

**PRESS RELEASE
FINAL DRAFT**

GARAGE CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND PERFORMA PRESENT

***33 FRAGMENTS OF RUSSIAN PERFORMANCE*
A MAJOR NEW EXHIBITION AS PART OF PERFORMA 11**

**Performa Hub, 233 Mott Street, New York
2 – 23 November 2011**

**Press Review November 2, 2011, 10 am – 12 pm TBD
Special Walk-Through with Curator Yulia Aksenova
RSVP to press@performa-arts.org**

Garage Center for Contemporary Culture and Performa present a major new collaborative project entitled *33 Stories of Russian Performance* as part of Performa 11, the fourth edition of the new visual art performance biennial in New York City (1–21 November), on view 2 to 23 November 2011. The exhibition will include performance archives, photographs and videos documenting Russian performance in both the historical avant-garde of the 1920s and contemporary periods. Presented at the Performa Hub and curated by Garage curator Yulia Aksenova in collaboration with Performa Founding Director and Curator RoseLee Goldberg, the exhibition will also include a lecture by renowned Russian art critic Alexandra Obukhova and a performance by Andrey Kuzkin.

33 Stories will explore the rich tradition of performance in Russia and its development during the 20th and 21st centuries. Performance art, or 'live' art, emerged strongly in the Russian art scene of the 1960s, although performance was popular in the projects of the avant-garde at the beginning of the 20th century. The avant-garde artists of the 1920s were pioneers who created entirely new means for articulating ideas to reach the mass public emancipated by the revolution. Using experimental techniques and mixing genres, they sought to release their works from the constraints of traditional, established artistic media, focusing instead on their bodies within time and space.

Presented in two parts; the first section will trace the early development of performance with documentation from visionary early Russian performance artists Mikhail Larionov, Ilya Zdanevich, Mikhail Matyushin, Alexey Kruchenykh, Nina Kogan, Valentin Parnakh, Vera Maya, Nikolai Forreger, Arseniy Avramov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Sergey Eisenstein and others. The second part will be devoted to performance's resurgence in the politically turbulent 1960s and 1970s and follows the genre's evolution into its current form in the 21st century. The exhibition illustrates the crucial position of performance and its discourses for non-official, underground movements, notably Moscow Conceptualism, Sots Art and their key protagonists: Collective Actions and Komar and Melamid. *33 Stories* documents performance's changing tactics, from 'New Wave's' mocking sarcasm to the anarchic gestures of Moscow Actionism, to finally present its most vocal current practitioners: Elena Kovylyna, Andrei Kuzkin, Liza Morozova and others.

Presenting Russian performance in all its diversity, the exhibition demonstrates the integral role it has played in the country's artistic development and the crucial means for freedom of speech it has offered in a century marked by political repression and censorship. Performance in Russia became an essential vehicle for engaging with a multitude of discourses in art, politics and society at the most critical moments in Russian history. This has persisted into the 21st century as a new generation of performance artists continues to tackle issues at the core of contemporary Russian society.

As one of the biennial's historical themes, centering on Russian Constructivism, Performa 11 will present a series of seminars, workshops and conferences which contemplates the early 20th century Russian avant-garde and considers its power and continuing relevance. *33 Stories* also marks a continued partnership between Performa and Garage which began with the third installment of the exhibition *100 Years of Performance*, curated by RoseLee Goldberg and Klaus Biesenbach, and presented at Garage in Moscow in 2010.

Roselee Goldberg, Founding Director & Curator, Performa

RoseLee Goldberg, Founding Director and Curator of Performa, is an art historian, critic, and curator whose book *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, first published in 1979, pioneered the study of performance art. Former Director of the Royal College of Art Gallery in London and Curator at The Kitchen in New York, she is also the author of *Performance: Live Art Since 1960* (1998) and *Laurie Anderson* (2000), and is a frequent contributor to *Artforum* and other publications. Recent awards and grants include two awards from the International Association of Art Critics (2011), the Agnes Gund Curatorial Award from Independent Curators International (2010), Curatorial Research Fellowship from the Warhol Foundation (2008), and Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters from the French Government (2006). In 2004, she founded Performa, a non profit arts organization committed to the research, development, and presentation of performance by visual artists from around the world, and launched New York's first performance biennial, Performa 05 (2005), followed by Performa 07 (2007), and Performa 09 (2009). In 2011, Performa will present its fourth biennial, Performa 11 (November 1–21, 2011). Goldberg has taught at New York University since 1987.

Yulia Aksenova, Curator, Garage Center for Contemporary Culture

Yulia Aksenova studied History of Art and Curating Contemporary Art at the Russian State University of the Humanities (1998-2002) and attended the Programme of New Art Strategy for Artists and Art Critics at the Soros Center of Contemporary Art (2000-2002). She later attended the International Curatorial Training Program de Appel in Amsterdam. Aksenova has held curatorial positions at the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow Center of Art and Garage. Yulia has curated and co-curated numerous exhibitions over the last 5 years. These include *Russian Pop-art* (2005) and *Sots-Art: Political art in Russia* (2007) at the Moscow State Tretyakov Gallery; numerous exhibitions at the Moscow Center of Art; Red October Gallery; *Masters Hamfrey's Clock*, De Appel, Amsterdam (2008); *Russian Utopias* (2010) and *Fantom Monuments* (2011) at Garage. Aksenova has also written for several influential exhibition publications.

Performa 11, the fourth edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance presented by Performa, will be held in New York City from November 1–21, 2011. The three-week biennial will showcase new work by more than 100 of the most exciting artists working today, in an innovative program breaking down the boundaries between visual art, music, dance, poetry, fashion, architecture, graphic design, and the culinary arts. Presented in collaboration with a consortium of more than 50 arts institutions and 25 curators, as well as a network of public spaces and private venues across the city, Performa 11 will ignite New York City with energy and ideas, acting as a vital "think tank" linking minds across the five boroughs and bringing audiences together for brilliant new performances in all disciplines.

Founded in 2004 by art historian and curator RoseLee Goldberg, Performa is the leading organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth-century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century.

Performa launched New York's first performance biennial, Performa 05, in 2005, followed by Performa 07 (2007), and Performa 09 (2009).

Performa

100 West 23rd Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10011
Tel: + 1 212 366 5700
www.performa-arts.org

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.

Garage Center for Contemporary Culture

19A Ulitsa Obratsova
Moscow, Russia
Tel: +7 495 6450520
www.garageccc.com

INTERNATIONAL PRESS AND IMAGES:

Erica Bolton

Bolton & Quinn
Tel: +44 20 7221 5000
Email: erica@boltonquinn.com

Ashley Tickle

Performa
Tel: + 1 212 366 5700
Email: ashley@performa-arts.org