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SHUT THE DUCK UP

A return to law and order, national pride and upright morals is colliding with Russia's exuberant and *skandal*-seeking art world, writes **Matthew Bown**

The moral decontamination of Moscow began about 1999. In that year the notorious Hungry Duck club, where the girls were plied with free booze and encouraged to dance topless on the counter, was shut down (it re-opened, and is still going, but tamer). The force behind the closure was the 82-year-old Olga Lepeshinskaya, a well-known dancer of the Stalin era, who objected to the presence of the degenerate enterprise in a building whose controlling committee she headed. Also in 1999, the young artist Avdei Ter-Oganyan was convicted on a charge of stirring up religious hatred. In December 1998, in a performance at an art fair, he had been unwise enough to deface a few cheap contemporary icons using excrement, nails, written obscenities and an axe. He fled to avoid the particular unpleasantness of Russian prison life and currently lives in Prague.

The Ter-Oganyan affair marked the end of an era which witnessed the anti-social actions of Alexander Brenner (who delighted in spoiling other artists' work); Oleg Kulik's cruel curatorial projects (the slaughter of a pig in the gallery, anyone?) and his performances as a dog, biting passers-by in the street; and Ter-Oganyan's own participation in the Non-Governmental

Blue Noses, The Age Of Mercy (Kissing Policemen, 2005)
Courtesy of the artists and the Guelman Gallery

Control Commission, a group of artists dedicated in a half-assed way to civil disobedience. The critic Ekaterina Degot summed up some of this work as 'Terrorist Naturalism': post 9/11, we can only say, what an Age of Innocence is encapsulated in that phrase!

Maybe someone will object to the conflation of the Hungry Duck's closure and Ter-Oganyan's prosecution, and if we consider them under the rubric of Free Speech, that may be right (speech of any kind was pretty pointless in the Hungry Duck, which was an extremely loud hook-up joint). However, in the perception of many Russians the two would be related, perhaps even equivalent: both of them reactions against moral excesses characteristic of the Yeltsin era. I think, in fact, it's reasonable to infer a fair degree of popular support for both crackdowns. The owner of the Hungry Duck, a Canadian, commented after the closure: 'Half the country is starving. Seeing [the Hungry Duck] going on offends people. It's time to do a re-think.' Ter-Oganyan was assaulted by a fellow artist at the time of his performance, the well-known poet Vladimir Salimon, who is not known, as the journal *ArtKhronika* has pointed out, as a radical Church activist. In the aftermath of his action, Ter-Oganyan received mixed support from the contemporary art community. Some artists spoke up for him (and gallerist Marat Guelman continues to this day to show his work), but others signed a letter terming his action 'vandalism'.

The appearance in Moscow during the campaign for the Duma elections of huge posters announcing 'Plan of Putin is Victory of Russia' encourages me to read such events in the tail-end of the 1990s as harbingers of a moral project (hereinafter, 'the Project'). The Project may be understood as a component of the policies of Vladimir Putin, who became prime minister in 1999 and president in 2000. It has several aspects. Like Putinism as a whole, it harks back to the era of prima ballerina Lepeshinskaya's professional prime, which is increasingly remembered positively as the age of Empire, national pride and also law-and-order and upright morals. The Orthodox Church plays a central role in the Project; absent communist ideology, it lends legitimacy to the government and in its turn has acquired a significant establishment role and a new dignity, which it is at great pains to protect. (This is not a context in which to examine in detail what the Orthodox Church stands for, or whom it represents, but I regard it neither as a proxy of the *siloviki* [Kremlin power-men] nor simply as an emanation of the People, but as an ancient institution with its own agenda, even though historically fairly flexible.) But the Project, insofar as it affects the art world, is not just intent on the protection of dignity, nor even on

the promotion of religious belief; it is broadly concerned with the shaping of public morality.

