

# *Lenin Lives*



*Lenin Lives*

Publication ©2017

Essays by Roman Utkin and Maria Silina

Artist texts by Lia Newman or Roman Utkin, with assistance from artists

This publication was produced in conjunction with *Lenin Lives*, at the Van Every/Smith Galleries, Davidson College, August 17–October 6, 2017.

**Van Every/Smith Galleries**

Davidson College

315 North Main Street

Davidson, North Carolina 28035-7117

[davidsoncollegeartgalleries.org](http://davidsoncollegeartgalleries.org)

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form without the prior written permission of the publisher.

ISBN: 9781-890573-22-5

**Curators:** Lia Newman and Roman Utkin

**Translation of Silina's essay:** Roman Utkin

**Editors:** Charles Gershman and Chris Vitiello

**Design:** Graham McKinney

**cover:**

Davide Monteleone, *The April Theses*, photograph, 2017

40 1/4 x 48 in.

© Davide Monteleone

VAN  
EVERY | SMITH  
GALLERIES  
AT DAVIDSON COLLEGE

***Lenin Lives***



## Acknowledgements

Nearly three years ago, Amanda Ewington, Professor and Chair of Davidson College's Russian Studies Department, initiated a campus-wide commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. The Van Every/Smith Galleries staff immediately began planning our role in this project, along with Roman Utkin, Assistant Professor of Russian Studies, who authored the idea for our collaboration and co-curation — an exhibition entitled *Lenin Lives*. It is our hope that the exhibition interrogates the continued fascination with the leader of the Russian Revolution — as well as his iconic image — and explores timely topics such as the rise of demagogues worldwide and the development of a cult of personality among political leaders.

*Lenin Lives*, the brochure, and all related programming would not have been possible without the support of the Bacca Humanities Development Fund, the Herb Jackson and Laura Grosch Gallery Endowment, the Dean Rusk International Studies Program, Bank of America Lecture Series, the Department of Art, the Russian Studies Department, and Davidson College Friends of the Arts. We owe many thanks to Roman Utkin — he's been an enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and invaluable collaborator. We also appreciate his contribution of an introductory

essay to this brochure and his help in translation as well. We are grateful to Maria Silina for her contextual essay, "*Immortal Ilyich*" as an *Industry: Practices of Commemorating Vladimir Lenin in the USSR*. We also thank all of the individuals, galleries, and museums who have assisted with the exhibition and its related programming including Chris Alexander, the Cement Translation Collective, Amanda Ewington, Charles Gershman, Nancy Greystone and Jerry Pomerantz, Jill Harris, Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, Michael Jolly, the Larry Rivers Foundation, Maggie McCarthy, Graham McKinney, Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, Nailya Alexander Gallery, Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Kate Nation, Rebecca Pempek, Megan Pottenger, Proyecto Paralelo Gallery, Meg Sawicki, Vadim Shneyder, Chris Vitiello, Wright Museum of Art at Beloit College, and Del Zogg. And last, but certainly not least, we wish to thank the exhibiting artists. Without their work — and their interest in exploring Lenin and the concept of revolution — this project would not have been possible.

**LIA NEWMAN**, Director/Curator

**MASHA VLASOVA**, *Squishy Lenin*, Rubber, 4 x 2 x 2 in. each.

©Masha Vlasova. Photo by David Ramsey.

# Lenin Lives:

## AN INTRODUCTION

by Roman Utkin

The avant-garde poet Vladimir Mayakovsky's famous lines about Lenin — who lived, lives, and will live — precipitated one of the most enduring and spectacular personality cults in modern history: the worship of the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Lenin. Written shortly after Lenin's death in 1924, Mayakovsky's poem is an incantation against death itself. The poem's epigraph is a powerful imperative: "Death — don't dare!" Mayakovsky proclaims that although Lenin's body might be in a mausoleum, his body of work will live on through his army of ardent young followers. And yet throughout the poem the words "Lenin lived, Lenin lives, Lenin will live" are repeated so obsessively that they betray vulnerability and even fear about the viability of the fledgling socialist state.

In 1924, the future of the Soviet Union, then a pariah nation exhausted by the bloody civil war, was anything but certain. After Lenin's death, the brutal struggle between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky over the leadership of the Communist Party threatened to undermine the Party itself. Lenin, now dead, was arguably more needed than ever. Artists and politicians alike recognized the symbolic significance of Lenin's public image. In his poem, Mayakovsky envisioned Lenin's ideas as igniting global revolutions

**LENIN —  
LIVED.  
LENIN —  
LIVES.  
LENIN —  
WILL LIVE.**

*Vladimir Mayakovsky*

and reshaping the world forever, while prominent Bolsheviks focused on preserving Lenin's physical body as a means of enshrining the legitimacy of the Communist project and the USSR. As the myth of the immortal Lenin commenced, the image of the October Revolution's iconic leader became, not ironically, larger-than-life. For the rest of the tumultuous twentieth century, Lenin came to embody the idea of Communism and the Revolution itself.

One hundred years after the Russian Revolution we borrow the title of our exhibition, *Lenin Lives*, from Mayakovsky to explore the lives of Lenin's image in contemporary art. Although the ideological charge of Leninism lost much of its potency after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Lenin continues to attract cultural producers across the world. This exhibition displays the metaphoric potential of Lenin's public image today by probing the tension between the Revolution's promise of a better world and the trauma wreaked in the process of fulfilling this promise.

Many prominent political leaders have complex biographies full of contradictions, but Lenin's figure is extreme in its simultaneous capacities as demigod and monster. He is admired for laying the

foundation of the "land of workers and peasants" on the ruins of the Russian Empire. He is cursed for giving rise to a brutal regime with little regard for human rights. Yet there is a certain duality in the posthumous Lenin as well. As Alexei Yurchak argues, Lenin exists in two incarnations: the carefully embalmed body on display in the mausoleum, one of the most important landmarks in Moscow's Red Square; and the abstract notion of him meant for the political gaze. Yurchak underscores the intersection of matter and meaning in the creation of Lenin's public image and links the biochemical process of preserving his body with the changes in Soviet and Russian political life: "the underlying meaning of the work directed at Lenin's body was to ensure that the party-sovereign remained perpetually embodied and anchored in foundational truth despite all internal crises of the party organization, purges of its members, denunciation of its leaders, and turns in its policy."<sup>1</sup> The appearance of Lenin's body conceals a fraught dialectic of form and content: while Lenin is seemingly unchanged since the day of his death, there is perpetual dynamism to maintaining his body. The dynamism in representing Lenin's image in art continues today.

The fourteen artists in the exhibition at the Van Every Gallery experiment with canonical images of Lenin in varying media and instill them with new meaning. Unlike the Soviet depictions of Lenin that were sanctioned by the Party and produced to communicate a

<sup>1</sup> Alexei Yurchak, "Bodies of Lenin: The Hidden Science of Communist Sovereignty." *Representations* 129 (2015): 147.

**VICTORIA LOMASKO, *Lenin Isn't for Sale*, 2017, Digital Print, 17 1/4 x 11 7/8 in.**

©Victoria Lomasko



single, unquestionable truth about the leader's greatness (an overview of those art practices is provided in Maria Silina's essay in this catalogue), the art gathered in *Lenin Lives* compels the viewer to look beyond the familiar. These Lenins subvert propaganda and instead prompt questions about history, society, art, and ideology.

*Lenin Coca Cola* (1980), by Alexander Kosolapov, a blunt critique of the Soviet ideology industry, is executed in the artist's signature Sots Art style, also known as the Soviet Pop Art. In a related way, Andy Warhol's haunting screenprint *Lenin* (1987) hints at the degree to which Lenin's image has become commonplace, a part of mass culture. At the same time, Warhol seems to reclaim the leader's popular image and render him an enigmatic celebrity. Leonid Sokov in his *Lenin with Mark of Gorby* (1991) engages the Sots Art aesthetic to reference the impact of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, on Lenin and, by extension, the state of imminent collapse that marked the USSR at that time.

In contrast to the artists working in variants of Pop Art and often relying on irony in representing the mythologized image of Lenin, a large group of young artists in the exhibition, who came of age just before or after the USSR's collapse, approach Lenin and his legacy in a markedly different way. Those born in the Soviet Union, including Evgeniy Fiks, Victoria Lomasko, Masha Vlasova, and Liliya Zalevskaya, interrogate Lenin's personality cult as a means of finding meaning in the political and personal aspects of life today. Others, like Davide Monteleone and Dread Scott, tap into the material of the Russian Revolution to brush away the propaganda filters and reassert the Revolution's potential to inspire.

