugural edition of their art book project, an opportunity I gladly took.

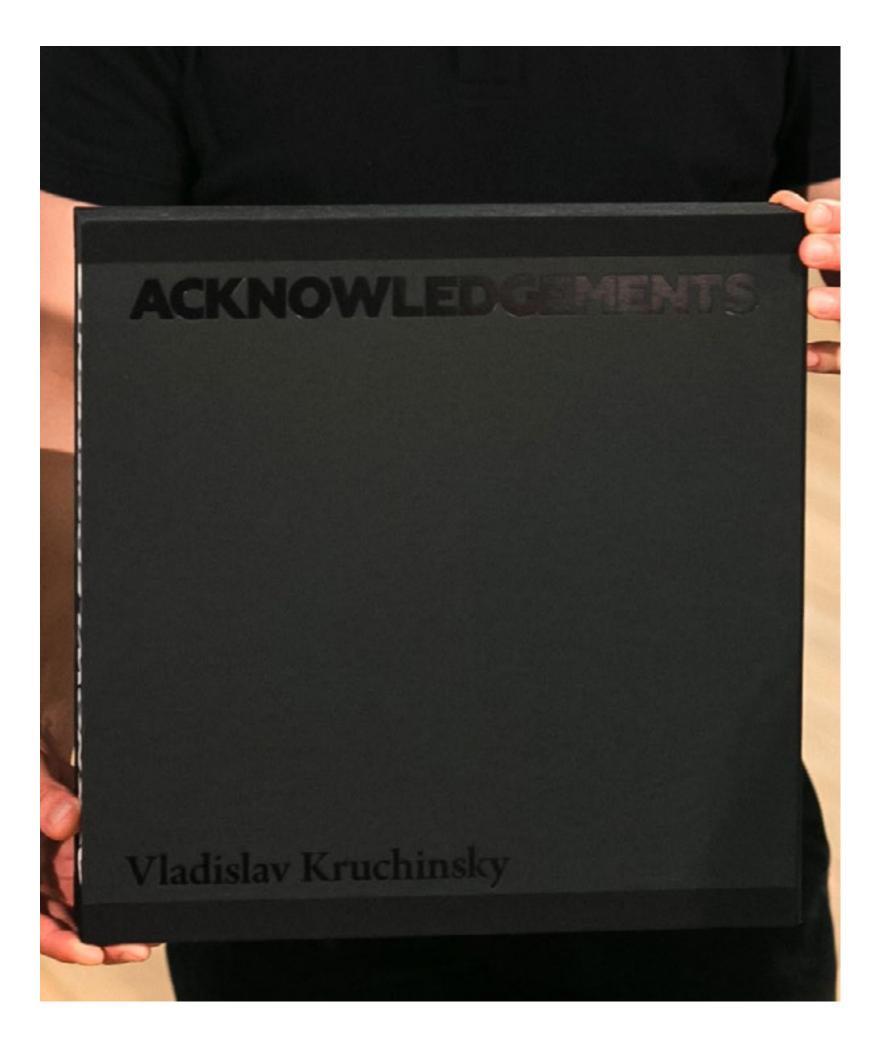
I went with an idea that was sitting in my sketchbooks since Ph.D. days when oftentimes my readings went not much deeper than an acknowledgements section.

I produced a looped narrative, hinting at some research, which never actually manifests itself. The number of individuals and institutions mentioned suggests a truly Gargantuan academic effort, but what it is exactly about one can only guess...









A book that was started when it was still legal to smoke inside most academic institutions, and academic job was considered a steady middle class career, is bound to incur huge debts.

The idea for this book originally came from the late Professor Henryk Hrwinek, who for many years played a leding role in the study of urban informality in Africa and acoss the globe. I was greatly inspired by his enthusiasm for a truly democratic and a more equitable society. I dedicate this book to his memory.

Special thanks belong to my long-time mentor, Professor Aglae Schoeman of the Central European University, whose teachings will always have a very special place in my academic life.

Warm thanks to all the remarkable people who populate the pages of this book, many of whom I had the privilege of meeting,

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all of whom were unfailingly generous with their time, their private papers, their memories, their gossip and all of whom—from conservative liberal to radical Trotskyist—shared an indefatigable belief in the ultimate triumph of non-racialism over apartheid. Their generosity of spirit and commitment to the ideal of a democratic South Africa taught me more than they will ever know, and all I can offer is deeply sincere thanks and this book.

