

Ai Weiwei (born 1957) is a Chinese artist and political activist. He was born into a dissident family, and in the early 1980s, fearing persecution by the authorities, moved to the USA. In the States he was educated as a designer and got to know the local arts scene. Returning to China in 1993 as a result of his father's illness, he began working as a designer, going on to become the director of the Chinese Art Archive and Depository and designer of the Bird's Nest Stadium for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Following the Szechuan earthquake, Ai initiated an investigation into government corruption leading to poor construction of kindergartens and schools, which he claimed had led to the death of many students in the earthquake. In 2011, he was detained by the police for 81 days, and the authorities went on to forbid him from leaving China, accusing him of "economic crimes." As a result, international stars of the arts world came to his defense, including Anish Kapoor, Olafur Eliasson, and Nicholas Serota, among many others. According to *ArtReview*, Ai came top in the rating of the most influential people in the art world in 2011.

Andy Warhol (1928–1987) was a leading American painter, film-maker, photographer, designer, producer, and a key figure in the Pop art movement. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to a family of Slovak immigrants, he spent much of his childhood at home due to continual illnesses. During this period he developed an interest in drawing and began to assemble his first collages from newspaper and magazine cuttings. In 1949, he moved to New York, where he studied at Carnegie Institute of Technology, and found work as an artist and illustrator for *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. In 1962, he had his debut solo exhibition. Later, he was one of the first to use screen-printing techniques. This became the first step in the embodiment of his key idea—the mass production of artistic works. He used the technique to reproduce his paintings of Coca-Cola cans, Campbell's soup cans, and portraits of celebrities, which he churned out along with his assistants in a studio in Manhattan that he called the Factory, a famous gathering place for New York City's Bohemian circle. In this way he questioned one of the key myths of creativity—the genius artist working alone on unique, original art objects. In the 1960s and 1970s, he made a large number of films, including 472 black and white "screen test" portraits of visitors to the Factory, and over 100 short and feature films, and in 1969 he founded the fashion magazine *Interview*.

Vitaly Komar (born 1943) and **Alexander Melamid** (born 1945) are Russian artists who live and work in America. Both graduated from the Stroganov Art Institute at the end of the 1950s, working predominantly in painting. They won renown in the 1970s as founders of the Sots Art (Soviet Pop art) style. While American Pop art was a reaction to the production of goods for mass consumption in the USA, Sots Art was a Russian response to the schizophrenic over-production of Soviet ideological images: portraits of leaders, slogans against red backgrounds, state symbolism, and so on. As a creative duo, Komar and Melamid took part in the famous "Bulldozer Exhibition" in 1974, as a result of which their dual self-portrait, where they depicted themselves in profile against a red background as Lenin and Stalin, was destroyed. They are among the most famous Russian artists in the West, featuring in the collections of leading international museums, including the Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum (New York), and the Victoria & Albert Museum (London).

Semyon Faibisovich was born in 1949 in Moscow and graduated from the Moscow Architectural Institute in 1972. His works have been featured in underground exhibitions throughout Moscow since 1976. In the 1980s, Faibisovich produced a series of colorful paintings depicting people of the Soviet-era on buses and commuter trains, in metro stations, standing in line to buy vodka on the street, or sitting outside on benches. Faibisovich is interested in the 'beautiful horror' of everyday life – that which we see but ignore. Although the artist's staring contest with Soviet reality ended with the latter's collapse, his habit of looking closely remained, and Faibisovich switched his visual focus from what we see to how we see it. He instead turned to painting the residual effects of images we see on the eyelid – where the negative aspects of

reality emerge and gradually transform into abstract shapes – thus again focusing on what we see without realizing that we are witnessing it. Faibisovich abandoned painting in 1995, but reemerged in 2007, painting brushstrokes over low-quality photographic images taken with a mobile telephone.

Konstantin Khudyakov (born 1945) was born and lives in Moscow. Having graduated from the Moscow Architecture Institute, he developed an interest in Russian Constructivism, though he soon turned to painting. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he began to experiment with new technologies, first introducing into his artistic arsenal a video camera, and then a video projector. Later, having mastered computer technologies and specialized software, he created synthetic images on themes that differed greatly in terms of their conceptual content: religion, the “Russian Idea”, and so on. Over the lengthy course of his career, Khudyakov has exhibited in leading Russian art institutes and museums, as well as in international galleries.

