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For Immediate Release:

## FotoFest Announces Artists and Programming for 2012 Biennial

# CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY 1950s – 2012

March 16 – April 29, 2012

Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

[www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org)



Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe, *Charlie Chaplin*, from the series *Heart Cancer*, 2004.  
Courtesy of ART4.RU Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow.

**HOUSTON, TEXAS, JANUARY 23, 2012** – FotoFest announces the Russian artists and exhibitions for its **2012 Biennial Contemporary Russian Photography**, which opens in **Houston, Texas**, on **March 16, 2012** and will be on view **through April 29, 2012**. The Biennial explores modern and contemporary Russian photographic history over the last five decades, from the post-Stalinist period of the 1950s to the present day. Three main exhibitions, created for the FotoFest 2012 Biennial, present three periods of Russian modern and contemporary photography, with the works of 142 artists from Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine: ***After Stalin***, ***“The Thaw”***, ***The Re-emergence of the Personal Voice (1950s-1970s)***, ***Perestroika, Liberalization and Experimentation (1980s-2010)***, and ***The Young Generation (2009-2012)***. Of the works, on loan from private collections and the archives of the artists themselves, many are being shown for the first time outside of Russia.

With a population of 143 million people, Russia spans two continents and nine time zones, while its citizens speak 28 languages. It is a global powerhouse fitfully engaged with capitalism, consumerism and an ongoing struggle to define itself as a modern nation in the context of its own history and culture. FotoFest’s 2012 Biennial will serve to introduce an international audience to never- or little-before-seen contemporary Russian art practice and culture through the medium of photography.

The FotoFest 2012 Biennial is the Fourteenth International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art, and it is the United States’ first and longest-running international photographic art event. Event and visitor information is available on the Fotofest website at [www.fotofest.org/2012biennial](http://www.fotofest.org/2012biennial).

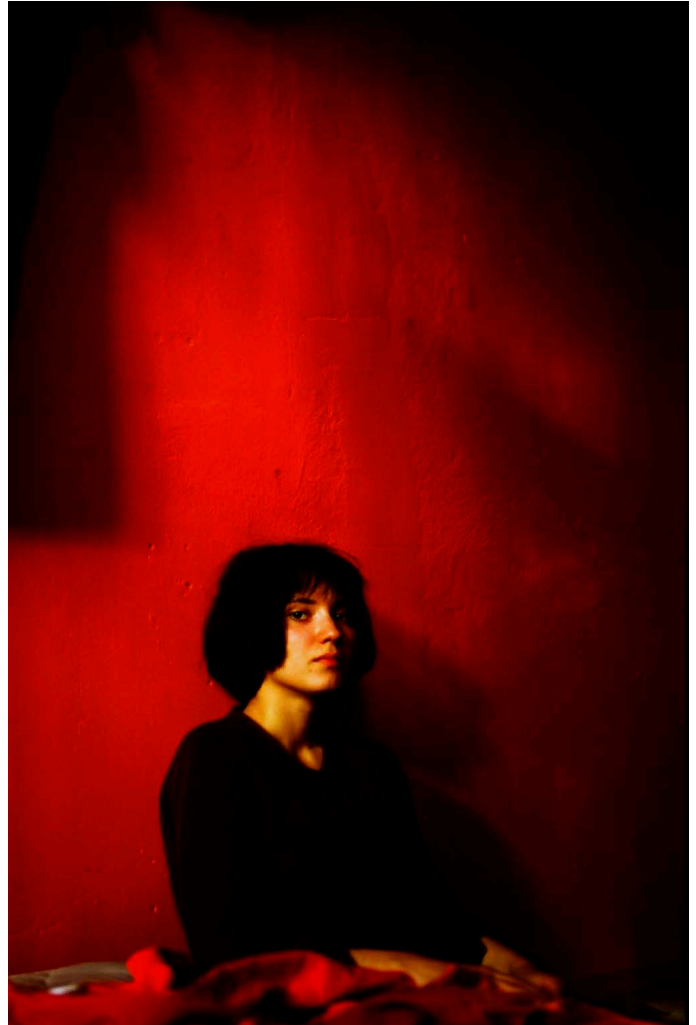
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The Biennial Catalogue, co-published with Schilt Publishing in Amsterdam, will present the full range of the Russian exhibitions as well as 50 independent exhibitions presented by Houston's leading art museums, galleries, non-profit and corporate art spaces. A Biennial Map and Calendar, with information on all Biennial programs and locations, will be available at over 100 sites across Houston and online in late February 2012.

