



Image credit: Jing Yuan Huang, *I Am Your Agency No. 07*, 2013

Really, Socialism?! **September 11 – November 9, 2015**

Curated by David Xu Borgonjon

Exhibition artists: Yevgeniy Fiks, Jing Yuan Huang, Jen Liu, Lisi Raskin, Anna Rubin
Program participants: Chang Yuchen, Eda Cufer, Christine I. Ho
Ksenia Nouril and Arseny Zhilyaev

Opening reception: Friday, September 11, 7-9PM

* Schedule for public events is included at the end of the press release.

Momenta Art is pleased to present *Really, Socialism?!*, an exhibition that examines the past of the socialist image in order to speculate on the future. Through the work of artists intimately involved in the aesthetic legacies of socialism, this exhibition seeks to stimulate viewers into a reappraisal of post-war art and its relevance for strategies of exit from the world-as-market.

Yevgeniy Fiks' *Pleshkas of the Revolution* record, in Soviet academic style, Moscow cityscapes dotted with socialist emblems that were also gay cruising grounds. Huang Jing Yuan's photorealist gray monochromes reflect on the televisual mediation of the Chinese Communist revolution and the crisis of faith after liberalization. The new abstract drawings and sculptural paintings of Lisi Raskin derive from her experience of the ex-Yugoslav Partisan monuments, focusing on the concealment and commemoration of history. A series of conversations with leading critics—respectively, Ksenia Nouril, Christine I. Ho and Eda Cufer—contextualizes these artists' works within the latest art-historical research.

These contemporary reflections on the trajectory of post-war painting are complemented by a series of screenings and performances. Jen Liu's video *The Red Detachment* will examine forms of bodily discipline by tracing the connections between the meat industry and the seminal Maoist ballet of the same name. Anna Rubin will present a rough cut of footage recording her relationship with a Leipzig teenager for whom cosplay serves as a means of reflecting on German history. In the closing event, Arseny Zhilyaev and Chang Yuchen will conclude with performative lectures on art institutions under socialism, respectively, experimental museology and technical life-drawing.

Really, Socialism?! intends to spotlight the diversity of official artistic practices in state socialism: not just Soviet Socialist Realism, but also its Maoist apostate Revolutionary Romanticism and the abstract modernism that flourished in former Yugoslavia, among others. Programs include an online reading group on socialist science fiction in collaboration with the New Centre for Research and Practice, focusing on an optimism about technology that seems almost alien today. This exhibition will be complemented by the launch of an online archive that translates, collates and introduces seminal tracts on socialist aesthetics.

(Text written by David Xu Borgonjon)

Details of public events, including dates, times and locations, will be posted online. All events, except for the Reading Group on October 10 & 17 at the New Center of Research and Practice, are free and open to the public:

September 13, 2-3:30PM

Huang Jing Yuan in conversation with Christine I Ho

September 27, 2-3PM

Curator tour of *Armed by Design* at the Interference Archive

October 4, 2-3:30PM

Yevgeniy Fiks in conversation with Ksenia Nouril

October 10/17 2-4PM

Reading Group on Socialist Science Fiction: *The Scientific Image*
Hosted by the New Centre for Research and Practice

October 11, 2-4PM

Curator tour of the Dodge Collection at the Zimmerli Museum

October 23, 7-8:30PM

Lisi Raskin in conversation with Eda Cufer

October 25, 2-4PM

Screening: rough cut of a new work by Anna Rubin

November 1, 2-3:30PM

Screening by Jen Liu: *The Red Detachment*

November 8

Performance by Chang Yuchen: *How to Draw in China: Maksimov and the Academy*

Talk by Arseny Zhilyaev: *Art after the Avant-Garde: Constructing the Institution in the Soviet 1920-30s*

TBD

Talk by Jason Adams: *Transposing Movements: Socialist SF Cinema in the West*

Jason Adams is an Organizer at the New Centre for Research and Practice. Previously he co-founded the Global Center for Advanced Studies, and is also Professor of Communication at Grand Valley State University. Adams previously held Visiting Assistant Professorships at Williams College (2011-2012) and Arkansas State University (2010-2011) following the completion of his two Ph.Ds, the first from the University of Hawaii in Political Science (2010), the second from the European Graduate School in Media & Communication (2012). Adams is author of *Occupy Time: Technoculture, Immediacy and Resistance After Occupy Wall Street* (Palgrave Macmillan) the co-editor of *Deleuze and Race* (Edinburgh University Press) and has written for such journals and periodicals as *Radical Philosophy*, *boundary 2*, *Critical Inquiry*, *New Political Science*, *In These Times* and *Z Magazine*. From 2004-2010, he was Managing Editor for the Johns Hopkins University Press journal *Theory & Event*, before founding Conatus Publishing.