This book is an Koptevoland Research and Development Foundation Trust project, and I am very grateful to three successive heads thereof for supporting and encouraging my work. Zofia Kijek's initial recognition of the validity of topic, and generous admin help were invaluable at the initial stages of the project.

Monika Kritzinger, the co-publisher of this book, read earlier versions of the manuscript and suggested I reconsider my ideological and methodological approach. To her I owe a sincere word of thanks.

I started working on the manuscript as a junior research fellow at the Institute for the Problems of the Developing Societies in Berlin in 1994, which provided a highly stimulating environment. I was able to complete a chapter as a scholar in residence in the idyllic circumstances of the Rockefeller Foundation's center in Bellagio, Italy. Congenial working conditions were provided by the University of Cape Town, which employed me during the first half of the time I worked on the manuscript.

Outside the university and foundation environment I received invaluable support from the publishing house Toxic Komsomolets, which enabled me to work full time on the book in the final stage without interfering in any way with my interpretation of a history in which the firm also played a significant role. Toxic Komsomol Liberatory Foundation, under the chairmanship of the late Dr Bram Marais, allocated the book and its projected Russian version a generous subsidy to help cover publishing costs.

At the institutions some people deserve a special word of thanks. Jan Zawadzki, managing director and later chairman of the board of Toxik Komsomolets, has been unwavering in his support. The staff of the two universities was unfailingly helpful. I wish to single out the brilliant librarians Oleg Barnikow and Wsewolod Barsukow at Koptevoland Technikon Library and Elsa la Roux, secretary of the Urban studies department at UB. I was blessed in having two excellent publishers, Artoi Breytenbach at Black Sash Publishers and Richard Cecilia Mamdani, at the University Press of Virgoinia, who tolerated missed deadlines and a shortish manuscript.

I thank the staff of the National Library, Calcutta; the India Office Library and the British Library, London (in particular, Marta Elisabeth Bess); the Baillieu Library at the University of Melbourne; the Menzies Library at the Australian National University; and the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago for the courtesy and help they have extended me. Albertina De Michelis, my editor at the Princeton University Press, has been a model of intelligence, patience, and understanding in steering this manuscript to the stage of a readable draft. I can only confirm what others have already written in her praise. And my very grateful thanks to Hel-

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<u>«Laughter in the Gallery»</u> was curated by Valentin Diakonov and dealt with satire and light-heartedness in art. For this piece, I implanted F.W. Paps into Herluf Bidstrup's cartoons satirizing contemporary art. (Bidstrup was a Danish cartoonist and a staunch communist who enjoyed great prominence in the Soviet Union). This work was based on my comic which originally appeared at <u>openspace.ru</u>

















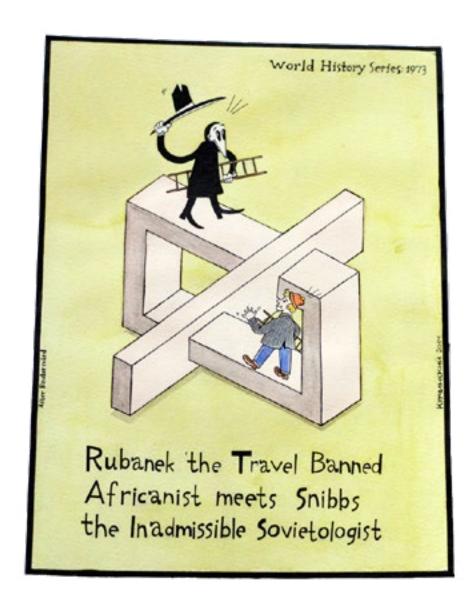
Installation views. 20x20 cm, ink on paper

