

ARTWIN GALLERY

VIRTUS POST NUMMOS ?

An exhibition by Olga Kisseleva

Horace himself always addressed and attempted to prove the inconsistency in the principle *virtus post nummos*.

- Georgi Plekhanov, A History of Russian Social Thought

Olga Kisseleva is an artist who firmly believes that the mission of the artist is to use every available means to make society better. The economic crisis of the globalized world has made it impossible to ignore conversations around money and ethics. For *Virtus Post Nummos?* (Latin for "Virtue After Money?"), her latest exhibition at Artwin Gallery, Kisseleva addresses the constant development and renewal of financial systems and the symbolic codes generating the flows of capital. The exhibition gathers together objects and installations created over the last five years, including new works that are making their public debut at the gallery.

Kisseleva's practice can best be described as polyphonic, containing in equal measure elements of scientific research and anthropological studies. For these works, the artist applies cutting-edge technology to address the past, luring the audience into a conversation about time and space, while raising the question as to how to change contemporary social paradigms. By integrating social and natural sciences and collaborating with specialists from many different disciplines, Kisseleva acts not only as an artist, but as an attentive witness, a dedicated scholar, and a diligent analyst. The artist picks up one of the foremost issues of contemporary art, returning to the search for "things," "constructions," and "objects" that defined the Russian avant-garde and Bauhaus.

For *Virtus Post Nummos?*, Kisseleva combines critical theory and the collective experience of Post-Soviet space with her own personal experience. The daughter of Soviet scientists, the artist fixes her attention on the attitudes of the recent past, looking at the relationship to money as it played out in Soviet culture, and how that relationship transformed under the influence of the market economy. Money not only distorted the idea of the individual, it was itself distorted in the process; at the beginning of Perestroika, money directly determined one's living conditions, while in recent years, it has mutated into a virtual concept.

Against this backdrop, Kisseleva creates a multilayered history of money and markers of value. She confronts the reality of monetary units with their virtual value, combining contemporary strategies with traditional technologies to play with understandings of financial and cultural value. Can virtue be measured in numbers, or is it even possible in the context of contemporary capitalism? What happens with ethical values in times of economic collapse? Kisseleva's works provide a symbolic reflection on critical milestones in the history of capitalism, from the first economic crisis of the early 17th century (the so-called "Tulip Mania"), to the Great Depression of 1929, to the more recent global crisis of 2007-2008.

The artist retraces the history of classical technologies to create authentic, sophisticated objects. For example, as part of the preparation for this project, she researched the production of mirrors, carpets and programming codes. Her "palette" thus brims with the widest array of materials, from "textile money" (hand-made carpets and tapestries), to sculptures, drawings, prints, interactive installations, wall paintings and mirrors.

Is the concept of value possible in a world without money? Do we find ourselves at the limit point of economic development? What does the future hold for the capitalist world? Before us is not just a social and anthropological undertaking, but a complex creative blueprint, laying out plans for a system whose assembly hinges on the idea of constant destruction and renewal.

Olga Shishko


Maison DELLOS
MOSCOW - PARIS - NEW YORK

Artwin Gallery Москва Тверской бульвар 26 стр. 1
www.artwingallery.com info@artwingallery.com
+79163878544

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This Moscow gallery was founded in June 2012 by sisters Madina and Marianna Gogova. Before opening its own space in February 2015, Artwin Gallery organized exhibitions in museum venues, actively supporting the artists on its roster, and participating in contemporary art fairs. The gallery's main objectives are to create a platform for dialogue between artists of different countries and generations, and to promote emerging Russian art both at home and abroad. Artwin Gallery's focus on Russian artists, its bold approach to curating and exhibition-making, and its in-depth understanding of the art market in Russia and CIS countries, allows the gallery to create extraordinary projects across a wide range of styles and genres of contemporary art: from painting, sculpture, photography and installation, to video and multimedia projects. Artwin Gallery has participated in multiple international exhibitions and biennales, including the IV Moscow International Biennale of Young Art (with Dima Rebus and Liza Haust's project "Insomnia"), the Moscow Photography Salon, COSMOSCOW (September 2014), and the Artbat Fest, a festival of contemporary art in Almaty, just to name a few. The gallery also helps foster the growth of contemporary art through a series of lectures and round table discussions featuring art world professionals, as well as its contributions to other educational initiatives, like the gallery's collaboration with the Turandot Academy. Artwin Gallery currently works with artists Olga Kisseleva, Olya Kroitor, Oksana Mas, Dima Rebus, Liza Haust and Katya Shkolnik. Its new space measures 130 square meters in the historic center of Moscow, in the building of Maison Dellos, a strategic partner of the gallery.



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