

Press Release

BRODOVITCH: FROM DIAGHILEV TO HARPER'S BAZAAR ***(26 October – 25 November 2011)***

A survey of the life and prolific career of Russian-born artist and designer, Alexei Brodovitch (1898-1971), will be presented in collaboration with *Harper's Bazaar* at Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in October 2011. Curated by Irina Meglinskaya and Roger Remington, *Brodovitch: From Diaghilev to Harper's Bazaar* will celebrate the artist's contribution to the fields of graphic design, advertising, publishing and fashion by tracing his meteoric rise from Diaghilev's Ballets Russes to art director of *Harper's Bazaar*.

After emigrating to Paris during the Russian Civil War in 1918, Brodovich earned his living by painting backdrops for Diaghilev's ballets. He immersed himself in a heady atmosphere of music, fashion, dance and the visual arts – an interdisciplinary mix that later informed his approach to product design, typography, photography and publishing. His work became recognizable for its trademark elegance and clean, minimalist lines. As a designer, art director and teacher, Brodovitch believed in the primacy of visual freshness, experimentation and immediacy.

During his tenure as Art Director of *Harper's Bazaar* between 1934 and 1958, Brodovitch not only established the magazine's public identity, but he introduced America to a new, minimalist style inspired by the European avant-garde art of the 1920s, forging the model of the modern magazine art director. Interweaving strands of different creative industries by commissioning work from up-and-coming and world-renowned artists, writers and designers, Brodovitch insured that *Harper's Bazaar* became synonymous with the names of artists Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró, the writer and filmmaker Jean Cocteau, the photographer Man Ray and the typographer and advertisement designer Adolf Cassandre. Brodovitch supplemented his creative drive with a pedagogical one. As the Head of Advertising Design at the University of the Arts in Pennsylvania, Brodovitch's students included photographers and designers such as Irving Penn, Richard Avedon and Diane Arbus. Designing magazine layouts as hand-drawn illustrations, Brodovitch would cut, tear, draw, paint and glue together pieces of text, photography and illustration to create layouts that became individual works of art. One of the first to recognize the importance of bright color and cinematic effects achieved through on-location fashion photography, Brodovitch turned popular, commercial publishing into a 'mediascape,' a form of high art in which he constructed a reality for the imagination of his readers.

The exhibition offers a chronological overview of Brodovitch's artistic evolution. It presents a selection of works in various media, including photography, advertising, typography and issues of *Harper's Bazaar* published under his art direction. Personal letters, archival footage and behind-the-scenes photographs of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes complete the survey and provide a personal insight into the life and work of this deeply influential figure.

Artist's Biography

Alexei Brodovitch (1898, Russia – 1971, France) began his career as a painter of backdrops for Serge Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* in Paris. At the same time, he built a portfolio of his own designs for textiles, china and jewelry, and worked part-time doing layouts for the art journal *Cahiers d'Art* and the influential design magazine *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*. Brodovitch gained artistic recognition in 1924 after winning first prize in a poster competition for the artists' soiree *Le Bal Banal*, beating Pablo Picasso. From 1928, Brodovitch worked at Athélia, the design studio of Parisian department store Aux Trois Quartiers, designing and illustrating catalogues and advertisements for their luxury men's boutique. At the same time, he continued to work as a freelance designer, commissioned by the Parisian publishing house La Pléaïde to illustrate works by Alexander Pushkin, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Jean Lorrain.

Brodovitch moved to the United States in 1930, following an invitation to become Head of the Advertising Design Department at Pennsylvania's University of the Arts. In 1933, he added Design Laboratory to his list of offered classes. From 1934 to 1958, Brodovitch worked as Art Director for *Harper's Bazaar*, during which time he established the magazine's design ethos. In 1949, Brodovitch designed his own typeface 'Al-Bro' and collaborated on the production of the revolutionary graphic design *Portfolio*. His avant-garde photographs of international ballet companies, taken from 1935 to 1937, were published as a book, titled *Ballet*, in 1945. Among his achievements and awards, Brodovitch was inducted into the Art Directors Club Hall of Fame in New York in 1972.

Curators' Biography

Irina Meglinskaya is a curator and teacher specializing in photography. In 1991, she opened Shkola, the first photography gallery in Russia, under the auspices of the National Center for Contemporary Art. From 1998 to 2008, she was Director of Photographer at the publishing house, Afisha. She is co-owner of the Pobeda (Victory) photo gallery and launched the Meglinskaya Gallery at Winzavod in 2010. Meglinskaya is also a teacher of photo editing, fashion photography and photojournalism at the Alexander Rodchenko School in Moscow. Previous exhibitions have included *Alternative Fashion before Glossies: 1985-1995*, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture (2011).

Roger Remington is a scholar and teacher with critical interests in design studies (graphic design history, theory and methods), research, writing and graphic design practice. Since 2006, he has been a Massimo and Lella Vignelli Distinguished Professor of Design at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Since 1982, he has been engaged in the research, interpretation and preservation of the history of graphic design. Author of multiple academic articles and lectures, Remington's publications include *American Modernism: Graphic Design 1920-1960* (2003). He is a guest professor at the Dessau Department of Design, Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in Dessau and at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Schwäbisch Gmünd.

Garage Center for Contemporary Culture is a major non-profit international arts space based in Moscow, dedicated to exploring and developing contemporary culture, which opened in 2008. There are two distinct areas of programming - to bring important international modern and contemporary art and culture to Moscow and to raise the profile of Russian contemporary culture and encourage a new generation of Russian artists. These are explored through a series of exhibitions ranging from major surveys of important collections to single-artist retrospectives or group exhibitions. Garage also hosts a strong program of special on-site events, including talks, film screenings, workshops, performances and creative activities for children. Garage's space includes galleries, open exhibition areas, courtyard, cafe, kids space, purpose-built auditorium and media room, all designed by award winning architect Jamie Fobert.

Garage will be relocating from its current space – the former 20th century Bakhmetevsky Bus Garage – to a new site in a historic pavilion inside Gorky Park, Moscow. Opening to the public in 2012, the space will be developed to include international standard gallery spaces, open exhibition areas, children's creative spaces, education and learning facilities, a cafe and a shop.

Garage is a project of The Iris Foundation, founded by Daria Zhukova.

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Garage Center for Contemporary Culture

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