After all, had Lenin lived longer, the rest of the century could have developed differently. In the history of modern dictatorships, Lenin stands apart from figures like Hitler and Stalin not least because Lenin bears comparatively little responsibility for the bloodbath of the mid-twentieth century. Perhaps it is in this margin of doubt about an alternative course of history that we find space to engage with the historical potential of his image. However, Lenin can also be viewed as a provocative symbol of Russian imperial dominance. The frequency with which Lenin statues in Ukraine have been demolished recently reminds us of how explosive this symbol is.

The site of a toppled Lenin statue in Kyiv is available to us in a video of Cynthia Gutiérrez's installation *Inhabiting Shadows* (2017). In the artist's intervention, passersby are encouraged to climb up a staircase to the statue's now-vacant pedestal and experience what it was like to stand there, inhabiting the shadow of history. The long, single-file line of people ascending to and descending from the pedestal evokes the formal arrangement of Mayakovsky's poem; its composition of lines resembling a giant ladder. Although the participants in Gutiérrez's installation are hardly Mayakovskian Leninists, their casual curiosity underscores the remarkable longevity of Lenin's image even in its absence. The scaffolding that buttresses the statue's granite pedestal signifies the intersecting narrative structures of politics, history, and art that comprise Lenin's public image. *Lenin Lives* welcomes you to consider these structures as Davidson College marks the centennial of the Russian Revolution.

**LARRY RIVERS, *Lenin with a Tie*, 1972, lithograph, hand-worked unique with graphite and colored pencils, 9 x 12 in.**

Courtesy of the Larry Rivers Foundation.





## “Immortal Ilyich” as an Industry:

### PRACTICES OF COMMEMORATING VLADIMIR LENIN IN THE USSR

by Maria Silina

Russia is filled with an astonishing number of Lenin monuments, and mass-produced images of Lenin remain one of the most recognizable of Soviet symbols. In Moscow alone there are currently more than one hundred Lenin statues, while the amount of memorial plaques installed at the sites where Lenin lived, worked, delivered speeches, or merely passed by, is incalculable. In the Soviet Union the image of Lenin was widely disseminated: it permeated all areas of public life, from kindergarten parties to retirement celebrations. There are many photographs taken by travelers in the USSR, who encountered and captured the image of Lenin in the most unexpected places including the park where Max Penson photographed children playing chess under the gaze of a Lenin

#### **CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ, *Inhabiting Shadows***

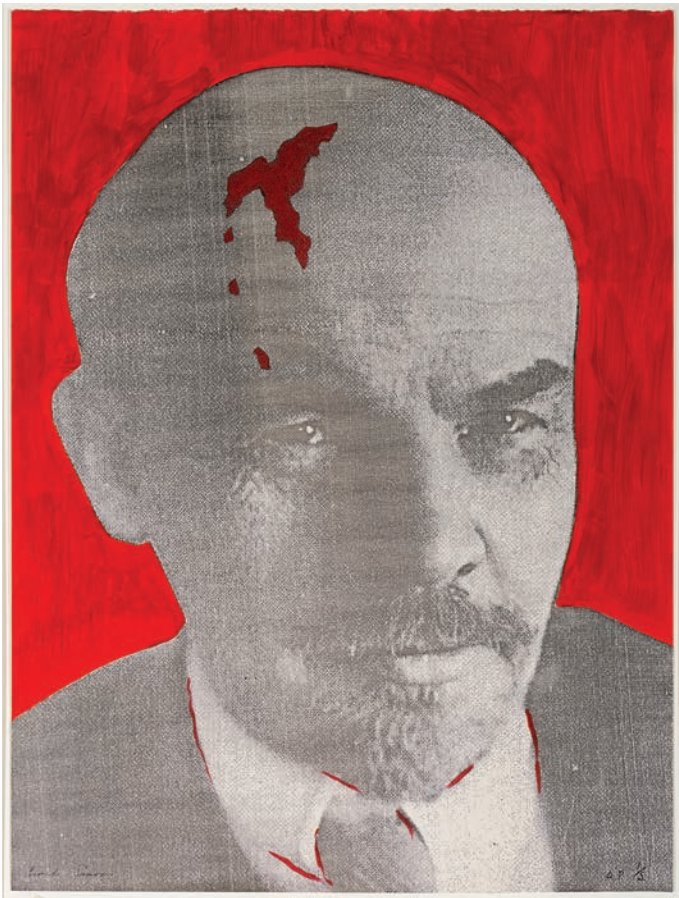
One of 700 letter-size prints depicting the fall of a Lenin sculpture in Kyiv. Found image (Photo by Mikhail Kalnitsky, [www.eveningkiev.com/article/20006](http://www.eveningkiev.com/article/20006)), altered by Gutiérrez. The work is part of the installation *Inhabiting Shadows*, documentation of the artist's intervention in which passersby were allowed to climb a set of stairs, step on the pedestal that previously held the statue of Lenin, and occupy the space for a few moments.

Courtesy of the Artist, Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, and Projecto Paralelo.

bust. Reproductions of Lenin's image — photos, oil portraits, and sculptures — could be found in every weekly newspaper, as well as in books and propaganda posters circulating in millions of copies.

In post-Soviet Russia, unlike in many other formerly socialist Eastern European states, there was no nationwide conversation about Communism and Lenin's impact on and connection to the country's past, its isolation, and political repressions. Soviet cultural heritage itself did not become an object of substantial criticism. A short period of physical and metaphysical iconoclastic activity against Soviet symbols in the early 1990s was followed first by obscurity and later by nostalgia for and valorization of Soviet traditions. Today, the ubiquitous Lenin monuments, memorial plaques, and memorial sites are not emphasized in any special way and are almost invisible, but they nevertheless constitute the memorial texture of a city.

Despite opposition to conventional ways of honoring the deceased leader, right after his death in January 1924, the cult of Lenin was spreading quickly and widely. This making of the “immortal Ilyich” narrative was marked by consistency, omnipresence, and determination. The first steps towards Lenin's canonization were taken well



before Lenin's death. Lenin's writings, papers, and various memorabilia, such as paintings, photos, and his private letters, were gathered for a museum exhibition in May 1923, when Lenin was still alive but gravely ill after a stroke. By the time of his death there was no visible hesitation or disorder in arranging his commemoration. A special task force, the Commission of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR for the Immortalization of the Memory of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov-Lenin, was set up to arrange Lenin's funeral and organize necessary memorial events.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin died on January 21, 1924 and within two days the former capital of the Russian Empire, Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg), was renamed Leningrad — the City of Lenin. The town of his birth, Simbirsk, was renamed Ulyanovsk the same year as an homage to Lenin's family name. In five days, it was decided to build a wooden crypt in Moscow (which preceded the current granite mausoleum) and a number of monuments in the largest Soviet cities. In six days, Moscow municipal authorities launched a fundraising campaign to finance the production and installation of new monuments. Those initiatives developed in tandem with other commemorative and propagandistic measures, such as the resolutions to publish Lenin's complete works in twenty volumes, to establish the Lenin Foundation, and to arrange the so-called

**LEONID SOKOV, *Lenin with Mark of Gorby*, 1991**  
Acrylic and ink on paper, 33 1/8 x 24 7/8 in.

Collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University,  
Durham, North Carolina. Gift of John Schwartz.

©Leonid Sokov. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.

Lenin Corners, spaces dedicated to displaying Lenin's portrait and Revolution insignia in the common rooms of schools, factories, and other public institutions. In May 1924, just four months after his death, the first Lenin Museum was opened in Moscow.

As mourning was being managed across the country, it was decided that the appearance of Lenin's image should be regulated. In a special publication called *On a Monument to Lenin* (1924), the prominent Soviet diplomat Leonid Krasin outlined guidelines for representing Lenin in art and emphasized that his portrait must be strictly realist, with no room for stylizing the deceased leader's features.<sup>2</sup> Krasin justified this approach by stressing the need to preserve in art Lenin's extraordinary personal charm. Two basic principles were invoked in ensuring that the leader's portrait was of the highest realist quality: artists were expected, first, to base their work on available photographs of Lenin and, second, to be advised by people who had been personally acquainted with Lenin. Special commissions were promptly set up to supervise portrait production on the local level in Leningrad, Ukraine, and Transcaucasia. The special commissions were obliged to have a board member who had known Lenin personally in order to carry out their censorship functions successfully.<sup>3</sup>

The production of authorized photographic portraits was also launched in the 1920s. The first photo album containing pictures of Lenin and his family appeared in 1927, with captions in French and Russian. That album contained one hundred approved images, which significantly restricted the number of visual sources for artists. A new album of Lenin's images was not released until 1970, the year of the centennial of Lenin's birth. The 343 images

in this subsequent catalogue were drawn from rare photographs and film stills that had recorded the slightest movement and provided the most pleasing angles of Lenin's face and figure, along with extensive descriptions of his appearance.

