

HAYHILLGALLERY

MASTER WORKS AND CONTEMPORARY ART

PRESS RELEASE

Oleg Prokofiev (1928-1998)

'From East to West'

31st March- 26th April 2014



Russian Landscape, Green & Lilac 1966



Bird Composition, Bronze 1992

This spring, Hay Hill Gallery is proud to be presenting a retrospective of paintings and sculpture from artist Oleg Prokofiev. Featuring over sixty works, the show brings together two major stages of his life; before and after he left Russia. This exciting exhibition leads us from the 1960s USSR period into the popular 'white-on-white' canvases of the 1970s, his revolutionary sculptures and last paintings. An exclusive new biography will be published in association with this exhibition, exploring the paintings, poetry and sculpture of the artist- as well as the influence of Soviet Russia and his father's music.

Oleg Prokofiev, son of the legendary composer Sergei Prokofiev, wrote that music inspired in him 'a wave of some wonderful energy... a poetic or artistic impulse'. Taking the musical form of free expression within set patterns, Prokofiev chose unexpected tones- especially in his later work- exactly as his father used 'wrong notes' as a chromatic twist to his compositions. The effect is an atonal shift that resonates visually with the audience long afterwards. The luminous quality of the earlier white period is still very much present in the later paintings, the colours now fully burst into life. Displaying a whole spectrum of feeling, the leaping arpeggios of Prokofiev's brushstrokes simultaneously embody order and chaos, oscillating between an attraction to structure and a need to destroy it. The artist controls the tempo and patterns with his brush as though he is conducting an orchestra.

The desire to find artistic synthesis between painting and the plastic arts led Prokofiev to a series of sculptural works, following single lines through loops and tangles. Combining an enthusiasm for the new with a stubborn refusal to stay in a 'safe' zone, the works show off the artist's endless

fascination with relationships between rhythm, time and space. Using wood and a variety of paints he created a kind of solid music with these energetic and original works. Meandering colours stretch and bend, keeping strict time in shapes. Crowned with bright plumes of reds and blues, the sculptures sit around like oddly angled birds of paradise. Each piece marks significant stages of the artist's life, lucid and immediate, ultimately transient. They are a testament to Oleg Prokofiev's irrepressible spirit, his strength in forgetting about past and future- the belief that the only reality is now.

http://www.hayhill.com/docs/prokofiev_book.html

ENDS

Born in 1928, Oleg Prokofiev lived in Paris until moving with his family to Moscow at the age of seven. His career as an artist began at sixteen, attending the Moscow School of Art from 1944-49. On completing his studies, Prokofiev worked in the studio of the painter Robert Falk, leaving in 1952 to work for the Institute of Art History in Moscow. There he studied and published his writing, specialising in the ancient arts of India and South-East Asia.

During Prokofiev's lifetime he exhibited worldwide, including the UK, Germany, Russia, France, and the U.S. As an artist, he was both excited about the future of Art as well as being remarkably informed about its history. During a visit to New York in 1977, Prokofiev experienced the works of Rothko, Still, Motherwell, Barnett Newman, and Helen Frankenthaler, and these continued to influence his own work throughout the 1980's. He began creating organic constructivist sculptures, and over a short period of time his paintings also began to change. His brightly saturated line paintings and skyline sculptures of the 1980's demonstrate a definite departure from the greys, browns, and masking white works of the 60's and early 70's.

Oleg Prokofiev died in 1998 aged 69. Since then, his popular abstract compositions have been exhibited in the collection of the renowned Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. His work is also in the collections of the Lehbruck Museum of Modern Sculpture, Germany; the Zimmerli Art Museum, USA; the Leeds City Art Gallery, UK; and the MART Museum, Italy.

Selected Lifetime Exhibitions

1997	Glinka Museum of Music, Moscow
1994	Cadogan Contemporary, London
1993	W. Lehbruck Museum of Modern Sculpture, Germany
1991	Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum
1989	Sue Rankin Gallery, London La Mama Galeria, New York
1988	Burg Zweifel, Germany '100 Years of British Art' at Leeds City Art Gallery
1987	Dortmund Opera House and Matthew Scott Gallery, Miami
1985	Galerie Edition Beauclair and Theater am Gartnerplatz, Munich
1984	Old Vic Theatre, London Galerie Johanna Ricard, Nurnberg
1983	ACG, London

Notes to Editors: Hay Hill Gallery, located on Baker Street, represents a number of internationally recognised contemporary artists. The exhibition will be held alongside a sculpture collection which features works by Gianfranco Meggiato, Massimiliano & Alfonso Cacchiarelli, Graham High, Eleanor Cardozo, Richard Minns, Palolo Valdes, Andy Cheese, Ian Edwards and Nicola Godden.

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