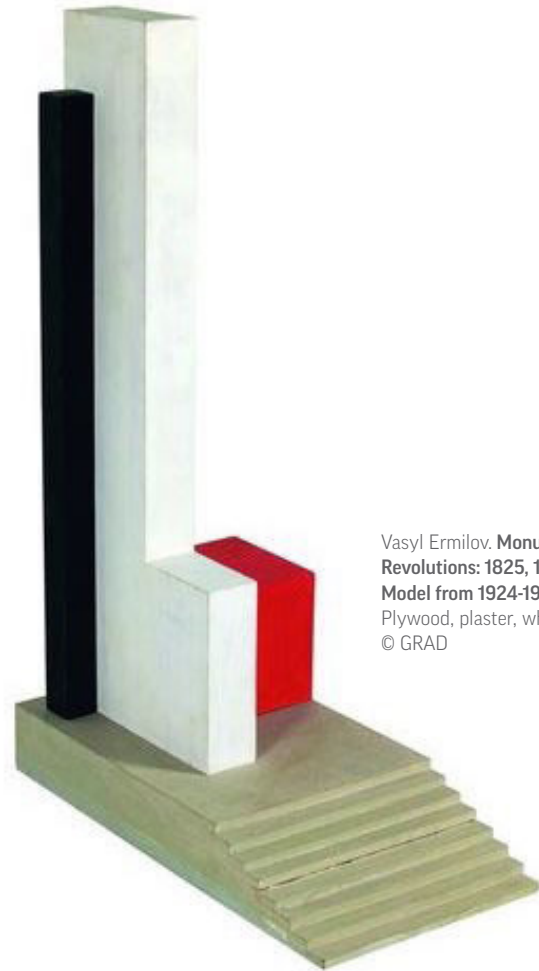


# POSTPONED FUTURES

Curated by Nikita Kadan



Vasyl Ermilov. **Monument to Three Revolutions: 1825, 1905 and 1917.**  
Model from 1924-1925,  
Plywood, plaster, white paint, 2017  
© GRAD

**Private View 25 April**  
**26 April – 24 June 2017**  
**GRAD, 3-4A Little Portland St, London W1W 7JB**  
**[www.grad-london.com](http://www.grad-london.com)**

GRAD, in collaboration with *waterside contemporary*, is proud to present *Postponed Futures*, an exhibition that offers an alternative perspective on early twentieth century Ukrainian avant-garde practices through the lens of contemporary Ukrainian art. Curated by Kiev-based artist Nikita Kadan, the exhibition includes historical works by twentieth century masters Oleksandr Bohomazov, Vasyl Ermilov, Maria Synyakova and Oleksandr Khvostenko-Khvostov, alongside collages by Lada Nakonechna, a film by Mykola Ridnyi and a sculpture by Nikita Kadan, inspired by 'Monument to three Revolutions' by Vasyl Ermilov.



Oleksandr Bohomazov, **Glubochitsa**, oil on canvas, 1914  
© James Butterwick



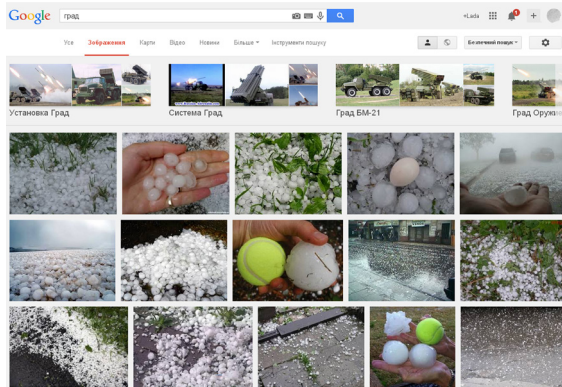
Nikita Kadan, **Observations on Archives**  
Paper, coal, black soil, 2015  
© Nikita Kadan