Sergei Bratkov (born 1960) is a Ukrainian artist and photographer. Together with Boris Mikhailov and Sergei Solonsky, he founded the Fast Reaction Group in 1994. From 2000, he has lived and worked in Moscow. Bratkov’s claim that he attempts to turn his photographs into sculptures where the shape, volume and mass are important elements, is reinforced by the non-standard formats that he employs: vast photographs are often mounted directly onto the wall or turned into light boxes of various shapes. Bratkov has frequently participated in international biennials, including São Paulo (2002), Manifesta (2004), and Venice (2005, 2007).

Alexander Calder (1898–1976) is an American sculptor. Both his father and his grandfather were sculptors, and he began to master this art from early childhood. In 1926 he moved to Paris, where he was close to avant-garde artists such as Miró, Man Ray, Mondrian, and Léger. It was at this time that he found his own form in sculpture—striking figures made in wire, recalling “drawings” unfolding in space, whose flexibility allowed the artist to change their configuration as he desired. Calder went on to take an interest in the circus, recreating it in miniature in the form of small toys controlled like marionettes by short wires. Later, his creative search led him to the creation of his “mobiles”—abstract kinetic constructions engineered into a fragile equilibrium. Soon, his “stabiles” appeared—static, painted sculptures made of metal, often copying the forms of technical constructions. Calder’s works are in the collections of the world’s most important museums, and his large-scale sculptures are installed in the squares of many European and American towns and cities.

Oleg Tselkov (born 1934) is a Russian artist. Since 1977, he has lived and worked in Paris, having “accepted the proposal” of the authorities that he leave the Soviet Union. Since 1960, Tselkov has been developing a key creative theme in his works – large-format deformations of human faces and figures, painted in striking colors on canvas. In an interview, he described looking at a human face and realizing: “this isn’t the face of a specific person, it is humanity in general, as a whole. That’s to say that I, without knowing it, accidentally pulled the mask off all faces in one go. I didn’t set myself the goal of ‘tearing off masks’ ... I couldn’t have any specific complaints about a specific person, but I have a very specific complaint about people en masse.” Tselkov’s works are in the State Tretyakov Gallery, the Pushkin Museum, the State Hermitage, the Russian Museum, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

Andreas Gursky (born 1955) is a German artist. He learnt photography from his father, a successful commercial photographer, and then studied for two years at the renowned Folkwangschule, and later at the State Dusseldorf Academy of Arts. At the beginning of the 1990s, he began to use computer technologies to process his photographs. Gursky’s style is extremely recognizable: large-scale photographs, measuring 2 x 4 meters, created using the C-

Print technique and containing an immeasurably large amount of information: rows and rows of shelving bearing foodstuffs in supermarkets; huge rock concerts with hundreds of thousands in the audiences, shot from a high point of view; stock exchanges teeming with life like ant hills. Gursky's world appears to be extraordinarily rich and monumental on the one hand, whilst on the other it is weighed down by its ultimately atomized and isolated nature. It is perhaps in this that his key point of view lies, as he studies the construction of society in the globalized epoch.

Jake and Dinos Chapman (born 1966 and 1962 respectively) are British artists who graduated from the Royal College of Art, London, and have been working together since 1991. Along with other talented young artists, they were spotted by the collector and media magnate Charles Saatchi at the beginning of the 1990s, who began to promote them actively. This group went on to be dubbed the YBAs – the Young British Artists. The first series by the Chapmans to gain recognition was *The Disasters of War* – works based on a set of engravings by Francisco Goya, including *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, wax figures of dismembered and castrated soldiers hanging on a tree. The Chapman's provocative approach continued with a series of [mannequins](#) of children with [genitalia](#) in place of facial features, and their sculpture *Hell* (2000) consisting of [miniature figures of Nazis](#) arranged in glass cases laid out in the shape of a [swastika](#). They also continue to reference other artists, such as Blake, Rodin, and Poussin.