Some aspects of the Project are unobjectionable. Moscow has become less seedy and, outwardly at least, a more law-abiding place than it was in the 1990s. Prostitutes no longer swarm the kerbs of the main avenues, child pornography is not openly on sale in the markets; gang shoot-outs have dropped off and businessmen don't feel obliged to keep guns in the top drawers of their desks. I guess similar changes have taken place, to some extent, in other Russian cities. In the arts, the situation is more ambiguous. There is now a flourishing art world in Russia which, in its size, variety and market exuberance, bears no comparison to the situation 20 or even ten years ago. There have also been several run-ins between the supporters of the Orthodox Church and the world of contemporary art, around which the debate about censorship in the arts has crystallised.

A series of unfortunate events

The salient clashes are as follows:

The exhibition Beware, Religion! held at the Sakharov Museum, Moscow, in January 2003. Containing, among other works, an image of Christ in a Coke advertisement with the slogan 'This is my blood' (by Alexander Kosolapov); a church made of vodka bottles (by Alina Gurevich); an 'icon' through which you push your head and hands, as though for a holiday photo (by Alisa Zrazhevskaya) and other works on religious themes. The exhibition was wrecked by Orthodox followers a few days after opening. Museum employees and one artist, Anna Mikhalchuk, were subsequently prosecuted (charges against the vandals were dropped); in 2005 Mikhalchuk was acquitted but the show organisers were fined 100,000 roubles (about £2,000).

Oleg Yanushevsky's show of contemporary 'icons' depicting public figures such as George Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger, held at the SPAS gallery in St Petersburg, April 2004. The exhibition was attacked with paint and Yanushevsky later faced various forms of harassment, including arson, at his studio. In 2005 he claimed asylum in London, which has been granted.

Forbidden Art 2006, curated by Andrei Erofeev, held at the Sakharov Museum in March 2007. The show was in itself an analysis of censorship in Russia, consisting of works that were banned from exhibition in Moscow

during 2006. Most of the works dealt with religious subjects, some with rude words and nudity. To see fragments of them, visitors needed to look through a peephole: an accidental viewing was impossible. Apart from the curatorial charm, this was no doubt an attempt to forestall a prosecution. But to no avail: there were protests from the Moscow patriarchate and fringe political groups and a criminal inquiry was opened. In November 2007, Erofeev's office was searched in connection with the show and he was interrogated by the FSB.

A recent *skandal* concerns the exhibition Sotsart and Political Art in Russia, a show of art from the 1970s to the present day, again curated by Andrei Erofeev but this time organised under the auspices of the Tretyakov Gallery and displayed at the Maison Rouge exhibition space in Paris from October 2007 to January 2008 (Sotsart is a term invented by the artists Vitali Komar and Alexander Melamid in the 70s; it signifies, roughly, socio-political satire of the Soviet era). Just as the exhibits were leaving Russia, some 17 pieces of contemporary work were removed by the authorities. Among them: an image of kissing policemen, entitled 'The Age of Mercy' (by Vyacheslav Mizin and Alexander Shaburov, known as the Blue Noses); a digital composition depicting Chinese conquerors raping and pillaging in the Kremlin precincts (by PG Group); a performance artist (Vladislav Monroe) photographed as Hitler; a Muslim woman caressing a phallic minaret (by Aidan Salakhova); various political and historical figures – Condi Rice, George Bush, Saddam Hussein, our own Queen Elizabeth, Lady Di, Ukrainian politicians Timoshenko, Yanukovich and Yushchenko – in nude ensembles (by the Blue Noses).

These are rude works, potentially offensive to many no doubt, but not at first sight images having to do with Orthodox belief. But the Russian Minister of Culture Alexander Sokolov, in choosing to publicly denounce them as 'Russia's disgrace' and 'pornography', and further accusing the Tretyakov Gallery of 'corruption' for selecting them, cited explicitly the moral guidance of a recent speech by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Aleksii II.