## **FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL EXHIBITIONS – CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY**

The three main FotoFest 2012 Biennial exhibitions feature 800 historic and contemporary works including classical photography, video and mixed-media installations. These exhibitions look at the evolution of creative photographic art in Russia from the beginning of “The Thaw” through the late 1970s, the early and late periods of Perestroika reforms (late 1980s to 2010), to the current period (2009-2011). These exhibitions are accompanied by a special exhibition of Soviet photojournalists who were winners of World Press Photo Awards from 1950-1991.

An international team of curators from Russia and the United States has organized the main Biennial exhibitions. The Russian curators are Evgeny Berezner, head of the “In Support of Photography in Russia” Project, The Iris Foundation, Moscow; Irina Chmyreva, Senior Researcher at the Russian Academy of Fine Arts; and Natalia Tarasova, a writer and cultural affairs consultant for the “In Support of Photography in Russia” Project. Leading figures in Russian photography and culture, Mr. Berezner, Dr. Chmyreva and Ms. Tarasova have organized more than 200 exhibitions with Russian artists over the past 15 years. The Russian curators are joined by Wendy Watriss, Senior Curator and Artistic Director of FotoFest.



Alexey Kuzmitchev, *Poet*, 2006, Courtesy of the artist

“These exhibitions tracing the re-emergence and history of independent art photography in Russian photography will challenge expectations and open the door to surprising encounters with Russian photographic art,” says Fred Baldwin, FotoFest Chairman and Co-founder. “They bring visibility to personalities and creative directions in Russian visual art that have been largely invisible to the outside world in recent decades.”

### ***After Stalin, “The Thaw”, The Re-emergence of the Personal Voice - The late 1950s-1970s***

**FotoFest at Williams Tower Gallery, 2800 Post Oak, Houston, Texas**

With Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 and the rise to power of Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet government opened a period of episodic reforms that became known as “The Thaw.” Between alternating years of openness and years of constriction, artists managed to find independent avenues for self-expression. In twenty-five years of complex shifts in the political, cultural and economic life of the Soviet Union, there was space for the development of a personal voice, even in one of the most closely supervised areas of Soviet culture – photography.

These reforms created the possibility of closer contact with non-Communist nations, including the United States, which presented two important and wildly popular U.S.-organized art exhibitions in Moscow in 1959 – Edward Steichen's *Family of Man* and the *American National Exhibition*.

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Many of the works in this section of the Russian exhibitions are vintage photographic prints on loan from private collectors Natalia Grigorieva and Edward Litvinsky, founders and owners of the **Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography in Moscow**, founded in conjunction with one of the first private galleries in Russia devoted to fine art photography.

Other works come from members of **Novator**, one of the most important and enduring of the independent Russian photography associations, founded in the early 1960s by individual photographers and photography lovers in Russia. More than photo clubs, the intent of these associations was to open a space where photographers could present and discuss new ideas in photography, and re-visit the unofficial, often banned, works of Russian-Soviet photography of the previous three decades. Members of these associations shared historical and contemporary works not approved by the state.