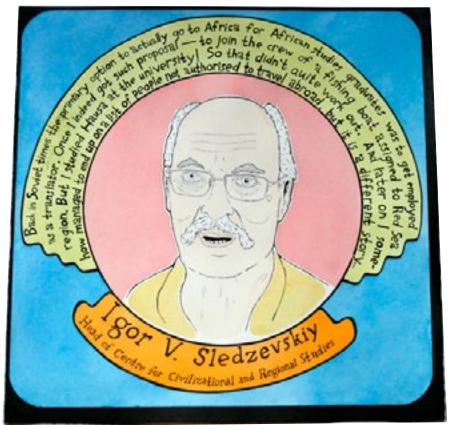
On Not Being White and Other Stories From the Institute for African Studies 2012

Created especially for <u>Meeting Points 7</u>, this project is a graphic series investigating the history and current state of Moscow's Institute for African Studies, where I worked for 9 years as a research fellow. The series consists of captioned portraits of academics and cartoons reflecting on more general notions connected to African Studies in Russia.

As a part of the project, I conducted a number of interviews with the Institute staff. The topics varied from the Institute's history to their backgrounds and experiences as employees of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The interviews were later summarised into short captions, which accompany the portraits.

In the second, cartoon part of the piece, I discuss some more general issues, such as exoticisation and selfexoticisation, issues of language and a bizarre position of being an Africanist in contemporary Russia.



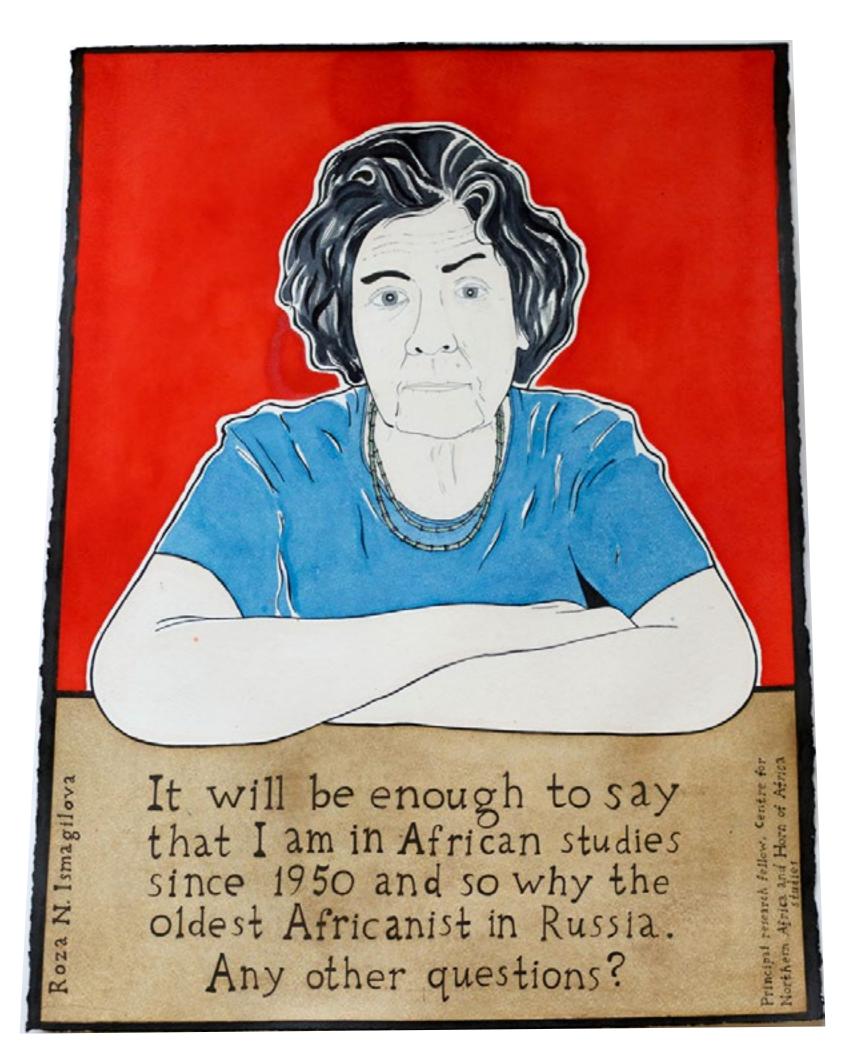




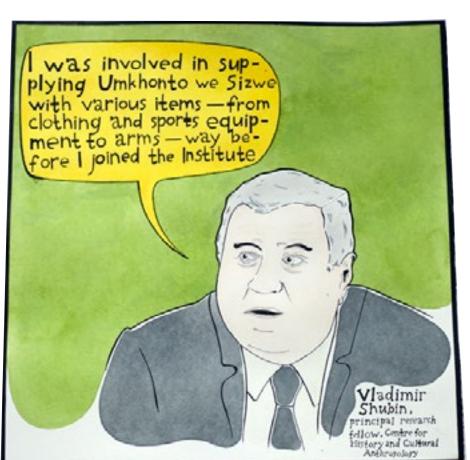
Rubanek the Africanist and Snibbs the Sovietologist (24x32 cm)

