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DECONSTRUCTING PERESTROIKA

January 28 – May 6, 2012

*Hand-painted poster art examines Soviet ideology and its discontents
20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union*



The Great Appear Great to Us Because We Ourselves Are Standing On Our Knees, cardboard, Valentina Egorovna Dorokhova & Viktor Konstantinovich Dorokhov, 1990. Courtesy of Wende Museum.



AIDS-No!, wooden fiberboard, tempera paint, Aleksei Rezaev, 1991. Courtesy of Wende Museum

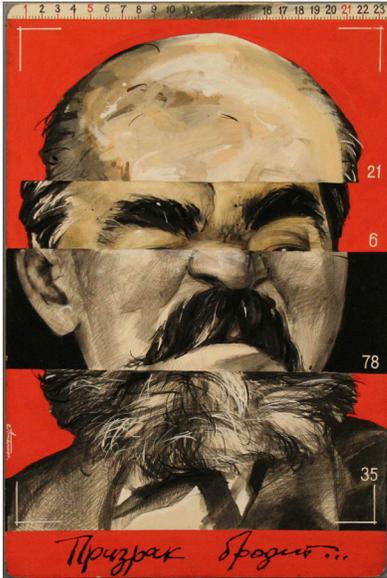
LOS ANGELES — In collaboration with The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War, the Craft and Folk Art Museum will present *Deconstructing Perestroika*, the first major exhibition in the United States of hand-painted Soviet-era political posters that were inspired by a new government policy of transparency in the former Soviet Union. Organized to mark the 20th anniversary of the former super power's demise in December 1991, this exhibition highlights some of the key political and cultural shifts that defined the era and ultimately led to the fall of the Soviet Union.

Curated by Dr. Ljiljana Grubisic, Director of Collections and Public Programs at The Wende Museum, the exhibition will showcase thirty original, hand-painted poster designs created by thirteen artists as visual responses to Mikhail Gorbachev's transformative policies of Glasnost and Perestroika of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Starting in 1985, Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost, or openness, started to liberalize Soviet society by allowing taboos to be questioned and, in the process, galvanizing people and encouraging them to talk and think freely for the first time. During this period, East-West hostilities started to evaporate and dissidents began to return from labor camps and exile. Gorbachev's parallel attempts to reform the economy through *Perestroika*, or restructuring, perished like all other previous attempts.

Deconstructing Perestroika illustrates the tradition of hand-painted poster design, known in Russian as avtorskii plakat. This art form can be viewed as an outgrowth of the traditional Soviet agitprop. The thirty works of art are unified thematically by a caustic satire that was made possible by Glasnost's very insistence on freedom of speech. Yet this razor sharp critique also stems from the deeply rooted tendency of the Russian psyche to view political and cultural endeavors through the prism of irony in order to subvert, reject, or give new meaning to an official ideology or previous work of art.

There will be an opening reception at CAFAM for *Deconstructing Perestroika* on Saturday, January 28 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.



The Phantom is Haunting..., wood, fiberboard, tempera paint, Aleksandr Amelin, 1990. Courtesy of Wende Museum



He Who Doesn't Work, Doesn't Eat, cardboard, tempera paint, paper, Aleksandr Petrovich Utkin, 1990. Courtesy of the Wende Museum

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Public programs are being organized in conjunction with the exhibition. Along with a curator-led exhibition walk-through and adult and family workshops, there may be film screenings and additional gallery talks.

Exhibition Walk-Through with Dr. Ljiljana Grubisic

Sunday, March 18

3:00 p.m.

The Craft of Poetry

A reading of original poetry created in response to *Deconstructing Perestroika* with poets Ilya Kaminsky, Cecilia Woloch, and Arash Saedinia.

Saturday, February 25

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Breaking Stalin's Nose: Book Discussion and Signing

Author and illustrator Eugene Yelchin discusses his acclaimed illustrated novel, *Breaking Stalin's Nose*.

Sunday, March 4

3:00 p.m.

Writing Workshop with poet Brendan Constantine

Create poetry inspired by art and politics.

Sunday, March 11

1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1973, the Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday

Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, seniors, and veterans; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed

Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.