The incident has become a cause célèbre for a number of reasons. For a start, it's a bigger deal than the others, a show put together by the national museum for display abroad, publicly criticised in intemperate terms by the minister of culture. Second, it indicates disagreement over policy at a high level in the culture establishment. Third, there is a qualitative difference between attacks, physical and legal, on religious-themed artworks by religious adherents and the praying-in-aid of the Church by a politician

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PG Group, mobile agitation installation, 2007
Courtesy of ArtKhronika *magazine*

carrying out what appears to be a comprehensive act of censorship. Sokolov's intervention, unlike the preceding events, has been interpreted as heralding a return in Russia to state censorship of the arts, with ramifications for public discourse beyond merely the art world. The writer Viktor Erofeev, brother of curator Andrei, for example, has written of the revival of Soviet-style 'controlled ethics'.

A little bit of context

'Milton, who wrote Paradise Lost for five pounds, was an unproductive labourer. It was an activity of his nature. On the other hand, the writer who turns out stuff for his publisher in factory style is a productive labourer.' Words by Karl Marx, which I discover inscribed on the surface of a recent painting by the artist and Marxist Dima Gutov (in Russia, Marxism is once more the redoubt of counter-culture intellectuals); and which I find myself pondering because they encapsulate the difference between the Russian art world of just a few years ago, and now (and this surely is Gutov's point).

In the 1990s, and earlier, making contemporary art in Russia was unproductive labour, a labour of love, or, in Marx's cynical biomechanical terminology, of 'silkworms'. But the Russian art world today bears no relation to the ragged-trousered 1990s and still less to the informationally-deprived, down-at-heel Soviet milieu I knew 20 years ago. The most commercially successful of the contemporary artists is the duo of Vladimir Dubossarsky and Alexander Vinogradov, makers in the 1990s of lurid parodies of Socialist Realism and in the noughties of seductive scenes of contemporary life. According to a conversation I had with their gallerist, Elena Selina, they have sold a couple of hundred paintings in recent years: these currently fetch up to a quarter of a million dollars at auction. What was once an activity of an artist's nature is now, for many, serious business: art labour has become productive. The infrastructure has grown up too: the ArtMoscow fair, the Moscow Biennale, the privately owned art magazines; Moscow galleries are touring the world's leading fairs, the Hermitage is building an extension for contemporary art, museums of private collections are opening. Moscow is not yet London, still less New York, but the contemporary art community has never had it so good.

In the context of such opportunity, the question of censorship, or more generally of some kind of limits to creative freedom, does not loom so large today as it did to the dissident artists of the Soviet Union. To be honest, when you are zipping out of Moscow for the Gagosian Gallery show in Barvikha Luxury Village, past billboard ads for Thai cleaning ladies, business success by hypnosis and cockroach-control, towards foie-gras, champagne, Alfabank billionaires, micro-skirted humdinger blondes, art by Richard Prince, Ilya Kabakov, John Currin, Ed Ruscha and others, some of it selected with a clever eye for Moscow lesbian chic, do you worry much about a little censorship? Insofar as you may be affected by a shipping delay, an exhibition cancelled, a work confiscated, you'll treat it as a business overhead, part of the price of working in Moscow.

And let's be honest about something else: in the words of the schoolboy Nigel Molesworth, 'as any fule kno', notoriety doesn't usually do a lot of harm to art's commercial prospects. After the 17 works were removed from the Sotsart show, the gallerist and artist Aidan Salakhova (whose own work was among those banned) and Marat Guelman (who represents the Blue Noses), with heavy irony publicly thanked Sokolov for the unprecedented PR, which had resulted in increased sales from their booths at the FIAC art fair in Paris. To this extent, at least, such *skandaly*, assuming they blow over, can be grist to a gallerist's mill.