Kendell Geers was born in South Africa in 1965. He took an interest in politics while young and ran away from home at the age of fifteen to join the struggle against Apartheid. Fearing persecution by the authorities, in 1989 he left South Africa and moved to Great Britain, where he found work as an assistant to Richard Prince. Geers was only able to return to his homeland in 1990, following the freeing of Nelson Mandela. From that period onwards, he began working as an artist, art critic, curator and performance artist. For the most part, Geers works with political themes, and his motifs include sirens, barbed wire and broken glass. In his installations and videos, Geers uses a language that allows him to establish a unique form of communication with spectators. From 1993, he has taken part in numerous exhibitions, including documenta, and the Istanbul and Venice Biennales.

Mikhail Shvartsman (1926–1997) is a Russian artist. He graduated from the Higher Arts and Industry Institute. At the beginning of the 1960s he entered the Second Russian Avant Garde group of artists. Shvartsman's paintings feature complex, sacral semantics. In each of his images we can make out a magical search comprised of mysterious letters, mystic altars, and totems. Shvartsman has dubbed his works "hierators," from the Greek word "hieraticos," meaning "cult" or "sacred," a term that he says came to him in a dream. "Architectonically," he has said, "the mystic experience of man is compressed in the hierator. The hierator is born in ecstasy. A sign of mystical experience that reveals itself to the human consciousness, a pre-memory, a pre-consciousness."

Nikolay Nasedkin (born 1954) is a Russian artist. From 1970 to 1974 he studied at the Fedoskinskaya Miniature Painting School, and he has been a member of the Moscow Union of Artists since 1985. Experts regard Nasedkin as one of the leading masters of post-Soviet Expressionism. In his painting, a rich black predominates, drawing all the other colors into it and creating a minor-key mood. However, the artist uses his pictures as a surface for the translation of emotions and a perception of a world where, beyond the impenetrable darkness, lies hope. In this way he appeals to eternal philosophical questions: good and evil, fear and hope, a flight from the horrors of human existence. Nasedkin has exhibited at the Russian Museum (2012), the exhibition of nominees for the Kandinsky Prize (2009), the Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2007) and many other notable institutions.

Valery Koshlyakov (born 1962) is a Russian artist. In 1985, he graduated from the Grekov

Rostov Institute, and in the 1990s he was a member of the renowned artistic commune in Tryokhprudny Alley, where he took part in exhibitions and actions. Today, he lives and works between Moscow and Paris. Koshlyakov's painting has a unique and instantly recognizable style. As a surface, he uses packaging cardboard, which for his early works, he found in garbage dumps. The main theme to which he returns again and again is landscapes of abandoned cities, places in ruins, capitals of formerly great empires, painted in faded, washed-out tones. Time in these works has stopped, and the people have disappeared, never to return.

Sam Durant (born 1961) is an American artist who lives and works in Los Angeles. In 1986 he received a Baccalaureate in arts from the Massachusetts Arts Institute and a Masters from the California Arts Institute. Durant works with a wide range of social, political and cultural themes. Often referencing the history of America, and combining this with an analysis of contemporary civil rights movements, the rock scene and other striking phenomena of modernity, Durant attempts to identify the nature of relations between culture and politics. His works have been exhibited at many international museums and art institutions, including the Los Angeles Arts Museum, S.M.A.K., Ghent, the Venice Biennale, the Sidney Biennial and the Whitney Biennial, New York.

Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe (1969–2013) was a Russian artist born in Leningrad. In the mid-1980s he worked with Timur Novikov's New Artists group, founding in 1989 the Pirate Television company. In this project, Mamyshev-Monroe wrote all the scripts and performed almost all of the roles. His main artistic device was transformation, often taking the form of performance, which he first carried out as a soldier in the army when he dressed up as Marilyn Monroe. A series of images followed, both historical and mythical: Andy Warhol, Vladimir Putin, Danaë, Elizabeth II, Lyubov Orlov and many more. Mamyshev-Monroe's name is also linked to a series of political scandals in the arts sphere. In 1995, the mayor of Moscow demanded the closure of an exhibition of works at the Yakut Gallery, which featured the artist as Adolph Hitler. Monroe was also involved in the *Caution Religion!* case in 2003. His main role in the fashion show *Polonium* in December of 2012 was the artist's last, prior to his premature death in 2013.