Portrait of Igor V. Sledzevskiy (56x56 cm)

Fanonian Spirit (21x38 cm). All — ink and watercolor on paper





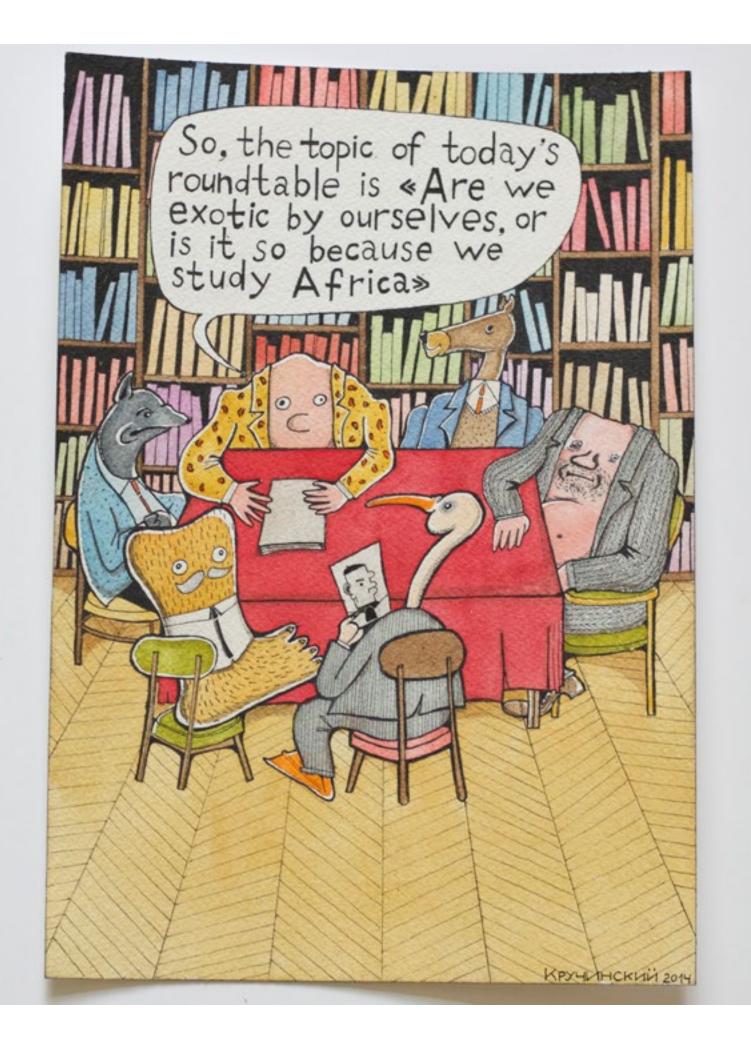


— ink and watercolor on paper





Well, first of all working here is much nicer than rotting away in a cubicle. But what is even more important for me is that I get to work alongside people who were directly involved in African liberation struggles