In your face

But they don't always just blow over, as Marat Guelman himself can testify. In October 2006, I was at Sheremetevo airport carrying works by the Blue Noses onto the London plane. These were photographs, laminated onto aluminium, on consignment from the Guelman Gallery and destined for an exhibition at my space in Savile Row. I had with me works from the series Mask Show (named after a now-defunct TV series of the same name, something like Benny Hill), which show Bush, Putin and Bin Laden in various combinations, in their underwear or naked, cavorting in a domestic interior; the image of a female suicide bomber, her skirt blown aloft à la Marilyn Monroe, called Chechen Marilyn; and a number of pieces from the series Kitchen Suprematism: parodies in bread and sausage of famous abstract paintings by Malevich.

I had the requisite licences, issued by the Ministry of Culture, but I was not allowed to export the works. I was myself, in fairly dramatic fashion, removed from my flight as it was about to leave. I spent about nine hours under interrogation by a series of men, with breaks for coffee and a nap in the VIP Lounge, and frequent interruptions by journalists on the phone. They had apparently been whipped into a frenzy by Guelman's PR-ing on LiveJournal, because I didn't call anyone myself (at least one of my phone conversations, I found out later, was broadcast live on Russian radio). The small room upstairs at the airport was memorable, to me, for the posters on the wall: exhortations against bribe-taking and other bad behaviour – of recent manufacture, but reminiscent of Soviet-era production.

Most of what my questioners wanted to know was merely factual: who was I? Where did I get the works in question? What was I planning to do with them? But inevitably the conversation touched on the reasons why they had been seized. I was offered several. One was the possible offence to Muslim sensibilities inherent in Chechen Marilyn. This I could understand and, indeed, the potential for this work to cause upset is patent (in fact, one of my colleagues in London suggested I mail the image to all the local imams, by recorded delivery so they couldn't ignore it, in order to whip up a bit of press coverage – a suggestion that is entirely in the nature of art-world-think). Rudeness about heads of state in the Mask Show series was another; it was suggested to me that Russia's ally in the War on Terror, President Bush, might object. Of course, it's likely that my interrogator was equally concerned about compromising the Russian president.

To my surprise, the religious question also cropped up. One of my interrogators told me that he could quite easily understand the bread-and-sausage photos, they were ridiculing Christianity. I write a lot of press releases, and I'm always looking for new angles, but I admit this thought had never entered my head. The works in question are parodies of abstract, so-called Suprematist paintings by Malevich dating from the 1910s. Malevich, of course, had been quoting icon-painting, but the Blue Noses, surely, were quoting only Malevich? My bad: I should have realised that in Russia a cross is a Cross, not an element of a geometric abstraction. My interrogator, presumably unaware of the Malevich connection, had managed blithely to short-circuit a century of art history: a little lesson in the gulf between contemporary art and popular culture.

If the object of the exercise was to protect Russia's image abroad, it's moot whether it succeeded. The world's media were interested, not least because of the Cold War-style scene at Sheremetevo and Marat Guelman's inclusion on a then-notorious list of Enemies of Russia, which had been circulating on the Internet (the list included the recently assassinated Anna Politkovskaya). And so the jokey image of Putin, Bush and Bin Laden was published widely. The physical works were detained, but it was clear that, as far as my show was concerned, the confiscated images could be sent by ftp and reprinted in London. The cost: a few thousand quid, plus the lost day – a business overhead. I was put on the evening plane home. The same evening, Guelman, on his LiveJournal, suggested that because of the publicity the commercial success of the show was ensured.

The next morning, Guelman's gallery was invaded by a group of men with skinhead hairstyles. His exhibition was wrecked and Guelman himself was held against a wall and beaten by metal bars. As a coup de grâce, a computer was thrown in his face. During the attack, he thought he would probably be killed and, plainly, he nearly was.