Accuracy in depicting Lenin was also ensured via the establishment of formal workshops for manufacturing Lenin monuments. Private sculpture-making initiatives sprung up immediately following Lenin's death. The modernist sculptor Sergei Merkurov was among the pioneers in proposing to mass-produce sculptural copies of Lenin and supply them to the new socialist society. The State Publishing House, *Gosizdat*, supported Merkurov's proposal and handled the marketing and advertising of the new statues and busts. Eventually, what began as Merkurov's private initiative became one of the most successful and enduring commemorative enterprises. A semi-private organization called *Vsekokhudozhnik*, the All-Russian Cooperative Association of Artists, was established in 1929 and set the production of Lenin's public image on a national scale.<sup>4</sup> By 1991 there were approximately 7,000 public Lenin monuments in Russia alone.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aleksandr Shefov, *Leniniana v sovetskom izobrazitel'nom iskusstve* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986), 82–89.

<sup>2</sup> L. Krasin, E. Gollerbakh, I. Fomin, L. Il'in, Ia. Tugendkhold, *O pamiatnike Leninu*. (Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1924): 21–33.

<sup>3</sup> *Khudozhestvennaia zhizn' Sovetskoi Rossii: 1917–1932. Sobytiia, fakty, kommentarii, Sbornik materialov i dokumentov*, ed. V.P. Tolstoi (Moscow: Galart, 2010): 191–192.

<sup>4</sup> G.A. Yankovkaya, *Iskusstvo, den'gi i politika: sovetskii khudozhnik v gody pozdnego stalinizma* (Perm: Perm State University Press, 2007), 144–165.

<sup>5</sup> <http://leninstatues.ru/skolko>.



As Walter Benjamin argued in his landmark essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936), the technical reproduction of a work of art has none of the authority of the original; a reproduced work, moreover, has an independence from tradition, ritual, and place, and so its existence is based only on politics. Politics has the power to create new traditions and set aside old ones. Benjamin compared the dissemination of the reproductions with architectural phenomena: building space is something that we get used to through constant repetition.<sup>6</sup> This was exactly the case with the Lenin commemoration in the Soviet Union. The state-sponsored propaganda system easily distributed images and easily disconnected them from local or recent political traditions. This system, comprising the network of reproduced art objects and artistic practice, was unprecedented in the 1920s when the commemorative industry was in its initial stages. The resulting method of reproduction — anonymous, unified, and mechanical — was applied to operations at *Vsekokhudozhnik* and was considered a new socialist method of creating non-hierarchical and, even more importantly, non-exploitative socialist culture. This cultural modality was called “culture of the masses,” and throughout the

<sup>6</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts*, ed. Francis Francina (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 301–302.

**MASHA VLASOVA**, *Lenin Balancing*, 2015  
Polylactic acid and wood, 10 x 5 1/2 x 3 in.

©Masha Vlasova. Photo by David Ramsey.

Soviet period it was used as a counterexample to the capitalist mass culture.

The process of (re)producing Lenins was codified and straightforward. Standard contracts with set prices were in place for the artists commissioned to produce models for mass copying in accordance with the needs of the state. Before going into production, the original artwork went through a formal approval process. Notably, artists producing Lenin’s images were compensated particularly well. The major commissioners of the mass-produced statues were big factories and industrial plants: statues of Party leaders served as visual symbols of state control in public spaces, such as squares, railroad stations, and workers’ clubs.

In the face of the ubiquity of mass-produced Lenin statues, there is no singular, universal Lenin statue. Although the Soviet authorities sought to create one architectural monument that would serve as the main Lenin memorial in Moscow, aside from the mausoleum, none of the many ambitious projects was realized, from the Stalinist Palace of the Soviets in the 1930s to the enormous Lenin monument in the Lenin Hills in the 1950s and 1960s. Lenin museums, however, were an exception. The architectural *Leniniana* commenced in 1924 with the construction of the first mausoleum in Moscow, designed by Alexei Shchusev. Special commemorative Lenin Corners began appearing as early as 1923: for example at the Moscow Agricultural and Domestic-Industrial Expo.<sup>7</sup> By the 1960s and 1970s, the network of Lenin Corners, memorial rooms, and museums was omnipresent. The towns of Lenin’s birth and death were designated as symbolic

museum sites and massive memorial complexes opened in Ulyanovsk in 1970 and in Gorki Leninskie in 1987. In the 1980s local branches of the central Lenin Museum opened in Samara (then Kuibyshev), Kazan, Almaty (Alma-Ata), Krasnoyarsk, and Bishkek (Frunze). Lenin museums were supported abroad as well, in Helsinki (opened in 1946), Paris (1955), and Ulaanbaatar (1978). In 1987, of 1,800 Soviet museums, 200 were dedicated to political leaders, of which over fifty were Lenin museums.<sup>8</sup>

After Perestroika, there was a period of reevaluation of Lenin’s public image under the assumption that the entrenched Soviet functionaries distorted the original. That search for Lenin’s relevance prompted the return of the rhetoric of “immortal Ilyich” and the greater integration of Lenin’s image into high- and low-brow cultures.<sup>9</sup> The conceptualist artists practicing so-called Sots Art, the Soviet analog of Pop Art, such as Komar and Melamid, Leonid Sokov, and Alexander Kosolapov, sought to convey a sense of ideological overproduction and saturation, repurposing socialist iconographical clichés in an absurdist manner in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the new millennium those clichés resurfaced again, this time not ironically, but in the process of rethinking the Soviet political and cultural legacy in contemporary Russia.

<sup>7</sup> Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 126–128.

<sup>8</sup> E.G. Rozanov and V.I. Reviakin, *Arhitektura muzeev V.I. Lenina* (Moscow: Stroiizdat, 1986), 26–76; 90–182.

<sup>9</sup> A.A. Boiko “Sotsial’no-politicheskii avtorskii plakat 1980-kh godov i iskusstvo sots-arta: osobennosti, obshchee i razlichii,” in *Neofitsial’noe iskusstvo v SSSR. 1950–1980-e gody*, ed. A.K. Florikovskaia, et al (Moscow: Buksmart, 2014), 361–370.





**CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ, *Inhabiting Shadows*, 2016**  
 Documentation of temporary intervention conformed by metal scaffolding staircase that allows people to ascend the pedestal where Lenin's statue once stood in Kyiv, Ukraine. Installation includes video, 80 slides photographed by Valeriy Miloserdov and Sergeev Dima, and 700 letter-size prints, Dimensions variable.

Courtesy of the Artist, Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, and Proyecto Paralelo.

Today, the frequently seen street art that plays on the semiotic ambiguity of Lenin's image seems to repurpose Soviet iconography by collapsing the mythologized status of Lenin to restore its critical potential. For instance, in Yekaterinburg, one can see

hipster-like graffiti of Lenin protesting the construction of a new church in the city. In the provincial town of Shadrinsk there is graffiti of Lenin and Karl Liebknecht depicted with outstretched arms in the iconic pose of Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet in James Cameron's film *Titanic* on a depressingly dilapidated building at the intersection of Lenin and Liebknecht Streets. Perhaps more surprisingly, government officials also repurpose Lenin. One might even say that Lenin is an ideologically acceptable brand of contemporary Russian culture.

Although there are no large-scale celebrations of the Russian Revolution's centenary year in Russia, public museums are curating memorial exhibitions aimed at tourists. Those exhibitions are tending to avoid all criticism of the communist past and exploit recognizable mass-produced Soviet images as reliable attractions. Recently, Moscow city officials invested in a complete renovation of the Lenin monument in one of the city's prominent landmarks, the VDNH Exhibition Center and Public Park. The city uses this sprawling architectural ensemble, adorned with Stalin-era pompous decorations, as a successful example of urban public space, the revamped version of which has been showcased at such prestigious international events as the 2016 Venice Architectural Biennale. In a word, the image of Lenin continues to haunt Russia.