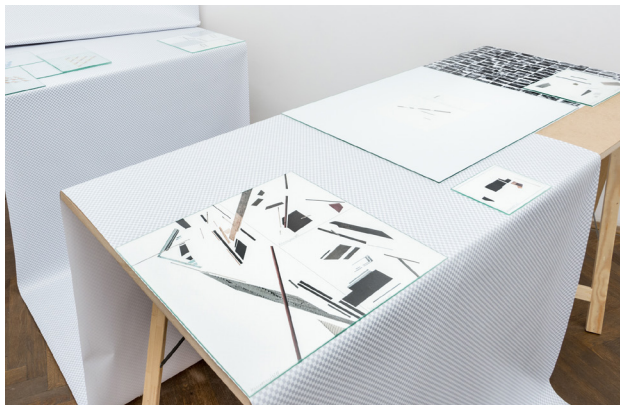
Mykola Ridnyi, **Grey horses**, HD Video, 2016  
© Mykola Ridnyi

By selecting these works and assigning them the categories 'revolution' and 'political imagination', Kadan juxtaposes the idealistic, future-oriented work of the avant-garde with the impulse of contemporary artists to confront the present. The display becomes a dialogue between these two artistic generations – the '*futurists*' and the '*nofuturists*' as the contemporary works respond to the avant-garde's fixation with progress, and desperation for change.

The exhibition also provides a new platform for the understudied and seldom-exhibited work of the Ukrainian avant-garde, a generation cruelly repressed during the 1930s. *Postponed Futures* encourages visitors to reinterpret these twentieth century works through the lens of the contemporary art presented in the exhibition. By combining art across generations in this way, *Postponed Futures* presents a history of Ukraine itself and its political and social upheavals over the past hundred years.



Lada Nakonechna, **Hail (Grad)**, photograph, 2015  
© Lada Nakonechna



Lada Nakonechna, **Merge visible**, photograph, cut out, 2015  
© Lada Nakonechna



Vasyl Ermilov, **10th Anniversary of October Exhibition of Book and Press of Ukraine, 1927**  
©Vladimir Tsarenkov

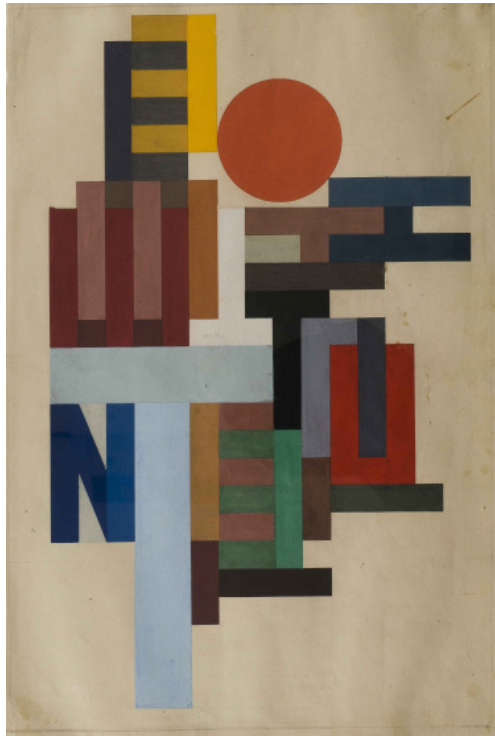
## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

*Postponed Futures* displays the work by the most prolific artists of the Ukrainian avant-garde and of three renowned and active contemporary artists. It attempts to view avant-garde through contemporary art – and, in turn, contemporary art through avant-garde.

