**MOSCOW GOVERNMENT**

**MULTIMEDIA ART MUSEUM, MOSCOW**

**PRESENT THE EXHIBITION**

**IGOR SAMOLET**

**ENERGY OF A MISTAKE**

Exhibition runs20 December 2019 — 2 February 2020

**Curator:** Anna Zaitseva

Exhibition from the МАММ collection

**With support of:** Tele2

The Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow presents a new project by Rodchenko Photography and Multimedia School graduate Igor Samolet, ‘Energy of a Mistake,’ in which the author studies the problem of human relationships through both social and digital filters.

All of the artist’s projects are characterized by a complex dramaturgy: from comedy to genuine dramatism. Samolet interprets the image of the contemporary person through emotional fragility, showing that vulnerability inside a gigantic digital space. Screen culture dictates new rules of the game and algorithms for interpersonal interactions: ‘live’ human communication has given way to social networks and various chats, intonations have been replaced with emoji, and faces are replaced with masks in Snapchat and Instagram.

A new reality demands a new visual language. Igor Samolet calls his pieces ‘content of the form’: these are screenshots of the artist’s phone screen which include playlists, news, messenger conversations, selfies with Instagram and Snapchat masks, and Facebook posts — anything that he liked, that caught his attention, or that seemed important. The author shows how a screenshot can become a kind of ‘deciding moment’: a new form or genre in photography.

This installation of fabric and other light materials on which the artist’s everyday smartphone content is ‘composed’ in the form of screenshots symbolises the ephemerality of digital space, lacking physical parametres, from which each of us nevertheless ‘sews virtual clothing.’

Igor Samolet considers himself part of the ‘20:20’ (twenty-twenty) generation of artists. This term, which refers us to the tradition of noticing and screening double numbers on our phone’s clocks while making a wish, is the artist’s invention. The generation of artists who came of age in the era of neural networks, news aggregators and social network algorithms is reimagining the fundamental problems of human existence: freedom, happiness, faith and self-identification in digital reality, while modelling possible versions of its development with an accent on its most problematic aspects — for example, the appearance of seemingly harmless entertainment applications that quietly collect social network users’ personal data a la Big Brother from George Orwell’s ‘1984.’ In Igor Samolet’s installation, the troubling feeling of an external presence is manifest through surveillance cameras, which have become one of the symbols of contemporary civilisation. Their endless blinking lets us know: ‘Big Brother is watching you!’

By placing visitors inside his field of communication, the artist forces them to think about the problem of privacy in the digital era. Personal data have become goods, while our desires, tastes and preferences are precious material for market researchers at global corporations who analyse our search queries and offer services for any taste.

Unlike the traditions of post-modernism that hide the artist’s identity behind a wall of quotes, Igor Samolet’s ‘Energy of a Mistake’ is as personal as possible. In the exhibit title, the artist unveils the essence of his creative method: ‘A mistake, which creates imperfection, personalises experience and makes it interesting in the process. All of my responses are personalised: I use my daily experience as foothold in the creation of my work. In describing my reaction, I describe the time in which I live and discover myself as a participant in global processes.’

In essence, the exhibit is Igor Samolet’s diary, expanded in space. On its pages and in its screenshots, engaging his circle of friends and audiences in the discussion, the artist asks one of the most important questions that interest humanity over time: how can we be happy in our historical given circumstances?

The effect of a virtual diary is repeatedly strengthened thanks to the actual paper diaries of a Moscow school boy, Oleg Chernevsky, from 1936—1937, included in the exhibit from the archives of the International Memorial Society, which are unique historical evidence of one of the most tragic periods in Soviet history. The teenager wrote about the arrests, public trials and shootings that concerned his family: Oleg’s father, Vsevolod Chernevsky, was arrested on 15 November 1937 on charges of participating in a military conspiracy. These entries are side-by-side in his journal with stories about successes at school, his classmates, purchases, trips to the movies, New Year celebrations, and experiences of being in love: everything that fills the daily life of any person and allows them to find reasons to rejoice in the most difficult conditions.

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Igor Samolet is a Russian artist, born in 1984 in Kotlas, who graduated from the Rodchenko School in 2013.

The artist has had two solo exhibits at Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow (curated by Anna Zaitseva), which were later successfully shown in Paris and Vienna.

In 2019, Igor Samolet was awarded the prestigious Credit Suisse and Cosmoscow prize for young artists.

Participant in the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art grant programme (2018—2019; 2019—2020).

We thank the International Memorial for providing Oleg Chernevsky’s journals.

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