*Translated by Roman Utkin*

**LILIYA ZALEVSKAYA, *Dead Man Portraying Uncertain Meaning*, 2016**  
 Porcelain, paper, wood, 36 x 8 x 8 in.

©Liliya Zalevskaya



## Yuri Avvakumov (Russian, b. 1957)

Yuri Avvakumov's screenprint, *Tribune for a Leninist*, is based on El Lissitzky's 1924 drawing entitled *Lenin's Tribune* which served as a schematic for a special moveable tribune or podium to enable Lenin to make public addresses. By the time El Lissitzky completed the project, Lenin had died and there was no longer any use for the tribune. In Avvakumov's version, the artist juxtaposes the constructivist podium with the front page of the last edition of *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, printed just before the collapse of the USSR.

### Artist Biography:

Avvakumov was born in Moldova and graduated from the Moscow Architecture Institute in 1981. He is a sculptor, printmaker, and a practicing architect with his own firm, Agitarch Studio, in Moscow. His work has been influenced by the Russian avant-garde artists of the 1920s, such as Vladimir Mayakovsky, Liubov Popova, and Konstantin Melnikov. Ladders and exposed stairwells are recurring themes in both his art and his architectural designs. For Avvakumov, ladders are carriers of meaning, becoming temporary monuments, symbols of construction and progress or barricades. Avvakumov's work has been exhibited internationally, including at the 1996 and 2003 Venice Biennale; The State Museum of Moscow, Moscow, Russia; the Palazzo dell'Arte, Milan, Italy; the Fondation pour l'Architecture, Brussels, Belgium; Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt-on-Main, Germany; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; and the Linssen Gallery, Cologne, Germany, among others.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*Tribune for a Leninist*, 1993

Screenprint on paper  
41 5/8 x 34 1/8 in.

On loan from the collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC. Gift of Gibby and Buz Waitzkin.

©Yuri Avvakumov. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.



YURI AVVAKUMOV  
*Tribune for a Leninist*, 1993

## **Emmanuil Evzerikhin** (Russian, 1911–1984)

*Viewing Movie Frames about Lenin* is a unique photograph for presenting an image of Lenin at a time when visual representation of Lenin's face was strictly regulated. Unlike many of his Soviet contemporary photographers who were using 35mm cameras, **Emmanuil Evzerikhin** worked with a large-format camera. He was deeply influenced by the rise of the film industry and strove to incorporate cinematic styles and techniques into his work, an interest evident both in content and concept in his 1960s photograph on view in *Lenin Lives*.

### **EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:**

*Viewing Movie Frames about Lenin*, c. 1960s

Vintage silver gelatin print; title, signature and stamp on verso  
9 5/8 x 7 7/8 in.

Courtesy of Nailya Alexander Gallery, New York, NY.  
©Emmanuil Evzerikhin

### **Artist Biography:**

Born in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, Evzerikhin was a photographer who came of age in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. By the 1930s, Russian photographers, instructed to document the new reality of the nation, were restricted from invoking both earlier photographic traditions as well as current European and American trends. After World War II, Soviet photography was limited to highly regulated events and photo-ops such as congresses, anniversaries, parades, construction sites, sporting events, and celebrities. When Evzerikhin died in 1984 at the age of 73, he left behind an archive of several thousand negatives, among them his famous photographs of urban life in Moscow, portraits of Soviet celebrities, and his coverage of World War II. Evzerikhin's photographs have been exhibited around the world, including at The State Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia; Nailya Alexander Gallery, New York, NY; Kunsthal Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Palazzo Arese Borromeo, Cesano Maderno, Italy.



### **EMMANUIL EVZERIKHIN**

*Viewing Movie Frames about Lenin*,  
c. 1960s

## Yevgeniy Fiks (Russian, b. 1972)

Since 2012, Russian propagandist and head of the Russian state news agency Dmitry Kiselyov has repeatedly launched vicious attacks on homosexuality, as well as on Europe and the United States, in his television talk show. Recently, Kiselyov has cynically wondered whether gays leave flowers at Lenin's monument as a token of gratitude for the decriminalization of male homosexuality during the Russian Revolution.

Yevgeniy Fiks notes, "Anti-communist sentiment is very strong in Russia today, so Kiselyov's comments linking homosexuality to Lenin, the founder and key leader of communist Russia, take advantage of Russian society's negativity towards communism and also, by association, vilifies homosexuality." In this installation, Fiks transforms Kiselyov's homophobic remarks into a flourishing memorial for Lenin and the ideals of the Revolution — complete with red carnations like those left traditionally at monuments in Russia.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*Has anyone ever wondered?*, 2014

Installation

Dimensions variable

©Yevgeniy Fiks

### Artist Biography:

Fiks was born in Moscow and has been living and working in New York since 1994. He has produced many projects on the subject of the post-Soviet dialogue in the West, among them: *Lenin for Your Library?* in which he mailed Lenin's book *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* to 100 global corporations as a donation for their corporate libraries; *Communist Party USA*, a series of portraits of current members of Communist Party USA, painted from life in the Party's national headquarters in New York City; and *Communist Guide to New York City*, a series of photographs of buildings and public places in New York City that are connected to the history of the American Communist movement. Fiks' work has been shown internationally including in exhibitions in New York at Winkleman Gallery and Postmasters Gallery; Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City, Mexico; the Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal; and in Moscow, Russia, at the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and Marat Guelman Gallery. His work has been included in the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, the 2011 Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art and the 2015 Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art.



**YEVGENIY FIKS**  
*Has anyone ever wondered?*, 2014

## Cynthia Gutiérrez (Mexican, b. 1978)

In 1939, notable Soviet sculptor Sergei Merkurov created a statue in honor of Vladimir Lenin. This monument remained erected in Kyiv, Ukraine until December 8, 2013 when a group of protesters toppled the 3.45-meter, Karelia red stone sculpture. The pedestal that held the sculpture remained in place. This event, like many other riots that occurred during the so-called Euromaidan, was one of the precursors of the 2014 revolution that led to the overthrow of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich. Since then, many other Soviet monuments have been toppled from public spaces throughout Ukraine.

Monuments mark, remind, advise, warn, and commemorate. They are part of our history and cultural identity. They can represent

victory or downfall, and quite often, as **Cynthia Gutiérrez** notes, feel as though they “belong to someone else’s history.”

Gutiérrez’s intervention, *Inhabiting Shadows*, in Kyiv, Ukraine, was carried out within the framework of the Social Contract Project in 2016, curated by Kateryna Filyuk, carried out by Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives. For this interactive performative work, Gutiérrez created a space that permitted passersby to climb a set of stairs, step on the pedestal that previously held the statue of Lenin, and occupy the empty space for a few moments. The aim was to allow the public to reflect upon the past and then become new and diverse living statues. Participants created a temporary monument, integrated with the remains of an old monument. The piece is less about the existing structure than it is about the people passing through or over it. *Inhabiting Shadows* questions whether a monument can be erected to embody the cultural identity and freedom of a whole nation or, potentially, all people.

### Artist Biography:

With a background in Visual Arts at the University of Guadalajara, Gutiérrez’s work has been widely exhibited in solo exhibitions including at the Museo de Arte Raúl Anguiano, Guadalajara, Mexico; and Proyecto Paralelo, Mexico City, Mexico, among others. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including currently in Viva Arte Viva at the 57th International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, Italy. Her work has also been shown at Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Mexico; Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, Kyiv, Ukraine; Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; EFA Project



**CYNTHIA GUTIÉRREZ**  
*Inhabiting Shadows*, 2016

Space, New York, NY; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany; Il Moscow International Biennale For Young Art, Russia; and Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico. She was invited to the Frac des Pays de la Loire 28th International Ateliers, the A+D Arte y Desarrollo

residency at Laboral Centro de Arte, Spain, and received the Jóvenes Creadores FONCA grant (2013–2014). Gutiérrez is currently a member of the National System of Art Creators 2016–2019 of the National Fund for Culture and the Arts, Mexico.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

#### *Inhabiting Shadows*, 2016

Documentation of temporary intervention utilizing metal scaffolding staircase that allows people to ascend the pedestal where Lenin’s statue once stood in Kyiv, Ukraine

Video, 80 slides photographed by Valeriy Miloserdov and Sergeev Dima, and 700 letter-size prints  
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the Artist, Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, and Proyecto Paralelo Gallery.

