

## OLEG TYRKIN

'Pilots and Wives', an exhibition of paintings by the Russian artist Oleg Tyrkin is the second survey of his recent work to be held in the UK. The exhibition consists of works spanning from 2003 to 2010. Oleg's paintings are supremely honest and naïve, their imagery is openly figurative. They carry reminiscences of Malevich's deconstructed faces, Tatlin's utopias, and Roublev's serenity.

Orthodox icons formed Oleg's language of colour, steeped in sacred serenity. Another deep imprint on Oleg's art was the symbolism of medieval Russian painting.

For a person of traditional values such as Tyrkin, the importance of memory – and its corollary, forgetting – is a central question to which he constantly returns. There is a fundamental unity in Oleg's work. He avoids literal representation; in most cases, individual features in his portraits are indistinguishable, and the edges of their silhouettes dissolve. The association is with the deconstructed faces of Malevich's peasants, the image of the destruction of the individual. For all the differences between the two artists, their common theme is the tragedy of the life they have witnessed.



Oleg Tyrkin was born in 1965 in Vladimir, Central Russia. His first experience in art came in the early 1980s when Oleg began working as an independent artist. At the same time, after studying at the Aviation Institute, he became a military helicopter pilot. While in the Air Force, he continued to draw. After being demobilized in the mid-1980s, Oleg travelled to Moscow to find himself as an artist. Shortly afterwards, Oleg began to find his first clients and patrons. Within two months, Oleg mastered the techniques of oil painting, which remains his favoured medium. He has always worked almost without sketches, directly on the canvas.

By the end of the 1980s Oleg had his first exhibition in France, which proved a great success. His work was exhibited alongside such late-Soviet greats as Ilya Kabakov, Vladimir Yankilevsky and Vladimir Nemukhin. It was an important exposure for Oleg – but importantly, he retained his own personal style with great consistency.

Oleg Tyrkin has works in major museums and private collections in Russia, France, UK, Switzerland, USA, Germany, Ireland and Belgium.

### Selected personal exhibitions:

2010 Pushkin House, London. "Arms and Wings"  
2001 Galerie Bastille, Paris. "Russian Myths"  
1999 Kovner Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland.  
1993 Russian-American Press Centre, Moscow.  
1992 Avantgarde Gallerie, Berlin.  
1990 Galerie Victor Hugo, Paris.

### Selected group exhibitions

2009 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Special project "Second Dialogue"  
2009 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Special project "Dormitory District"  
2009 State Russian Museum, St Petersburg. "Zaripov Collection"  
2008 Moscow Museum of Modern Art. "XX Century. Zaripov Collection"  
2007 State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Bench of Peace, group project.  
2000 Moscow Art Fair "ART-MANEGE", Manege, Moscow.