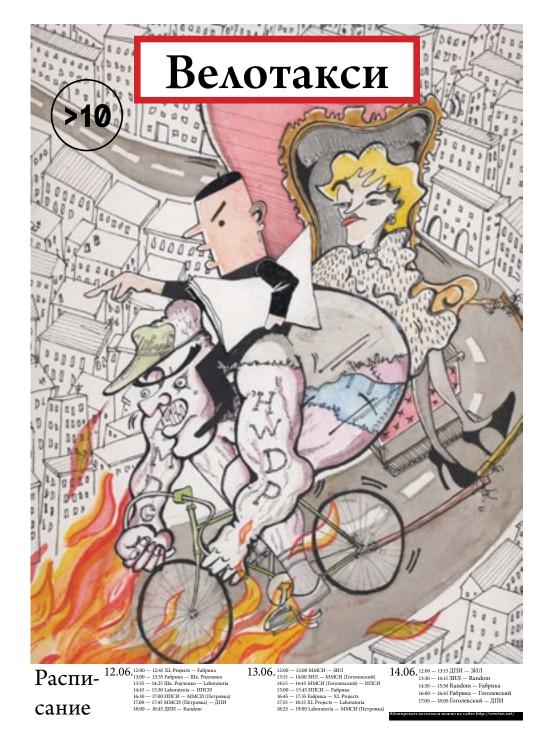
Bike Taxi 2013

Bike Taxi was a part of >10 («Overten») exhibition initiative. The project consisted of a series of group exhibitions that opened simultaneously at a number of Moscow's gallery and museum spaces. All the exhibitions carried sets of identical works organised in a particular order so that the same exhibition effectively reproduced itself more than ten times.

All the curatorial and logistical tasks have been executed by the artists participating in the project.

All the exhibitions (venues included the Moscow
Museum of Modern Art, All-Russian Decorative Art
Museum, and XL Gallery among others) had the same
content and were connected by a rickshaw bicycle route.





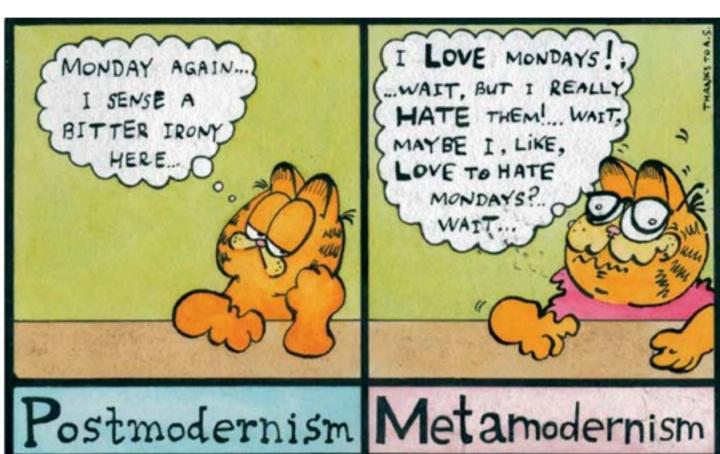
«Bike Taxi» performative effort consisted of hiring a pedicab and transporting the viewers from venue to venue according to a pre-developed timetable for the duration of the project. The passengers were entertained by the rickshaw–artist's attempts at supporting a conversation about art, «Overten» initiative and general chitchat.

Stills from project video documentation and routes and timetable poster

2011

It was a dubious project—a luxury housing project in need of marketing stuffed with art within the framework of the IV Moscow Biennial. There were 24 standalone shows, featuring, ironically, several local artists considered to be 'leftist'.

My commission was to produce a newspaper that would serve as an exhibition guide and also provide some comments on the works and personalities connected to the project. Thankfully, the editorial crew took care of the guide part, so I was able to concentrate on the comical problematisation of the very participation in such megalomaniac projects (with the print run of 15 000 it was indeed my most circulated publication).



Cartoon discussing project on Metamodernism, 17x24 cm





Aa!



Субботние программы



2011

Toxic Komsomolets Publishing House is a selforganised media platform established in 2009.

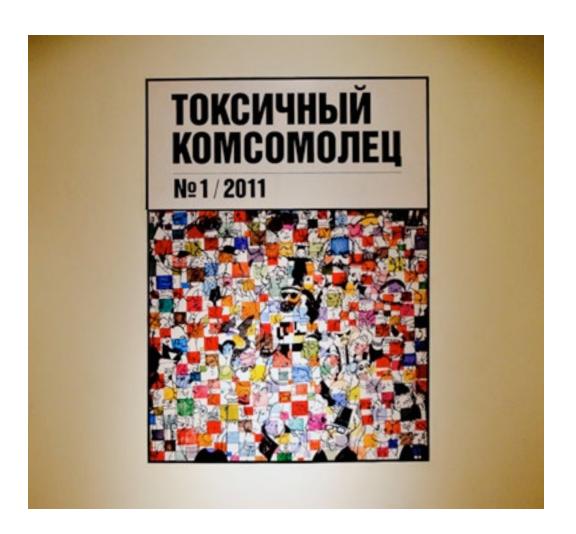
Its militantly irreverent publications cover a wide range of issues, from current affairs to art and academic novelties. They use obscure political mockery, sharp cartoons and satirical fiction as a means of transmitting their often contradictory and bizarre (but always theoretically informed) messages. Borrowing visually from both Soviet and Anglo–Saxon satirical traditions, Toxic Komsomolets publications create a network of overlapping self-references, swap topics, stories and illustrations, and tend to behave rather like a literary work than a media holding.