## Alexander Kosolapov (Russian, b. 1943)

Alexander Kosolapov first designed *Lenin – Coca-Cola* in 1980. Since then, the design has appeared on numerous postcards and prints, and in 1982 even as a billboard in New York's Times Square. Executed in the Sots Art style, also known as Socialist Pop Art, this image borders on the absurd as it blends together a recognizable socialist image with a capitalist logo. Kosolapov's emigration from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1975 allowed him to playfully experiment with hackneyed Soviet symbols and convey the sense of ideological overproduction and saturation in both socialist and capitalist worlds. However, while Kosolapov was safe from Soviet censorship in New York, his use of the registered American trademark in art prompted legal difficulties for the artist in the United States.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*Lenin – Coca-Cola*, 1988

Screenprint on paper  
23 x 36 1/4 in.

On loan from the collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC. Museum purchase with additional funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wilsey.

©Alexander Kosolapov/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY.  
Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.

### Artist Biography:

Born in Moscow, Kosolapov graduated from the sculptural department of the Stroganov Art School in 1969. He has worked in the realm of Sots Art since 1972, combining the visual products of the communist ideology with the products of western mass-culture in his works. In 1975 he emigrated to the United States. Since then, his work has been widely exhibited internationally including at Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Galerie Vallois, Paris, France; Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; The State Historical Museum, Moscow, Russia; and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.



ALEXANDER KOSOLAPOV  
*Lenin – Coca-Cola*, 1988

## Victoria Lomasko (Russian, b. 1978)

Victoria Lomasko documents contemporary Russian life in her graphic reportage style and can be frequently seen at Moscow's protest demonstrations and public trials. Her drawings from the massive political rallies in Moscow in 2012, a selection of which are represented in *Lenin Lives*, are drawn from her *Chronicle of Resistance* — a series of sketches improvised on the spot to convey the immediacy of events. The minimalism and unassuming simplicity of the drawings reflect genuine, if raw, engagement with the subject matter. The elderly women carrying Lenin signs represent the generation of

people who lived most of their lives in the Soviet Union but retired in modern Russia. They deploy their Lenin posters as icons and forcefully assert their presence at political rallies. The juxtaposition of communist Kapitalina Ivanovna and liberal Valentina underscores the ideological divisions in the Soviet generation of Russians.

During her recent visit to the United States, Lomasko drew a statue of Lenin she spotted in Seattle. Brought to the West Coast from Slovakia in 1989, the statue is now a local tourist attraction, while Lenin decidedly looks like a tourist himself in the upscale Fremont neighborhood. Someone recently vandalized the statue by painting Lenin's face and hands bright orange. Now Seattle's Lenin looks both like a murderer and a jester. The statue's owners are currently trying to sell it.

### Artist Biography:

Lomasko is a graphic artist who earned a Bachelor's degree in art at Moscow State University of Printing Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include *Tagansky Justice*, with Anton Nikolaev, Knoll Galerie, Vienna, Austria; *HIV: The Unequals*, Borey Art Centre, Saint Petersburg, Russia; and *Unwanted Women*, Ortega y Gasset Projects, Brooklyn, NY. From 2010–2014 she taught drawing at a youth detention center in Russia. The papers related to that project are archived at the Queen Sofia Museum in Madrid, Spain. She has also co-curated two art exhibitions, *Drawing the Court* and *The Feminist Pencil*. Her books include *Forbidden Art* (with Anton Nikolaev, 2012) and *Other Russias* (2017). She currently lives and works in Moscow.



### VICTORIA LOMASKO

LEFT: *Communist Rally, May 1, 2012*  
Kapitalina Ivanovna: "Lenin Lives! It's what I live for!" Her sign reads "Lenin."

RIGHT: *Opposition Rally, March 10, 2012*  
Valentina, 73 years old: "Way to go, Pussy Riot! I would have sung 'Mother of God, Drive Putin Away' with them." Her sign reads "What a Talent for Treating People Like Idiots."

Caption rallies translated by  
Thomas Campbell.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*Transparent*, 2012

*Communist Rally, May 1, 2012, 2012*

*Opposition Rally, March 10, 2012, 2012*

*Lenin in Seattle*, 2017

Digital prints  
17 1/4 x 12 1/4 in.

*Lenin Isn't For Sale*, 2017

Digital print  
17 1/4 x 11 7/8 in.

©Victoria Lomasko

## **Davide Monteleone** (Italian, b. 1974)

In March 1917, Lenin left exile in Zurich, Switzerland. On April 9, with the support of German authorities, at war with Russia at the time, he travelled back to his own country on a train across Germany, Sweden and Finland. After a decade in exile, on April 16, Lenin arrived at Finland Station in Saint Petersburg, Russia to set in motion the Russian Revolution. One month before, Czar Nicholas II abdicated the throne following the February Revolution. In a bullet point document, known as *The April Theses*, Lenin called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and outlined the strategy that, within seven months, would lead to the October Revolution which brought the Bolsheviks to power. He assumed the leadership of 160 million people occupying one-sixth of the world's inhabited surface.

One hundred years later, artist Davide Monteleone created a chronology of two weeks of Lenin's life just before the events that changed Russia — and the entire world. In search of the original draft of *The April Theses*, Monteleone recreated, and sometimes reenacted, Lenin's

epic journey inspired by the archival documents he found at the Russian State Archive of Soviet Political History and in historical books, including Edmund Wilson's *To Finland Station* and Michael Pearson's *The Sealed Train*. Monteleone's photographs on display in *Lenin Lives* are a small sample of the artist's final series — a collection of contemporary landscapes, forensic archival photographs and staged self-portraits — that retrace a journey through space and time.

### **Artist Biography:**

Monteleone is an artist and a visual journalist working on long-term independent projects using photography, video and text. He has devoted himself to the study of social issues, exploring the relationship between power and the individual. Known for his specific interest in post-Soviet countries, he has published several books on this topic: *Dusha, Russian Soul* (2007), *La Linea Inesistente* (2009), *Red Thistle* (2012) and *Spasibo* (2013). His newest book project, *The April Theses*, was released in 2017. His projects have brought him numerous awards and honors including several World Press Photo prizes, and grants such as the Aftermath Grant, European Publishers Award, the Kraszna-Krausz Foundation best book award and the Fondation Carmignac Photojournalism Award. He regularly contributes to leading publications internationally and his photography projects have been presented as installations, exhibitions and screenings at festivals and galleries worldwide including at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway; Saatchi Gallery, London, England; MEP, Paris, France; and Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy.

### **EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:**

#### *The April Theses*, 2017

Photographs  
Dimensions variable

©Davide Monteleone



**DAVIDE MONTELEONE**  
*The April Theses*, 2017



## Larry Rivers (American, 1923–2002)

Larry Rivers is known for imaginatively connecting contemporary art with art history. Throughout his career, he engaged the canonical masterpieces of Western art, such as Gustave Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* (1849–1850) and Manet's *Olympia* (1863), to find inspiration for his own work. In 1972, Rivers turned to a famous Socialist Realist portrait of Lenin and used it for the series of lithographs *Lenin with a Tie*. By using this very popular image of Lenin, Rivers acknowledges the impact of socialist iconography on contemporary art. At the same time, Rivers adds a mischievous twist and emphasizes the tie in every one of the prints as if pointing out that, whatever Lenin's mythological status in the Soviet Union, he still is a human, wearing a tie. Rivers was fascinated with Russian history, and one of his largest projects is a massive mixed-media assemblage, *The History of the Russian Revolution from Marx to Mayakovsky* (1965), held at the Smithsonian Institution.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