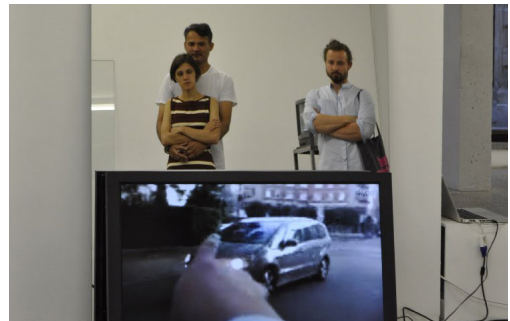
This exhibition is based on the firm belief that, in telling the history of the arts, one must also tell the history of society – therefore, this exhibition is also about Ukraine; the Ukraine of today and of a century ago.

It is not the aim of this exhibition to give a detailed academic overview of the Ukrainian avant-garde. The artists and the curator are certain that the definition of 'Ukrainian avant-garde' (derived from the broader 'Russian avant-garde' which unites any avant-garde art practices on the territories of the former Russian Empire or Soviet republics) is totally justified. Nevertheless, the practices of this particular strain of avant-garde require both greater visibility and a diversification of views on it, including its interpretations by contemporary artists. It will, perhaps, take a significant amount of time to supplement the lack of serious academic publications on and exhibitions of the Ukrainian avant-garde – but we must begin with what we have.

At the same time, we recall the universal, international nature of the artistic avant-garde and its close connection with radical, liberating political movements. We realise that the existence of 'Russian', 'Ukrainian,' or any other national avant-garde is a consequence of the incomplete



Vasyl Ermilov, **Composition with Capital Letters**, 1915  
©Vladimir Tsarenkov



Lada Nakonechna, **Hail (Grad 2)**, performance, 2015  
© Lada Nakonechna

fulfilment of the avant-garde intention, and that art history is very much beholden to the realpolitik of a divided world. Still, while the 'Russian avant-garde' exists, we must insist on a distinct 'Ukrainian' one. The latter was repressed in the 1930s with particular cruelty, as a result of a return to a centralised and authoritarian form of rule in an inversion of the earlier soviet policy of 'Ukrainisation'. This memory lays the foundation for our exhibition and evolves among other issues through the context of an ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Today is a time of crisis of political imagination. Where such imagination is present its ability to consider and plan a different social structure clashes with the present negativity and the joy of desperation – it introduces the possibility of a revolution.

If the artists of the historical avant-garde frequently turned to the planning of a new type of social interaction, if their oeuvre had a paradigm of reaching the future, then one of the defining qualities of contemporary art is the absence of a future, 'nofuturism'. Not to plan a 'better tomorrow', but to persevere through conflict, to stand with dignity in the face of history, to persist – *Postponed Futures* presents a contemporary response to the avant-garde's fixation with the future, since they could not wait for it.

All the works by Ukrainian avant-garde artists were generously lent by London-based collectors James Butterwick and Vladimir Tsarenkov.

**About the Curator**

Nikita Kadan was born 1982 in Kiev, Ukraine, where he lives and works today. He is a member of the artist group R.E.P. (Revolutionary Experimental Space, since 2004) and Co-founder and member of the Hudrada (Artistic committee, 2008) curatorial and activist group. He often works in interdisciplinary collaborations - with architects, human rights activists and sociologists. Kadan's work has been exhibited internationally, including exhibitions at CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (2012), ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe (2013), Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2013), Castello di Rivoli (2013), 56th and 55th Biennale di Venezia (2015, 2013), 14th Istanbul Biennale (2015), and "The School of Kyiv" Biennale (2015).

**About GRAD**

GRAD is a non-profit cultural organisation for initiatives and communication, bringing new insights into Eastern European art, design and culture through exhibitions, publications, live events, collaborations and digital engagement. We act as a social and visual platform to encourage creative dialogues and question long established preconceptions of Russian and post-Soviet culture.

**About waterside contemporary**

Established by Pierre d'Alancaise in 2008, waterside contemporary supports determined and engaged art practices that pertain to or stem from political periphery. An international commitment allows the gallery to foreground current and historical overseas debates in a London context. Waterside hosted Nikita Kadan's first UK solo exhibition 'Limits of Responsibility' in 2015.

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