Illusion and reality

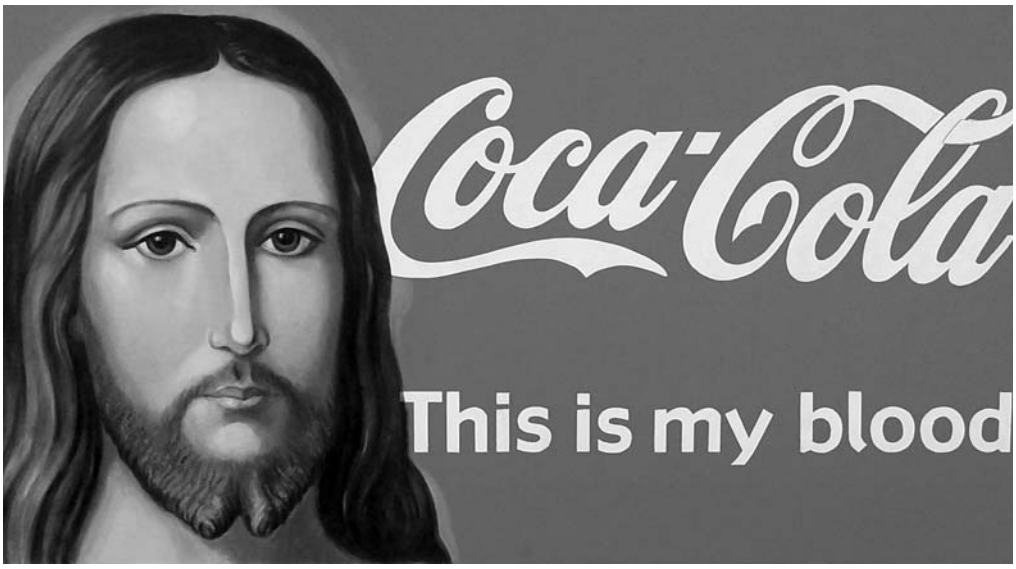
After my arrest at Sheremetevo a couple of conspiracy theories were offered to me in all seriousness by Russian friends and acquaintances: that it was a put-up job by the authorities, anxious to create a public example; or that it was a put-up job by Guelman, out to concoct a *skandal* for his own nefarious gallerist's purposes. Neither scenario has, as far as I can tell, any connection with reality. A more considered opinion, from a professor at Moscow University, was that I'd met a jittery customs man who was leaving nothing

to chance in view of Putin's anti-corruption campaign. Perhaps: it's a view which jibes with the posters on the wall, and the clear lack of a planned scenario; but on the other hand, since my experience there have been other similar hold-ups of art at customs. In fact, teasing out the threads of cause-and-effect in my arrest, the attack on Guelman and, too, the Sotsart affair is a complicated business: there are multiple parties involved, and their motivation, sometimes even their identity, cannot always be known.

For example, we don't know who arranged the attack on Guelman, who carried it out, or even exactly why it took place. The juxtaposition of two events: my arrest and the surrounding PR campaign orchestrated by Guelman, and the attack the following day, suggested to many that Guelman was attacked because he had supplied a variety of transgressive art works. But on the other hand, these artworks had already been shown in Russia, some within the precincts of the Tretyakov Gallery, without any notable reaction. It seems more likely that my Sheremetevo arrest was, if not a coincidence, then simply the final provocation which led established enemies of Guelman, who has a parallel career as a political consultant and is well known as an anti-fascist and anti-nationalist campaigner, to vent their long-standing hostility. An art-world event bled over into the bigger and much rougher world of Russian politics.

The Sotsart affair is also not wholly straightforward. According to a résumé in *ArtKhronika* magazine, 16 of the 17 banned works did not belong to the Tretyakov Gallery and were slipped into the exhibition after the committee stage, presumably on curator Erofeev's sole say-so. This seems, to say the least, like sharp practice in the context of a national museum show. One can see how it would infuriate a bureaucrat. The director of the Tretyakov Gallery, Valentin Rodionov, suggested that the decision to remove works marked not censorship, but simply a distinction between what was appropriate for a state-sponsored museum show and for a private gallery.

Again, one may not agree with the distinction as made in this case, but I suspect it's the way of the world. Would the British Council be likely to circulate an artwork abroad, no matter how good, showing Frenchmen in stripy shirts and berets raping Anglo-Saxon beauties in the precincts of 10 Downing Street? Up to a point, Lord Copper; or, in an alternative vernacular, I should coco. The art in question here is bumping up against not only censorship on moral grounds, but also realpolitik.