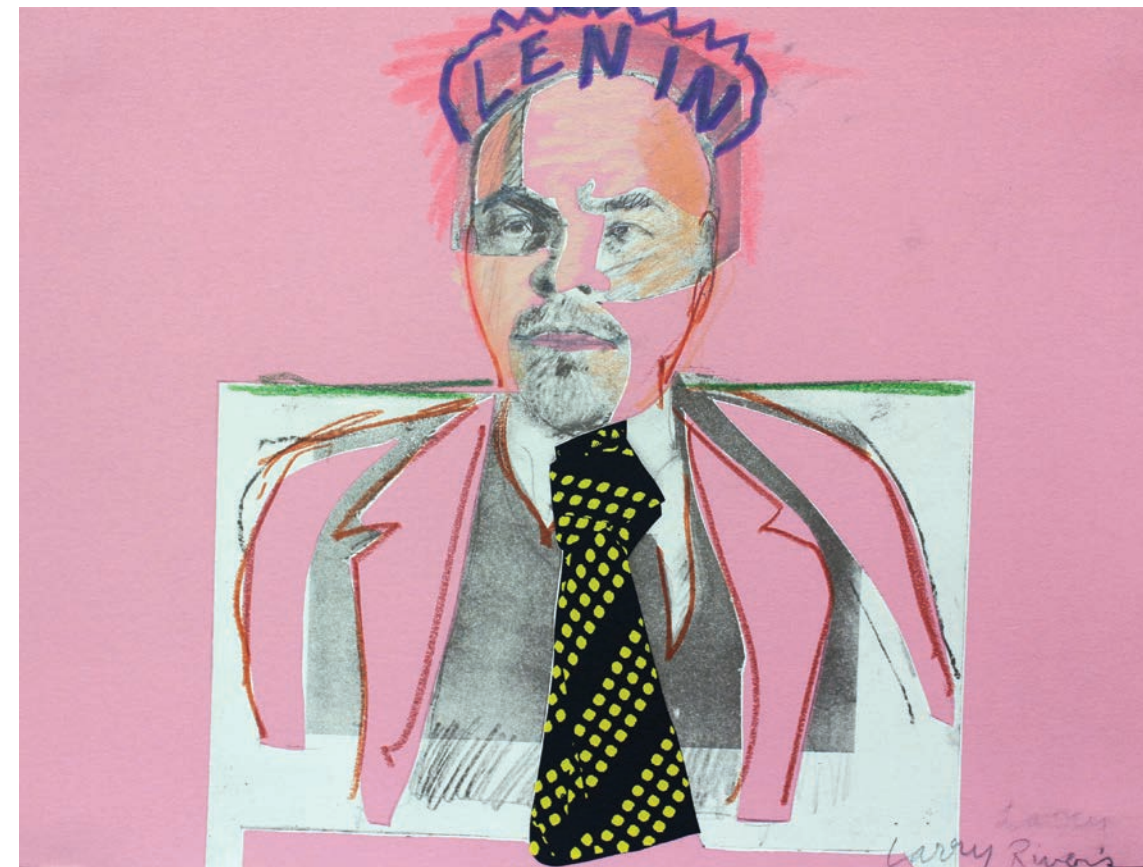
#### *Lenin with a Tie*, 1972

Six lithographs; five hand-worked unique with graphite and colored pencils  
9 x 12 in. each

Courtesy of the Larry Rivers Foundation.

### Artist Biography:

Rivers was an accomplished painter, sculptor, poet and musician. Born and raised in the Bronx, he was an established figure in the New York School and was recognized for creating large paintings that merged abstract and narrative elements. The son of Ukrainian Jewish immigrants, he was known as Yitzroch Loiza (Irving) Grossberg until age 17, when a nightclub emcee announced his band as "Larry Rivers and the Mud Cats." After a brief stint in the U.S. Army, Rivers studied for a year at the Juilliard School of Music studying musical theory and composition. He then studied under Hans Hofmann from 1947 to 1948. Though Hofmann was considered the grandfather of Abstract Expressionism, Rivers never abandoned figuration. Rivers' works have been widely exhibited all over the world including at the Museum of New South Wales, Australia; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Ulysses Gallery, Vienna, Austria; the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK; the Louvre, Paris, France; and the Jewish Museum, New York, NY; among others. His work was also featured at the 1993 Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.



LARRY RIVERS  
*Lenin with a Tie*, 1972

## **Dread Scott** (American, b. 1965)

*Lenin, Boy and World*, is from **Dread Scott's** *Revolutionary Archive* series, a set of paintings that draw on vintage photographs from the arc of Communist revolution — the Paris Commune, the October Revolution and the Chinese Revolution. There are photographs of communards from 1871 standing around a monument to the victories of Napoleon Bonaparte that they recently toppled; a 1919 photograph of a crowd of eager Soviet peasants gathered around a gramophone brought by an agitprop train bringing the latest news from Petrograd; pictures of university walls in Beijing in 1967 covered with handmade “big character posters” arguing for their respective authors’ views on how to advance society. These images constitute an archive of a contested and sometimes forgotten history. Scott notes, “I reproduce and transform the photographs, simultaneously highlighting the widespread rebellion they depict and obscuring parts of the image. The works focus on the importance of the exchange of ideas to revolutionary transformation. Specifically, text or other means of communication is whited out, highlighting a massive effort by people to communicate

their ideas about the direction of society and simultaneously obscuring the content of the actual communication. There were times when millions of people’s hearts and ideals led them to attempt to build a world without exploitation and they consciously worked for this.”

The *Revolutionary Archive* project is a continuation of ideas that Scott has explored for more than two decades. The artist notes that “a tiny handful of people control the great wealth and knowledge that humanity as a whole has created.” Our world is one “of profound polarization, exploitation and suffering, and billions are excluded from intellectual development and full participation in society. It does not have to be this way.” Scott’s hope is that his exploration and art can propel history forward and forge a new potential path.

### **Artist Biography:**

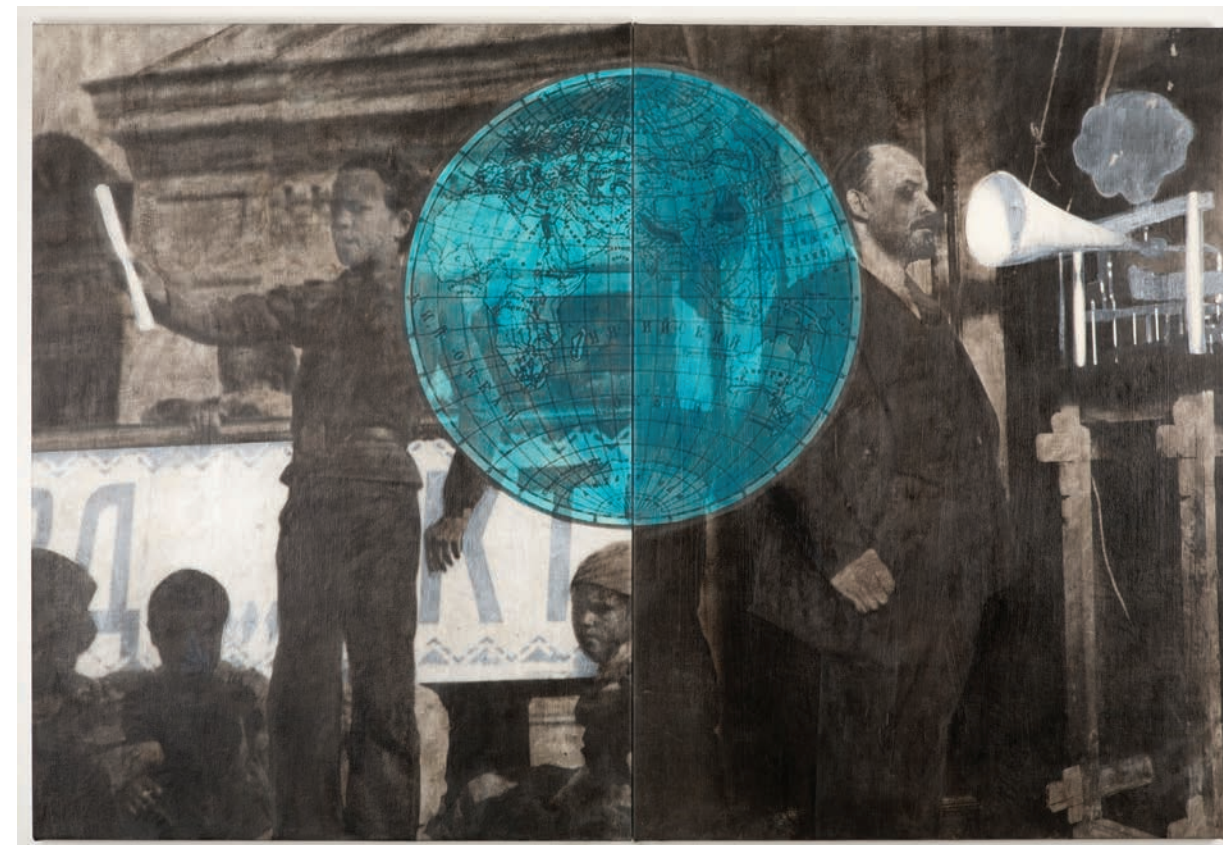
Scott is an interdisciplinary artist whose work is exhibited across the United States and internationally. For three decades he has made work that encourages viewers to reexamine cohering norms of American society. In 1989, the entire United States Senate denounced and outlawed one of his artworks and President Bush declared it “disgraceful” because of its use of the American flag. His art has been exhibited/performed at MoMA/PS1, Long Island City, NY; Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland; BAM, Brooklyn, NY; and galleries and street corners across the country. He is a recipient of prestigious grants including from the Creative Capital Foundation, the MAP Fund, and the Pollock Krasner Foundation. His work is included in numerous collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

### **EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:**

*Lenin, Boy and World*, 2011

Acrylic and Xerox on transfer on canvas  
44 x 66 in.