Chang Yuchen (b.1989, China) graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (BFA) in 2011 and School of the Art Institute of Chicago (MFA) in 2013. She currently lives and works in New York. Recent performances: *The History of All Hitherto Existing Society* at Printed Matter, New York, 2014; *Waveforms* at Design Cloud, Chicago, 2013. Recent Exhibitions: *Chang Yuchen: Snake and Others* at Fou Gallery, New York (2013), *Boston Printmakers 2013 North American Print Biennial* at Boston University College of Fine Arts, *Superstition* at San Francisco Center for Books, *Gwangju Biennale 2011* at Gwangju Kunsthal, *Martell Focus on Talents Finalists Exhibition* (2011) at Today Art Museum and *A Decade Long Exposure* at Central Academy of Fine Arts and Contemporary Chinese Photography (2010). Her work is collected by Museum of Modern Art Library, New York and Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection, Chicago.

Eda Cufer is a dramaturge, curator and writer. In 1984 she co-founded an art collective NSK based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She has collaborated with many contemporary theater, dance and visual art groups including the Sisters Scipion Nasice Theater, the dance company En-Knap, the IRWIN group and Marko Peljhan's Project Atol. Her recent writings are mainly concerned with the ideological dimensions of contemporary art and the relationship of political systems to art systems. These have appeared in magazines like *Art Forum* and *Maska*, and in books published by MOMA, MIT Press, Revolver, Afterall Books, Sternberg Press, Whitechapel Gallery, and the catalog of the 2009 Istanbul Biennial. She has curated exhibitions in Germany, Austria, and Italy, including *In Search of Balkania*, *Balkan Visions*, and *Call Me Istanbul*. She recently published a history of dance notation systems, and is now working on a new book project, *Art as Mousetrap*, with the support of a fellowship from the Arts Writers Grant Program of the Andy Warhol Foundation. Now living in the United States, she remains active with many art projects and groups in Europe.

Yevgeniy Fiks was born in Moscow in 1972 and has been living and working in New York since 1994. Fiks has produced many projects on the subject of the Post-Soviet dialog in the West, among them: *Lenin for Your Library?* in which he mailed V.I. Lenin's text "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism" to one hundred 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. This includes exhibitions in the United States at Winkleman and Postmasters galleries (both in New York), Mass MoCA, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and Marat Guelman Gallery in Moscow; Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros in Mexico City, and the Museu Coleção Berardo in Lisbon. His work has been included in the Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011), Biennale of Sydney (2008) and Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2007).

Jing Yuan Huang was born and raised in mainland China and immigrated to Canada in 2002. She received a BFA from Concordia University in 2005 and a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008. Major projects include a series of mixed-media paintings, first shown in 2006, entitled *Anachronism*, as well as *Transmigrating Inadequacy*, comprised of site-specific murals created from photocopy enlargements of digitally scanned photographs produced from her original drawings. The *Transmigrating* series was first exhibited in Chicago and later in Berlin, as well as being presented in artist-run centers and public galleries in seven provinces across Canada. After a return to China in 2010, her work has focused on the contradictions and disconnections within Chinese society, and between China and the world. Two major series have been produced during this period: *Confucius City Project* and *I Am Your Agency*. *Confucius City Project* is an on-going project involving installations, artist books, drawings,

and paintings, taking as its subject the activities, events, and projects stemming from an imaginary city. The series' title refers to the state-run Confucius Institutes, which promote China internationally under the guise of supporting cultural exchange. *I Am Your Agency* (begun in 2013) is comprised of painting installations that depict the collision of traditional and global culture, and the paradox of a nation whose rulers have been forced to liberalize yet see liberty as a threat.

Jen Liu is a visual artist working in performance, video, and painting. Her most recent performance commission for six dancers, *The Red Detachment of Women*, premiered at the Whitney Museum of Art, and her most recent video, *The Machinist's Lament*, featured in the 2015 Berlinale, 2014 Shanghai Biennial, and The New Museum in 2015, among others. She has also presented work at The Sculpture Center, On Stellar Rays, and Issue Project Room, New York; the Aspen Museum of Art; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; MUSAC, Leon; Royal Academy and ICA in London; Kunsthau Zurich; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, and public commissions on the Manhattan Bridge and Times Square. Liu will have forthcoming exhibitions with Triple Canopy (digital commission); Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam; a performance and video commission scheduled for 6 locations world-wide; and the Goethe Institute, Brussels. Liu lives and works in New York.