Alexander Kosolapov, 'This Is My Blood', 2002
Courtesy of the artist and the Guelman Gallery

State of the Art

In a discussion at the Moscow Biennale in March 2007, the curator Yara Bubnova announced that there were three forbidden subjects in Russian art: the Orthodox Church, Chechnya, and President Putin. Well, yes, but mostly no. Putin, for example, continues to figure in quite a lot of art and visual satire and Chechnya is a subject which, for one reason or another, artists seem to have tired of rather than to be avoiding (although it remains a recurrent subject with film makers). When we consider the question of censorship in Russian art, I would argue, we're not considering a list of proscribed subjects as such, we're contemplating a gulf in understanding.

On the one side is the conviction (of course, I simplify) that art provides, essentially, depictions of how life ought to be lived. To cite Alexander Shilov, a hyper-traditional painter admired by Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov (who created a museum for him), art 'is the guide and educator of the soul' and the atmosphere of society as a whole depends upon it. Viewed in this perspective, an image such as 'The Age of Mercy' becomes, perhaps, an exhortation for guardians of the law to engage in immoral practices. Underpinning this conviction in Russia, I submit, is an Orthodox Church which prides itself on practices which have remained unchanged for a thousand years and for which the traditional form of art is the sacred images of icon-painting. (Indeed, if one rumour is to be believed, the Russian Church is still actively fighting the battles of the remote past: it is said that it lobbied

successfully against the inclusion of 19th-century paintings critical of organised religion in the huge show RUSSIA!, held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2005.)

On the other side stands international contemporary art practice, of which Russian practice is a part, with its strategies of de- and re-contextualisation, its aura of an ill-controlled game in a sandbox, its effects of emotional and intellectual disorientation, its rude outbursts, its lack (often) of apparent craftsmanship (especially galling when you consider the price it fetches), its ceaseless revolutions, its hostility to certainties and openness to all the intellectual fads, not to mention the opacity of the insider's market, the critics' hooey and the artists' priestly pretensions. Having said which, the conflicts are not (as they were in Soviet times) about art that is abstruse, abstract or excessively aesthetical: they are about iconography, that is, about art that operates, one way or another, in a tradition of didactic, socially explicit art related to the icon-painting tradition itself.

In the figure of Minister of Culture Alexander Sokolov, the Project has found a dedicated champion. Of course, a change in the political wind may blow him from his seat, but it is perhaps worth attempting a brief pen-portrait. His background is not in art but in music (he wrote a thesis on the history of the piano and was for some years a professor of music theory at the Moscow Conservatory). He combines this high intellectual background with apparent spirituality, a severe moral outlook and an unusually uncompromising approach to that of which he disapproves. On his appointment in 2005, he described the Ministry of Culture as suffering from bribe-taking on every floor, a trenchant statement which caused his predecessor, Mikhail Shvidkoi, to sue him (the case was settled out of court). His recent pronouncement about corruption in the Tretyakov Gallery has prompted a further defamation case, from the gallery's director, Valentin Rodionov. His commitment to Orthodox principles aside, in my experience people educated in the disciplines of classical music often have a hard time accepting, let alone appreciating, the raw and sometimes uncouth conjectures of contemporary artists, and I guess Sokolov is no exception.