On loan from the Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection.  
©Dread Scott



**DREAD SCOTT**  
*Lenin, Boy and World*, 2011

## **Leonid Sokov** (Russian, b. 1941)

One of the most significant Soviet nonconformist artists, **Leonid Sokov** mocks the superficial rhetoric of patriotism channeled incessantly by the Soviet propaganda machine. He responds to politics and society saturated by ideological clichés by using irony as his main weapon. Both *Study for Lenin and the Devil* and *Lenin with Mark of Gorby* were created in 1991, a momentous year in the history of Russia. Following Perestroika, the wave of political reforms that began in 1987, the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. Sokov seems to hint at imminent radical changes in Soviet life in the miniature sculpture of Lenin in a thinker pose garishly covered

in gold with a tiny devil on his shoulder, presumably tempting the great leader of the working class. The image of Lenin with the birthmark of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, superimposed on his forehead playfully suggests the contamination of Lenin's original ideas. Gorbachev was the initiator of reforms that were meant to reform Soviet socialism. Much of Sokov's work mixes recognizable features of famous images to produce new meanings in a postmodern context.

### **Artist Biography:**

Sokov was born in the USSR in 1941. He graduated from the Moscow School of Art and Industry in Moscow, Russia in 1969. His works are primarily in the Sots Art style, adapted to Socialist Realism through the use of ideology as an object of consumption. He emigrated to the United States in 1980. Since that time, his work has been widely exhibited, including at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland; the Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto, Japan; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. In 2001, Sokov represented Russia at the Venice Biennale and participated in the 2004 Gwangju Biennale in Gwangju, South Korea. His works can be found in many prestigious collections, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Luigi Pecci Centre for Contemporary Art, Prato, Italy; The National Gallery of Australia, Sydney, Australia; and in Russia at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow and The Russian Museum, Saint Petersburg.

### **EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:**

#### ***Study for Lenin and the Devil*, 1991**

Gold foil on plaster with plastic devil  
12 x 12 x 11 in.

#### ***Lenin with Mark of Gorby*, 1991**

Acrylic and ink on paper  
33 1/8 x 24 7/8 in.

Collection of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University,  
Durham, NC. Gift of John Schwartz.  
©Leonid Sokov. Photos by Peter Paul Geoffrion.



**LEONID SOKOV**  
*Study for Lenin and the Devil*,  
1991

## Oleg Vassiliev (Russian, 1931–2013)

Oleg Vassiliev's print brings together familiar Soviet images — the Lenin monument, rioting sailors and soldiers, staged folk dances, a damaged facade of a building and a piece of the *Pravda* newspaper — in one powerful collage. The title of the print is easily recognizable as well. *The House with the Mezzanine* references the eponymous short story by Anton Chekhov, written in 1896. Chekhov's story is about the passion with which young Russian people loved each other and loved to proselytize the message of social inequality among peasants and the working class at the end of the nineteenth century. Whereas Chekhov's story ends on a piercingly nostalgic note about bygone days, Vassiliev's print can be seen as a commentary on the aftermath of the October Revolution, which grew out of the best intentions but resulted in the violent destruction of the old way of life.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*The House with the Mezzanine*, No. 19, 1991

Lithograph on cream paper  
29 3/4 x 21 in.

On loan from the Mead Art Museum, Amherst College,  
Amherst, Massachusetts, Gift of Joan Afferica.

### Artist Biography:

Vassiliev was an artist associated with the Soviet nonconformist art style. He attended Surikov State Art Institute and graduated in 1958. He worked with Erik Bulatov as a children's book illustrator before exploring the possibilities of painting as a specific language. Vassiliev's works often refer to literary quotations and allusions, from classical through contemporary literature. In 1990, the artist left Russia for the United States, where he lived until his death in 2013. His work has been widely exhibited internationally, including at the Galeria Fernando Duran, Madrid, Spain; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Dunikowshio Museum Palac, Warsaw, Poland; Setagaya Museum, Tokyo, Japan; and the Marconi Galleria, Milan and Rome, Italy.



**OLEG VASSILIEV**  
*The House with the Mezzanine*, No. 19  
1991

## **Masha Vlasova** (Russian, b. 1988)

In **Masha Vlasova's** film, *Monuments and Other Things that Change*, the artist interviewed a friend and voiceover actress originally from Crimea. Her friend spoke of the stress she experienced seeing her hometown on the front page of *The New York Times* during the annexation of the peninsula by Russia. Her stress was intensified by her being here in the United States while things were happening there in Ukraine. She fixated on the news, was unable to let go, and couldn't stop feeling responsible. Vlasova created a rubber stress-ball for her friend, in the shape of a Lenin bust. The object drew on the nostalgic quality of a miniature desk bust, but also subverted

that notion due to its materiality: squishy rubber. Vlasova has revised her *Squishy Lenin* stress balls with the addition of colorant. Visitors are invited to squish the sculptures to relieve any stress associated with Lenin's image in our post-Soviet and post-Cold War environs.

*Balancing Lenin* is another work that developed from Vlasova's research for the aforementioned film, on view in the Visual Art Center lounge throughout the duration of the exhibition. The film's point of departure is a single found photograph of a monument to Lenin in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The statue, cropped within the frame, is only visible upside down, as a reflection in a puddle. For Vlasova, the untitled photograph, without a date or an author, seemed to foreshadow the imminent collapse and dismantling of many other Lenins from the post-Soviet milieu. In late 2013 during the Euromaidan protests, Lenin statues started falling all over Ukraine while, simultaneously, Lenins previously dismantled or vandalized in the late 1980s were erected back on their pedestals in Russia. With these rapid transitions of Lenins both on and off pedestals, Vlasova felt a need to hold the Lenin monument. She recreated the Bishkek image in a sculptural form — the grandiose pose, straddling a delicate balance between on and off, erect and toppled. It was after she created her 3D model in polylactic acid that Vlasova became aware of an earlier version of Lenin, upside down, balancing on his hand, painted by Marc Chagall. The painting, *Revolution* (1938), marked the peak of the purges in the Soviet Union, a time when Stalin used Lenin's monumental image as a way of building his cult of personality. For Vlasova, "the photograph from Bishkek, in which Lenin was both on and off the pedestal, and Chagall's painting served as a

### **EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:**

*Squishy Lenin*, 2016–2017

Rubber  
4 x 2 x 2 in.

*Lenin Balancing*, 2015

Polylactic acid and wood  
10 x 5 1/2 x 3 in.

*Monuments and Other Things that Change*, 2012–2015

HD Video, Color, B&W, Sound, 1:02:10

©Masha Vlasova



**MASHA VLASOVA**  
*Squishy Lenin*,  
2016–2017

prediction of the changing significance of Lenin's image — suspended, barely balancing on the side of a dinner table."

### **Artist Biography:**

Vlasova was born in Russia and lives and works between Tennessee and New York. She is a multidisciplinary artist who works in film, video, sculpture and installation. She received her BFA at the Cooper Union in 2012 and her MFA from Yale University's Sculpture Department in 2016. Vlasova has been honored with numerous prestigious awards including a

Fulbright Fellowship in Filmmaking, the Alice Kimball Traveling Fellowship, and JUNCTURE Art and Human Rights Initiative Fellowship from Yale Law School. Her work has been widely exhibited including in New York at La MaMa La Galleria, Smack Mellon, Anthology Film Archives, and Abrons Arts Center; Leeds College of Art, Leeds, England; in Philadelphia at Temple University and Vox Populi; and at ArtSpace in New Haven, CT. She has presented on her work at Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, Munich, Germany, the Cooper Union, NY, and University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

## Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987)

Andy Warhol created two screenprinted versions of *Lenin*, one with a red background and one, such as that displayed in *Lenin Lives*, with a black background. In the work on view here, only Lenin's face, rendered in red, and a bit of his white shirt or collar, emerge from the rich black ink. In eliminating the details and contrast typical of his screenprinted portraits, Warhol draws one's attention to Lenin's face — recognizable, iconic, at one time regulated in its presentation but, nonetheless, a face that has fascinated artists for a century.