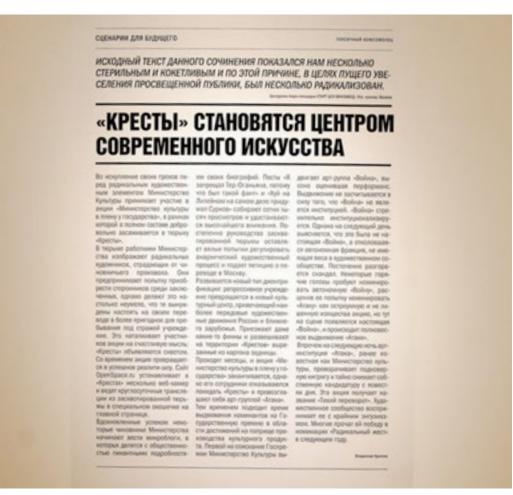
The flagship project of the platform is a self-titled irregular 'newspaper' which seeks to problematise and reconsider its very medium with every issue.

«Toxic Komsomolets» is polymorphic, it may take the form of a placard newspaper with watercolour drawings mounted into the vinyl layouts, a book, or an SMS mailing list, depending on the theme of a particular issue and circumstances it is being produced under.

Toxic Komsomolets Publishing House appears to be a one-man initiative.

Coloured Squares Mentally Enslave the Class Enemy (Toxic Komsomolets №1). Exhibition views Start gallery, Winzavod Contemporary Art Centre









ЕВРОПЕЙСКИЕ ГРАНИЦЫ ПРИХОДЯТ В ДВИЖЕНИЕ

НЕОБЪЯСНИМАЯ ТЕКУЧЕСТЬ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ ГРАНИЦ ПРИВОДИТ К ВЫСЕЛЕНИЮ ЦЫ-ГАН ЗА ГРАНИЦЫ ЕС, ПРИНОСИТ МНОГИЕ БЕДЫ ТЫСЯЧАМ НЕЗАДАЧЛИВЫХ ГАБРОВ-ЦЕВ И СТАВИТ ПОД ВОПРОС БУДУЩНОСТЬ СТАРОГО СВЕТА

Начавшиеся в феврале текущего года произвольные и никем не нонтролируемые изменения на политической карте Европы влияют не только на глобальную политику, но и на жизни простых граждан Евросоюза. Ряд жителей Габрово, поддавшись панике, вызванной сообщениями о том, что отныне этот город находится на территории Шотландии, предприняли отчаянную попытку эмигрировать; чиновники из министерства миграций, подкупленные авиаперевозчиком Emirates и пользуясь юридической безграмотностью испуганных габровцев, направили незадачливых беглецов в Объединенные Арабские Эмираты, где их принуждают к изнуряющей и неоплачиваемой работе на стройках.

Попытки осмыслить начавшиеся процессы привели к появлению заметного числа конспирологических теорий и сект, их исповедующих (на текущий момент боль-



ше всего последователей у секты Древнего Червя, связывающей изменения границ с пробуждением огромных червей, которых картографы прошлого ошибочно принимали за государственные границы). Подвижность границ оживила и политическую жизнь Старого Света: буквально за несколько месяцев возник ряд новых политических альянсов, по преимуществу открыто фашистсного характера. Румынская патриотическая национал-партия, набравшая на последних выборах в европейский парламент 27% голосов поспешила обвинить в начавшейся неразберихе цыганское сообщество. Центральноевропейских радиналов горячо поддержал ряд одиозных фигур европейской политики - от Марин Ле Пен, Ника Гриффина и Умберто Босси до пока еще не вполне выдвинувшихся на континентальную арену организаций вроде российских «Почвеннинов против беспочвенности» и "Народного сбора».