AES+F is a Russian art group, formed in 1987. The name is derived from the initials of its permanent members - Tatiana Arzamasova, Lev Evzovich, Evgeny Svyatsky, and the photographer Vladimir Fridkes, who joined the group in 1995. In their work, they raise topical social and philosophical issues that are translated through various media and techniques - installations, sculpture, photography. AES+F have mainly gained their international renown thanks to their video works, however, which are characterized by high-quality images saturated with color, and the smooth dynamics of the action. They are currently among Russia's most famous artists, and their video project *Last Riot* was presented in the Russian pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007).

Alexander Brodsky (born 1955), is a Soviet and Russian architect and artist, one of the founders of the *Paper Architecture* movement. This group united young architects sharing progressive, creative views who saw no way of working in the ideologized conditions of the late Soviet period. At the beginning of the 2000s, after several years spent working predominantly as an artist in the USA, Brodsky returned to Russia and became a practicing architect. In his constructions and installations, he allows spectators to experience the images of the past in works that, as Kiril Ass has observed, "imperceptibly transform the experience of the everyday into a deep sensation." Whether in the recreation in an exhibition space of a traditional train compartment, complete with tea glasses clinking in their metal holders (*The Journey*, 2010), or a simple window, through which we can make out cozy family life (*Windows*, 2010), each of Brodsky's works reanimates the everyday past.

Oleg Golosiy (1965–1993) was a Ukrainian artist. He studied at the Kiev Arts Institute and the Monumental Painting Department of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Architecture. He began his artistic career during the second half of the 1980s and quickly became one of the most notable figures on the Kiev arts scene. In his paintings, Golosiy searched for an alternative to Soviet Academism and, together with his circle of friends and colleagues, formed an independent movement that fully engaged with the international contemporary arts context. Towards the beginning of the 1990s, Golosiy became renowned beyond the borders of Ukraine, particularly in Moscow. As interest in his work was growing among the public at large and in professional circles, he died prematurely, though he left behind a significant body of works for an artist aged just 27.

Jac Leirner is a Brazilian artist. She was introduced to the world of modern art by his parents, who collected art, and educated at the Visual Arts College in São Paulo. In the 1980s, Leirner began creating conceptual sculptures and installations, using out-of-circulation banknotes, airline tickets, cigarette packets, and carrier bags. She carefully selects and places these objects, taking them out of their natural, utilitarian context, delineating the distance between their primary function and their artistic purposes. In this way, the objects acquire a new status. In 1990, she accepted an invitation to become a visiting researcher in Oxford. She has taken part in significant international events such as the São Paulo Biennial (1990) and documenta (IX), and represented Brazil at the 47th Venice Biennale (1997).

Evan Penny was born in South Africa in 1953 and currently lives and works in Toronto. He graduated from the Alberta College of Art and Design, going on to work in digital photography, though he soon turned to sculpture. All of Penny's sculptures are of human figures created using hyper-realistic techniques and the application of silicon, aluminum, pigments, and natural hair. They are distinguished from living humans, however, for the most part by their scale. At the initial stage in his career, the artist created his works in proportions that were greatly reduced in relation to the classical human scale, but over time they "evolved" into giants that can stand several times taller than the average man. At present, Penny is working on a reconsideration of the borders of three-dimensional space, resulting in sculptures that stretch out along the vertical axis, but still executed with great technological precision.

Oleg Kulik (born 1961), is a Russian artist born in Kiev. Despite having started out in the second half of the 1980s as a sculptor and creator of installations, he won international fame through his performances. He became truly renowned in the 1990s, thanks to his radical acts. Perhaps the most famous was *Rabid Dog, or the Last Taboo, Guarded by Lonely Cerebrus* (1994). During the course of this performance, the artist took on the role of a dog, walking naked in the street on all fours, barking and sometimes attacking passersby. The performance reached its culmination at a scandalous INTERPOL exhibition in Stockholm, where the artist bit the visitors to the event and was taken off to a police station. Having gone down in the history of Russian art as one of the most striking representatives of Moscow actionism, Kulik continues to practice in Moscow, and his works can be found in many international collections and exhibitions around the world.