Lisi Raskin's most recent work explores the intersections between utopian architecture, the idiom of western abstraction, community connectivity, capitalist individualism, materialism, energetics, and art pedagogy. Since 1998, Brooklyn-based artist Lisi Raskin has traveled to the Arctic Circle, former East German and Yugoslav Atomic bunkers, and through the American west chasing the specter of nuclear-age fears and utopian mythologies as they manifest in oral histories and the architectures of the Cold War. Raskin's on-site research has informed the making of paintings, drawings, objects, videos, and large, constructed environments that she has exhibited internationally at institutions including the Frankfurter Kunstverein, the Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius, PS1/MoMA Contemporary Art Center, and the Center for Curatorial Studies/Hessel Museum at Bard College. She has built large-scale environments and site-sensitive sound projects at multiple biennials. In 2013, Raskin was the recipient of a Creative Time Global Residency grant, focusing on Soviet infrastructural projects, war museums, and monuments in Kabul and Herat. Raskin was born in Miami, Florida. She received her BA in Fine Arts from Brandeis University in 1996 and her MFA from Columbia University in 2003. Raskin is an Associate Professor in the Painting Department at Tyler School of Art, Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

Anna Rubin is an artist based in New York. She works predominantly in video, examining the way different types of cultural performance generate communities on and offline. Anna received her BFA from RISD in 2013 and continued her studies as a guest student with Hito Steyerl at The Universität der Künste in Berlin.

Christine I. Ho, assistant professor of East Asian Art, received her BA from Wellesley College and PhD in art history from Stanford University. She specializes in late imperial, modern, and contemporary Chinese art. Her research focuses on ink painting, aesthetics and politics, global socialist visual culture, and the postsocialist legacy. Additional teaching and research interests include histories of landscape and environment, transnational art movements, public art, and design cultures. Her research has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, Henry Luce Foundation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation. She is currently revising her doctoral dissertation, *Drawing From Life: Mass Sketching and the Formation of Socialist Realist Guohua*, into a book manuscript, and writing a monograph, tentatively titled *Collective Brush-work*, on the history, theory, and practice of collective art production spanning wartime China, the Maoist era, and the Reform period.

Ksenia Nouril is a New York-based curator and scholar of modern and contemporary Central and Eastern European art. A Ph.D. candidate and Dodge Fellow at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Ksenia is writing her dissertation on the work of contemporary Eastern European artists who actively question and engage with history and historical representations of socialism since 1989. At the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, Ksenia has assisted in numerous exhibitions of the Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union. Currently, she is organizing the exhibition *Dreamworlds and Catastrophes: Intersections of Art and Science* in the Dodge Collection, which will open in March 2016. When not dissertating or curating, Ksenia is a Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives

(C-MAP) Fellow at The Museum of Modern Art, where she researches and plans programming related to Central and Eastern European art. Previously, she was the Research and Editorial Assistant for the Thomas Walther Collection in the Department of Photography at MoMA, where she co-organized the exhibition *Production-Reproduction: The Circulation of Photographic Modernism, 1900-1950*. Ksenia has published in the Oxford Benezit Dictionary of Artists, The Calvert Journal, Art Margins Online, and on various platforms of moma.org.

David Xu Borgonjon is based in New York, where he plans and analyzes contemporary art strategies and logistics. Recent projects include *Harlem: I'm Still Here*, and the recently founded *Admin Group*, which employs administration as the artful form of power. He is a managing editor of *SCREEN* and a fellow at the Laundromat Project, and his writing is forthcoming in *Randian*, *&&&*, and *the Journal for Chinese Contemporary Art*. Previously, he directed exhibitions at Eyebeam Center for Art and Technology, and was also Curatorial Fellow at Wave Hill. He received a Dual B.A.-B.F.A. from Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, where he was trained as a literary critic and painter.

Arseny Zhilyaev (born 1984 in Voronezh, Russia) is an artist who lives and works in Moscow and Voronezh. Using artistic, political, scientific, and museological histories to uncover and propose potential futures, Zhilyaev explores a productive space between fiction and non-fiction. Within his recent projects, the artist casts a revisionist lens on the heritage of soviet museology: *Cradle of Humankind*, V-a-c Foundation, *Tre Oci, Venice*; Museum of Proletarian Culture. Industrialisation of Bohemia, Tretyakov State Gallery, Moscow, 2012; *Pedagogical poem* in collaboration with Ilya Budraitskis and collective of the project, Presnya Historical Memorial Museum, V-a-c Foundation, Moscow, 2012; and *M.I.R.: New paths to the objects and M.I.R.: Polite Guests from the Future*, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris and San Francisco, 2014. Since 2011, Zhilyaev has also been a member of the editorial board of the Moscow art magazine, *Khudozhestvennyi Zhurnal*. He is a contributor of *e-flux Journal* and others. Zhilyaev graduated from Voronezh State University, Philosophical Faculty (2006); Moscow Institute of Contemporary Art (2008); and MA International Programs, Valand School of Fine Arts, Goteborg, Sweden (2010). Recent accolades include the Innovation 2010 Russian state award in the sphere of contemporary art, the Soratnik [Companion-in- Arms] 2010 and 2012 awards, and a nomination for the Visible Award in 2013.

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