Warhol's portraits typically connote the artist's obsession with beauty, wealth and stardom — both real and contrived. His decision to create a portrait of Lenin, a symbol of the communist

revolution, both loved and demonized, serves to remind us of the tight connection between celebritydom and politics.

### Artist Biography:

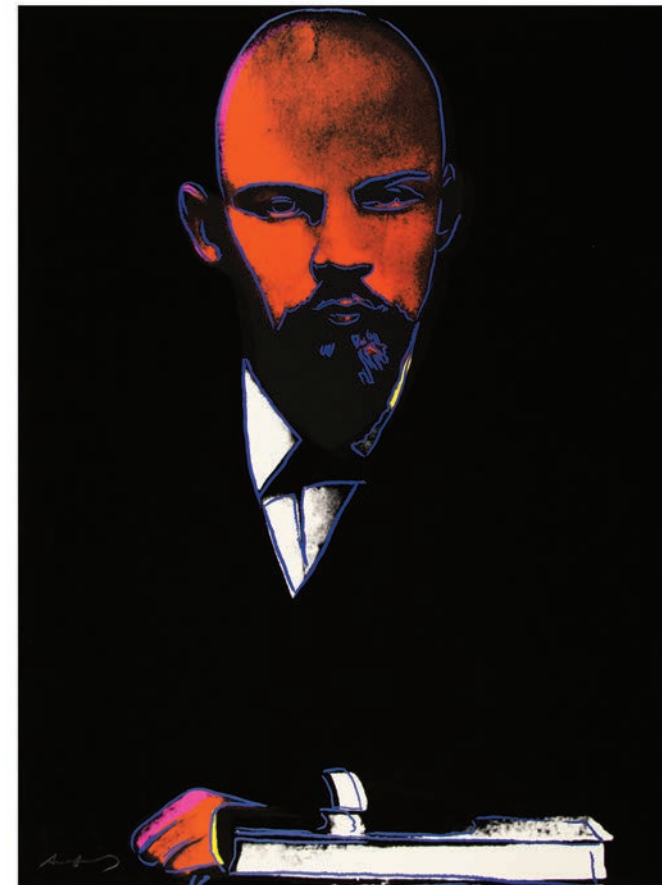
Warhol was born Andrew Warhola in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants from present-day Eastern Slovakia. As a child, Warhol suffered from Sydenham chorea, a neurological disorder commonly known as St. Vitus' dance, characterized by involuntary movements. Warhol's father saved enough money for him to attend Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon University) from 1945 to 1949. In the 1960s, Warhol began to focus on the Pop Art movement, which began in Britain in the mid-1950s. He then turned to his most notable style, photographic silkscreen printing, in 1962. He created some of his most famous works, the Campbell's Soup Cans, in 1962. His art has been exhibited around the world including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain; the Alan Cristea Gallery, London; Art Gallery NSF, Sydney, Australia; Museo del Novecento, Milano, Italy; Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Japan; and The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

#### *Lenin*, 1987

Screenprint on Lenox Museum Board  
39 7/16 x 29 1/2 in.

On loan from the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts, Gift of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; out of the edition. Designated for research and educational purposes only.



ANDY WARHOL  
*Lenin*, 1987

## Liliya Zalevskaya (Ukrainian, b. 1979)

Liliya Zalevskaya was born in Kyiv, Ukraine and emigrated to the United States as a teenager just as the Soviet Union fell apart. This experience continues to inform her interest in how social structures are perceived versus how they are experienced by the individuals living within them. In essence, her work is the artifact of play, through which she interrogates the roles as a director and actor in the construction of a fantasy that questions reality. The fantastic emerges from the anxiety caused by the search to understand the differences between reality and perception. In her exploration of this gap, the mundane begins to appear strange or unfamiliar.

### EXHIBITION CHECKLIST:

*Dead Man Portraying Uncertain Meaning*, 2016

Porcelain, paper, wood  
36 x 8 x 8 in.

©Liliya Zalevskaya

In *Dead Man Portraying Uncertain Meaning*, Zalevskaya revisits the experience of growing up in the last generation of Soviet classrooms in the 1980s. The work humorously touches on the fluidity of history and its interpretation while exploring the genesis of mythology as a fallacy. A Lenin bust was a constant presence in a Soviet classroom, to the point of becoming invisible — yet untouchable. Occasionally, a student would act out against the teacher by mistreating the bust, as depicted in Zalevskaya's Lenin as "dunce." Thus, a Lenin bust became a stand-in for the system that was both misunderstood and crumbling.

### Artist Biography:

Zalevskaya received a BFA in Printmaking from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and an MFA in Digital Media from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She currently teaches Printmaking and Digital Photography at Gaston College, Dallas, NC.



LILIYA ZALEVSKAYA  
*Dead Man Portraying Uncertain Meaning*, 2016





Like strength,  
    like knowledge,  
        like a banner.  
Earth,  
    tremble underfoot.  
Words –  
    Rise up to whirl  
beyond all borders.  
Lenin –  
    lived.  
Lenin –  
    lives.  
Lenin –  
    will live.  
Lenin too  
    after all  
        began with mere basics, –  
life –  
    is the genius' workshop.  
Strive  
    from the bottom of time,  
        from the class at the bottom,  
to clamber up  
    and become like a Lenin.  
Shake, you palaces' floors!

Market of profit,  
    you'll be beaten.  
Lenin –  
    lived.  
Lenin –  
    lives.  
Lenin –  
    will live.  
Lenin is bigger  
        than the biggest,  
but even  
    this  
        wonder  
was made by  
    the little ones of all ages –  
us,  
    the little ones of the collective.  
Tie  
    the muscle  
        in a knot.  
Razor-teeth –  
    tear  
        into the knowledge.

Lenin –  
    lived.  
Lenin –  
    lives.  
Lenin –  
    will live.  
It builds,  
    collapses,  
        cuts  
        and tears,  
grows quiet,  
    boils  
        and foams,  
buzzes,  
    speaks,  
        goes mute  
        and roars –  
the young army  
    of Leninists.  
We  
    are the new blood  
        of the city's veins,  
the body of the fields,  
the thread  
    woven of ideas.

Lenin –  
    lived.  
Lenin –  
    lives.  
Lenin –  
    will live.

31 March 1924

*Translated by the Cement Translation Collective*

# Biographies

## **LIA NEWMAN, curator**

Since January 2013, Lia Newman has held the position of Director/ Curator of the Van Every/Smith Galleries at Davidson College. From 2002–2012, Newman was Director of Programs and Exhibitions at Artspace in Raleigh, NC. She earned a BA in Art History and a BFA in General Studio with concentrations in sculpture and photography from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC, and an MA in Liberal Studies from Duke University, Durham, NC. Newman is responsible for curating exhibitions, developing exhibition-related programming, and overseeing and growing Davidson College's Permanent Art Collection, including the Campus Sculpture Program.

## **MARIA SILINA, essayist**

Maria Silina received her Ph.D. from the Russian Academy of Fine Arts and is currently a Senior Researcher at the Moscow Academy of Fine Arts, Russia, and Adjunct Professor of History of Art at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada. She is the author of *History and Ideology: Monumental Decorative Relief Sculpture in the 1920s and 1930s in the USSR* (Moscow, 2014). Her research interests include Soviet art history, architecture, museology, and heritage studies.

## **ROMAN UTKIN, curator**

Roman Utkin is Assistant Professor of Russian Studies and Core Faculty in the Gender and Sexuality Studies Department at Davidson College. After graduating from Lenin Kazan State University in Russia in 2007, he studied at Yale University where he received his Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures in 2015. A specialist in twentieth-century Russian and Soviet poetry, prose, and visual culture, he enjoys teaching and writing on queer theory, comparative modernisms, transnationalism, and exile. He is currently working on a book manuscript titled "Russian Berlin: Culture of a Modernist Diaspora." He is also organizing an international symposium, called *Queer Russia: Gender, Sexuality, and Race After the Soviet Union*, which will take place February 16–18, 2018 at Davidson College.

ISBN 978-1-890573-22-5



9 781890 1573225 >

VAN  
EVERY | SMITH  
GALLERIES  
AT DAVIDSON COLLEGE