The big question, I suppose, is how far the Project will impose itself on Russian contemporary art as a whole, not just in the special cases of border crossings (where, in Russia as in other countries, the burden of proof is low and tendency to confiscate high) and national museum shows. Will more-or-less challenging imagery, not just satire of the Church, Putin and Chechnya, but also (to list a few subjects in trouble) severed heads in jars, games with

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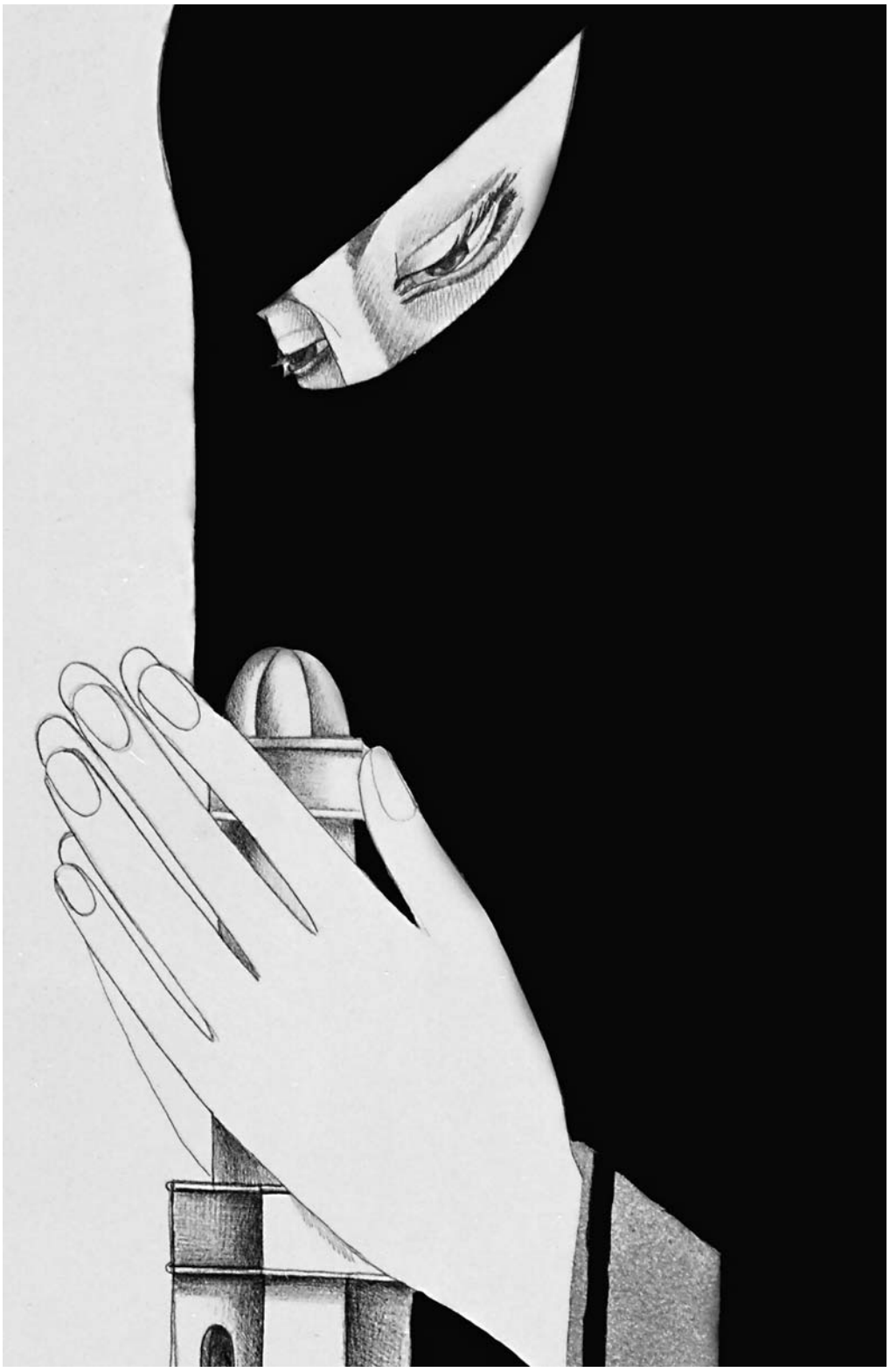

Aidan Salakhova, from the Persian miniature series, 2006. Collection D Safarova
Courtesy of ArtKhronika *magazine*

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Nazi insignia, raping and pillaging Chinamen, sex-bomb suicide bombers and undressed politicians – fall out of bounds for Russian art?