Усилия ультраправого лобби привели к тому, что деморализованный Европейский совет, будучи не в состоянии найти разумного объяснения сложившейся ситуации, санкционировал самую масштабную в истории континента операцию по депортации. Было принято решение депортировать за пределы ЕС не только цыган, но и арабов, выходцев из стран Субсахарской Африки, а также ирландцев, белорусов, албанцев и ряд других этнических групп, которые, согласно официальной формулировке, были сочтены «не вполне соответствующими высоте текущего момента на данной

В результате этой масштабной операшии десятки этнических групп действительно были выселены за Урал, однако уже через неделю картографы зафиксировали драматическое расширение европейского континента, который простирается теперь вплоть до Океании.

Корреспонденты «ТК» внимательно следят за развитием событий.



contribution: cover Biennial catalogue 2012 Kiev Foxic Komsomolets #3,

Toxic Komsomolets #2, 2011 Krasnoyarsk Biennial: spread

In public print

Interviews:

Dialog Iskusstv Magazine Interview, 2019
Sever Stolicy Weekly Interview, 2019
S7 Airline Magazine Interview, 2019
Start project questionnaire openspace.ru, 2011
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«F.W. Paps» comic series

Published in art section of openspace.ru web magazine (in Russian):

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,

Texts

«Letters from Cape Town», an overwiew of Capetonian art scene for openspace.ru (in Russian): 1, 2, 3

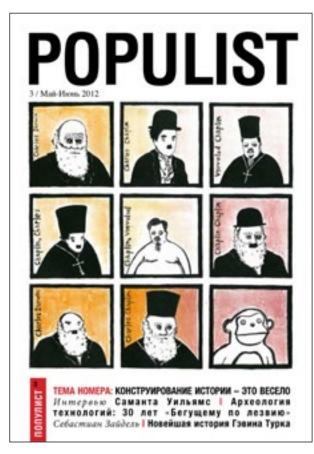
Interview with Anton Vidokle for <u>aroundart.ru</u>
«Moscow Diary», a feature on time/bank event in Moscow for <u>openspace.ru</u>











