

GRAD



Irina Korina. Special project for MANIFESTA 10, St-Petersburg, 2014
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IRINA KORINA SOLO EXHIBITION

DESTINED TO BE HAPPY

2 December 2016 – 28 February 2017

Private View Thursday 1 December 2016

GRAD, 3-4A Little Portland St, London W1W 7JB

www.grad-london.com

GRAD is proud to be collaborating with Irina Korina to present her first solo exhibition in London *Destined to be Happy*. The Moscow-based artist will be taking over the gallery and will transform the space into an immersive environment by creating a site-specific audio-visual installation.

Building on her training as a set-designer and exploring multiple social discrepancies between intrinsic and extrinsic well-being, Korina has created six sculptural characters ranging from Love to Rainbow that are placed in the unconventional, even hostile, habitat. The audience will experience the macabre reality of Korina's greyscale domain, punctuated with characters whose emotional relatability is laid bare for scrutiny. What were once symbols of comfort have been stripped of their warmth, forcing the participants to confront their own socio-political complacency.

Juxtaposing concepts of global and local, epic and colloquial, physical and virtual, Korina continues her anthropological research into the paradoxes of human behavior. Through her pseudo-monumental and deceitfully joyous installations Korina addresses urgent issues such as collective memory, cultural and social history and challenges our traditional perceptions of everyday routine.

The title of the exhibition *Destined to be Happy* refers to the British documentary directed by Sergey Miroshnichenko. Following in the tradition of the original UK Up Series, this documentary, initiated in 1987, revisits a group from the now former Soviet Union and tracks their development against a backdrop of social and political change every seven years.



Irina Korina. Preparatory drawing for the Rainbow character, 2016, felt pen on paper
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Born in 1977 in Moscow to the family of a nuclear physicist and a chemist, Irina Korina is the descendant of generations of renowned artists who specialized in icon painting at the Palekh region of Russia for several centuries. Graduating as a set designer from the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS) in 2000, Korina later studied contemporary art at the Valand Academy of Fine Arts in Gothenburg, Sweden, and at the Vienna Academy of Arts in Austria. During her studies, Korina continuously worked in theater and film while at the same time presenting her works independently, developing the overwhelming environments and spaces that would form her body of work.

Having exhibited in Russia and Europe since the late 90s, Korina premiered her work in the United States in 2012 to great critical acclaim at the Scaramouche Gallery in New York. Her recent exhibitions have included solo shows at the Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Stella Art Foundation, both in Moscow, as well as recent group shows at the Saatchi Gallery in London and Kielhaus in Berlin. Korina has also participated in group exhibitions in the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in Moscow; Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci in Prato; and the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen in Antwerp.

Her trademark installations of large-scale sculptures weave narratives not based on any specific storyline, instead gaining formation through the interplay of textures, materials and scale. Korina favours cheap, disposable and often industrially produced materials for her works, ranging from textiles and plastic to plasticine.

It is through this prosaic composition that her work recalls the décor and decay of the ordinary Russian home, providing a strong social commentary on the everyday Russian reality with a conceivably more global resonance. While her works may seem bold and dramatic in purpose, they transcend the preoccupations of whatever environment they are stationed in, be it a small gallery or an extravagant exhibition centre. The numerous allusions in her installations aim to convey the emotional attachment of certain time periods, exploring the often uncomfortable zone between socio-economic despair and existential dread.

Irina Korina's work has been widely recognized in Russia as well as internationally. She has been among the group of artists representing Russia in both the 53rd and 55th Venice Biennale in 2009 and 2013 respectively. Korina is also a recipient of both the Soratnik prize for contemporary art professionals (for 2006 and 2009), and of the Innovation Contemporary Art Award (for 2008 and 2014). Her work has garnered praise of many reputable publications. In 2016 she was featured in *Sleek Magazines* 'Ones to Watch' segment, with *Frieze* remarking that Korina's sculptures demonstrate 'a distinct style and an intuitive ability to define spaces', while *e-flux* labeled her 'a master of the spatial and monumental format'. A recent publication by renowned Moscow-based art-critic and theorist Irina Kulik positions Irina Korina's works in the context of installations by Louise Bourgeois, environments by Yayoi Kusama and rooms by Irina Nakhova, thus underlying her strong connection with the leading feminist artists of the XX Century.



Irina Korina. Preparatory drawing for the Heart character, 2016, felt pen on paper
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Irina Korina. Preparatory drawing for the Globe character, 2016, felt pen on paper
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About GRAD

GRAD shines a contemporary light on the culture of Russia and Eastern Europe. Our purpose is to share specialist knowledge in ways that capture the imagination, inspire creativity and spark new ideas. GRAD Academy puts ideas centre stage through collaborations with leading institutions and experts worldwide to present exhibitions, lectures and screenings that explore cultural and social history. GRAD Lab provides a platform for experimentation in the now that showcases cross-artform projects such as artist-curated exhibitions, performances and specially-commissioned new work. GRAD Sputnik is an international initiative to travel our programme around the world through strategic partnerships with renowned arts organisations. GRAD is a not-for-profit organization established in 2013.



Irina Korina. Preparatory drawing for the Fire character, 2016, felt pen on paper
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Irina Korina. Preparatory drawing for the Comet character, 2016, felt pen on paper
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IRINA KORINA

Born in 1977 in Moscow.

Selected solo exhibitions:

2016 – Humiliated and Elated, XL Gallery, Moscow

2015 – ArtExperiment(with Alexandr Povzner), Garage Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow

2014 – Scales of desire, PLATO, Ostrava

2013 – Chapel, BAM, New York

Selected group exhibitions:

2016 – Interaction: Contemporary Artists Respond to MMOMA Collection, MMOMA, Moscow

2015 – Balagan, Kuehlhaus, Berlin | HOPE, Special project of 6-th Moscow Biennale, Moscow | Her, CCA ZARYA, Vladivostok | POST POP: EAST MEETS WEST, Saatchi gallery, London

2012 – In an Absolute Disorder, Arts Santa Monica, Barcelona | Russian Povera, PAC, Milan

2009 – Russian pavilion, Venice biennale, Venice 2009 - Comma13, Bloomberg Space, London

2009 – Installations, Museum Folkwang at RWE Turm, Essen

Awards:

2015 – Innovation Art Prize, Visual Art Category, prize-winner

2006, 2009 – Associate Art Prize, Visual Art Category, prize winner.