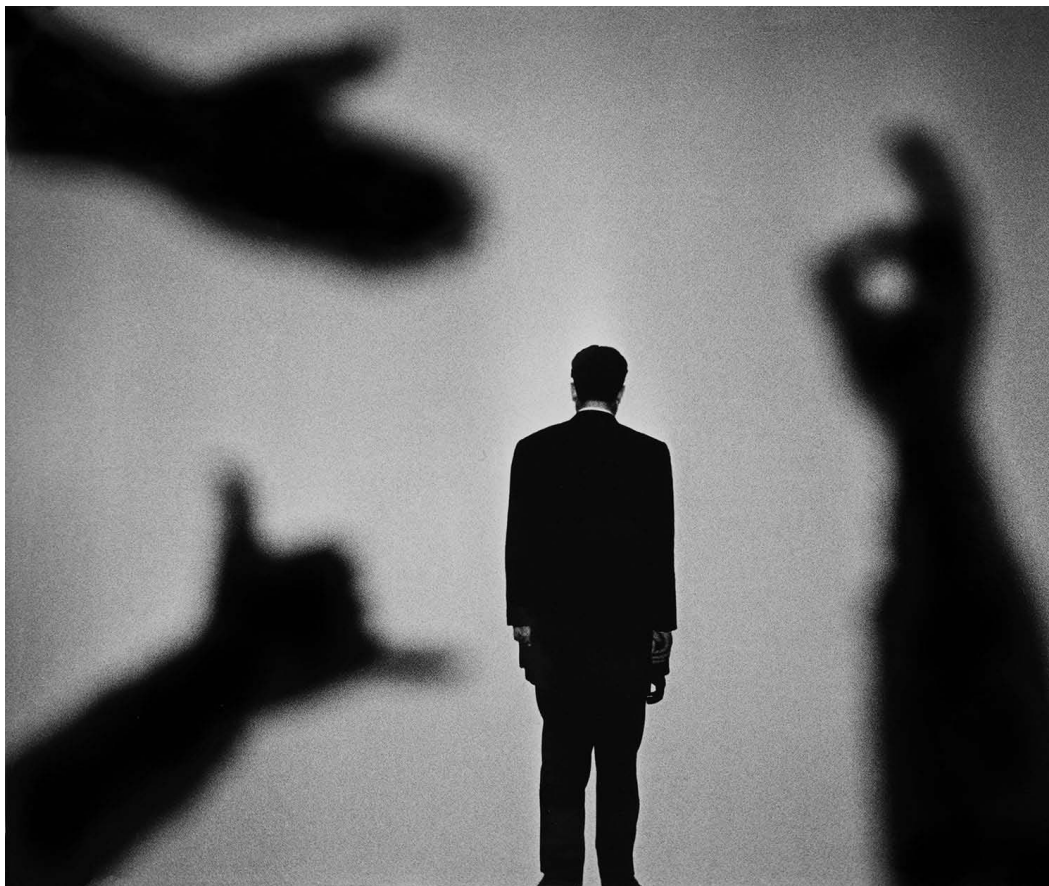
Featured artists include:

Alexander Abaza  
Yury Abramochkin  
Victor Ahlomov  
Max Alpert  
Dmitry Baltermants  
Anatoly Boldin  
Alexander Borodulin  
Lev Borodulin  
Vitaly Butyrin  
Michail Dashevsky  
Boris Dolmatovsky  
Vasily Egorov  
Anatoly Erin  
Emmanuel Evzerikhin

Semyon Fridlyand  
Igor Gavrilov  
Elena Glazycheva  
Igor Gnevashev  
Mikola Gnisyuk  
Mikhail Grachev  
Naum Granovsky  
Alexander Grashchenkov  
Zinaida Karetnikova  
Valentin Khukhlaev  
Yury Korovin  
Jury Krivonosov  
Vasily Kunyaev  
Vladimir Lagrange

Galina Lukianova  
Jury Lunkov  
Oleg Makarov  
Nikolay Matorin  
Vilhelm Mikhailovsky  
Alexandres Matsiyauskas  
Eduard Musin  
Igor Palmin  
Sergey Petrukhin  
Lev Porter  
Nikolay Samoilov  
Boris Saveliev  
Lev Sherstennikov  
Valentin Sobolev

Antanas Sutkus  
Vsevolod Tarasevich  
Sergey Ter-Oganesov  
Mikhail Trakhman  
Boris Trepetov  
Oleg Tsesarsky  
Isaac Tunkel  
Alexander Ustinov  
Alexey Vasiliev  
Alexander Vikhansky  
German Vorotnikov



Vladimir Lagrange, *The Alphabet of the Deaf*, c. 1960, Courtesy of the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, Moscow.

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An exhibition of World Press Photo Award winners from the Soviet Union between 1956-1991 show another aspect of Soviet photography during this period. This exhibition, organized by the Russian curators in conjunction with CANON Ru and Cultural Project “RUSS PRESS PHOTO”, presents images by 42 Soviet photojournalists, including the important photographers Gennady Koposov, Vladimir Musaelyan, Sergey Vasiliev, Valery Shustov, Vladimir Vyatkin, and Viktoria Ivleva.

***Perestroika, Liberalization and Experimentation - The mid/late 1980s-2010***

**FotoFest at Winter Street Studios, 2101 Winter St., and Spring St. Studios, 1824 Spring St, Houston, Texas**

The mid/late 1980s and the 1990s were a period of profound transition for the Soviet Union. The well-known reform movements *Glasnost* (openness) and *Perestroika* (economic restructuring) changed the country irrevocably and ultimately set the stage for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. These movements vastly expanded the cultural openings of the previous decades. The 1980s and 1990s brought about the dissolution of state censorship and extraordinary opportunities were created for an open examination of Soviet and Russian society. The 1990s were a decade of unregulated capitalist growth that created a class of newly affluent business people and consumers of mass culture.