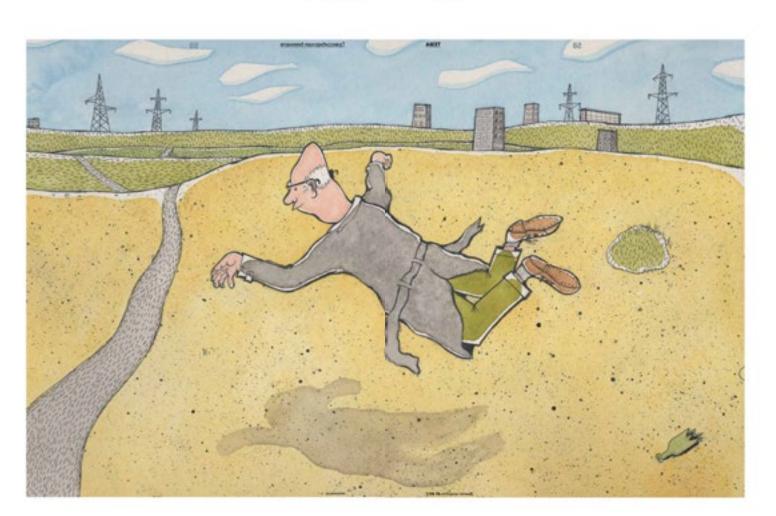


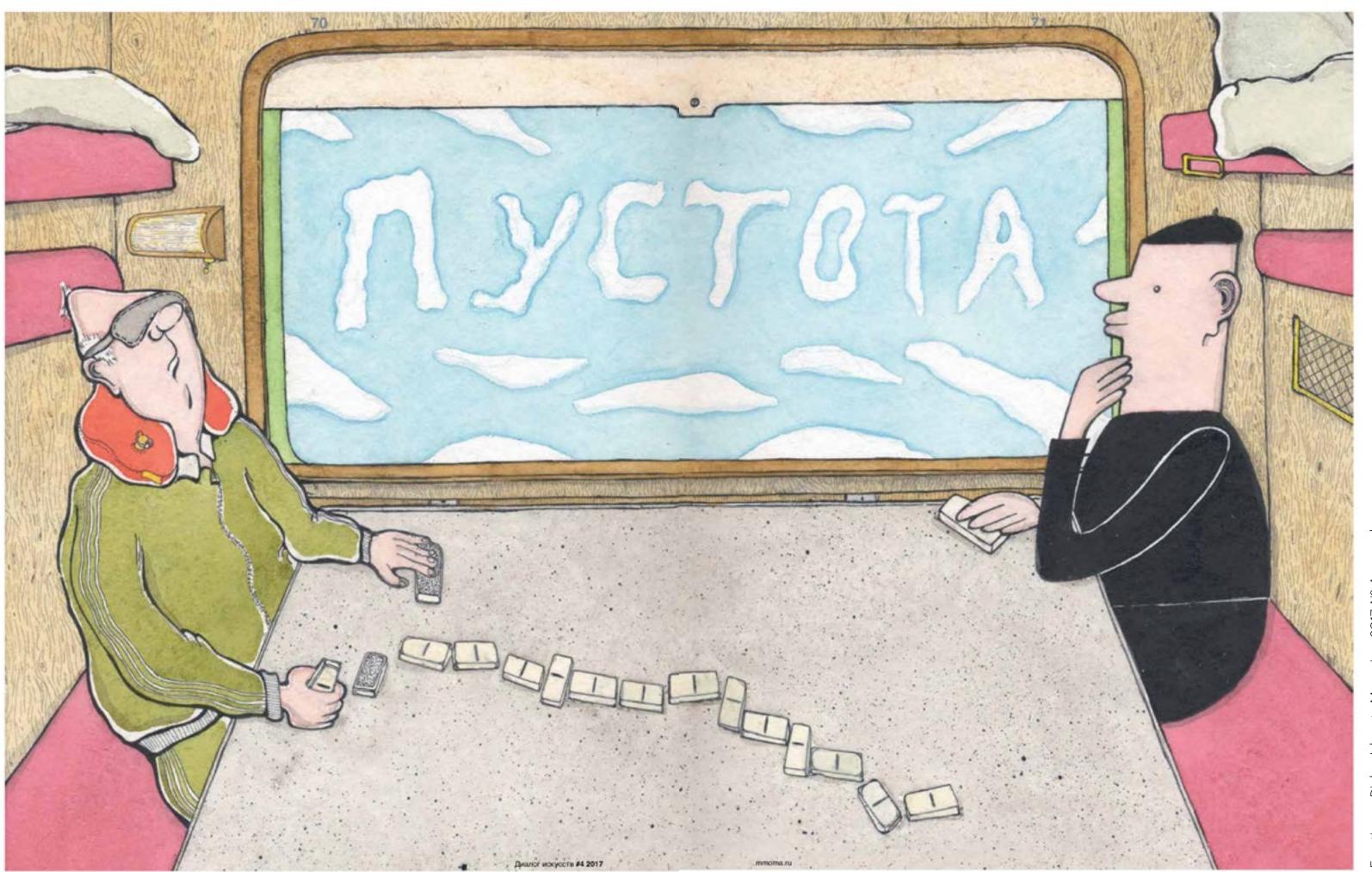


Joseph Müebium

ВОЗЕЙ ПЕБЛУЗУ — не некростинных не критен, не куритор и не проценатие. Он понициой израст пределя и ист. пристрастиванного и спирочения учествости. Это некростию не неста принятия Волиф, не-тим итилименто и придадили теати, не неста учесту на симых пројемых неи-тими

Как в паработ оченае, на ветра завират су в трупутивнителя. В перволат втом бит дето факуроттур в Росуми на приносибирской доргах, чторащить Мисковскую, Какториябурскую и Важи утносую бителья инсумта. В неставит учести Набор фицичинала повыше намератичествую и при на учествення повыше под приносителя при всем на учествення повыше под повыше учествен трунения или приграм на поставить подрабовай повышения, почетные намератичествую на поставить подрабовай повышения.





Emptiness. Dialog Iskusstv Magazine, 2017, № 4: spread