Possibly. As I indicated at the beginning of this article, the remit of the Project is not merely to defend the dignity of the Church. It is also to shape society's morals. Sokolov's denigration of 'The Age of Mercy' as 'pornography' is, I guess, the honest encapsulation of an attitude, however much, to a hard-nut habitué of the contemporary art scene, it must seem like a brain-crash (a stray thought: what would he make of that Second World War favourite, 'Kiss Me Goodnight, Sergeant-Major'?) Under Sokolov, the Ministry of Culture is preparing a law regulating pornography in the media for presentation to the Duma; if passed, it has been suggested to me, it would put work by several well-known contemporary artists in Russia beyond the legal pale. The seizure by police in December 2007 of contemporary sex-oriented novels from the Moscow bookshop Falanster, among them Lidia Lunch's *Paradoxia*, Pierre Bordage's *L'Evangile du Serpent* and Virginie Despentes's *Baise Moi*, maybe shows something of the way going forward. The high political *apparat* seems to be increasingly involved in Church-based initiatives. At a meeting in the Kremlin on 19 November 2007, the Patriarch Aleksii suggested to President Putin the creation of a 'people's council' responsible for questions of morality, which would have a 'regulatory function'. Svetlana Medvedeva, the wife of Putin's chosen successor as president, heads an organisation called the Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Next Generation of Russia, which was set up by the Church. Some political activists seem to envisage the complete integration of Church and State: for example, a recent article by Nadezhda Orlova, chairman of the political council of the Young Guard of United Russia, argues in favour of 'political Orthodoxy' (*politicheskoe pravoslavie*).

All this suggests that, at the least, a stricter interpretation of public morality will have an impact on the art world. In fact, one can already sense it: an exhibition of sexually oriented paintings and sculptures by Marina Belova and Alexei Politov at Aidan Gallery in December 2007, required visitors to don special glasses to view explicit details, a tactic that critic Irina Kulik in *Kommersant* described as an attempt to avoid accusations of pornography. The artistic response to new strictures may be, to use an epithet popular in the Soviet era, an increase in Aesopian statements; or, as here, Aesopian technology.

The poet Lev Rubinshtein put it to me one evening, over a glass of wine in the fashionable cafe Zhan-Zhak, that the current conflicts arise from an atavistic fear that the state may be brought low by a poem (a fantasy in

which some artists, too, are invested). In the Soviet Union, the war on alternative art sometimes seemed to be waged for precisely this reason (notably in the 1930s, when the vagueness of impressionist technique was deemed capable of harbouring enemy sentiments). I think times have changed: ideology is not all-consuming and art per se is no longer such a hot potato. Some kinds of exuberance – political, sexual, satirical – have been chilled recently and may cool further. But I doubt there will be a return to the straitjacket of 'controlled ethics' feared by Viktor Erofeev.

It remains to be seen how the Project will pan out in practice. Earlier attempts to introduce a law on pornography, for example, were rebuffed, in part because of the absence of an acceptable definition of pornography, but also because of opposition from deputies. And, despite the apparent gulf between the Orthodox-influenced outlook and the world of contemporary art, there may be room for dialogue. A couple of years ago, soon after his appointment as minister of culture, Sokolov was walked around the big Moscow-Berlin exhibition (a comparative survey of Russian and German art) by a couple of its curators. I am told he expressed particular appreciation of Gutov's film *From Flat to Flat*, a highly romantic twin-screen view of Moscow (to the accompaniment of music by Tchaikovsky). When confronted by an altogether less attractive work, an installation by German artist Micha Brenner consisting of a lot of dubious-looking organic matter in glass specimen jars, on being told that the work was dedicated to Peter the Great, he made the link to the tsar's famous museum of anthropology, the Kunstkammer. As E M Forster suggested, 'Only connect'. The presentation of contemporary art involves an educational push, and especially these days in Russia. ❐

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