Photography and other art forms saw a burst of creative energy and multi-faceted experimentalism that moved in many different directions. The first years of Perestroika were marked by hope. Artists not only re-interpreted all aspects of Soviet political language and life, but they also often moved art into non-traditional spaces, bringing it directly to the public. Later, with the ensuing political and economic chaos of the mid 1990s, artists became more openly critical, confronting traditional Soviet mores and parodying the external realities of Soviet-Russian life and ideology. In the early 21st century, as the heady and often violent conditions of change began to stabilize, many artists turned toward aesthetic and metaphysical explorations of photography itself. It was a twenty-five year period of remarkable diversity and creativity in Russian photography.



Valera and Natasha Cherkashin, From the installation *The Fall of Empire*, 1994-1997. Courtesy of the artists.

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The two Perestroika exhibitions are the largest of the Russian presentations at the FotoFest 2012 Biennial. They present internationally-known Russian artists such as Boris Mikhailov, AES+F, Sergey Bratkov, Andrey Chezhin, Alexey Titarenko, Francisco Infante, Valera and Natasha Cherkashin and Gregory Maiofis as well as:

Yury Babich	Alexander Kitaev	Nikita Mashkin	Alexander Samoilov
Nikolay Bakharev	Stas Klevak	Sergey Maximishin	Igor Savchenko
Andrey Bezukladnikov	Viktor Kochetov	Vladimir Mogilevsky	Vladimir Semin
Gennady Bodrov	Georgy Kolosov	Evgeny Mokhorev	Vladimir Shakhlevich
Yury Brodsky	Alexey Kolmykov	Galina Moskaleva	Alexey Shulgin
Vladimir Brylyakov	Yury Kozyrev	Igor Mukhin	Valery Shchekoldin
Vita Buivid	Nikolay Kulebyakin	Timur Novikov	Alexander Slusarev
Olga Chagaoutdinova	Igor Kultyshkin	Anton Olshvang	Boris Smelov
Alexander Chernogrivov	Vladimir Kupriyanov	Sergey Osmachkin	Pavel Smertin
Olga Chernyshova	Alexey Kuzmichev	Rita Ostrovskaya	Olga Tobreluts
Sergey Chilikov	Lyalya Kuznetsova	Evgeny Pavlov	Oleg Videnin
Oleg Dou	Mikhail Ladeishchikov	Ilya Piganov	Alexander Viktorov
Vladislav Efimov	Sergey Leontiev	Andrey Polushkin	Alik Yakubovich
Alexey Goga	Alexander Lapin	Svyatoslav Ponomarev	Alexander Yakut
Alexander Gronsky	Tatiana Liberman	Roman Pyatkovka	Evgeny Yufit
Vadim Gushchin	Vladislav Mamyshev-Monroe	Mark Rozov	

### ***The Young Generation - 2007-2012***

**FotoFest Headquarters at Vine Street Studios, 1113 Vine Street, Houston, Texas**

Unlike their predecessors, the young generation of Russian artists today has little direct experience with Soviet Communism. Growing up after its collapse, they began their careers as part of a globally-connected, consumerist and individual-oriented society. Although some have the means to leave Russia to study art in Western Europe and the U.S., many others continue to work inside Russia. In contrast to the sharply ironic and outward-looking artists of the Perestroika periods, younger artists are looking inward, immersed in their own personal experiences and the psychological dilemmas of growing up in modern-day Russia. The artists in *The Young Generation* exhibit are:

Tatiana Antonuk  
Oleg Borodin  
Roman Bregman  
Alexandra Demenkova  
Kir Esadov  
Maria Kozhanova  
Vlad Krasnoshchek  
Ivan Mikhailov  
Karen Mirzoyan  
Vasilisa Nezabarom  
Alisa Nikulina  
Margo Ovcharenko  
Nikita Pirogov  
Tatiana Plotnikova  
Petr Rakhmanov  
Dina Shchedrinskaya  
Anna Skladmann  
Alexandra Stukkey  
Anastasia Tailakova  
Denis Tarasov  
Fedor Telkov  
Daria Tuminas



Margo Ovcharenko, *Rita with a Cigarette*, 2010, From the series *Without Me*. Courtesy of the artist.

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## OTHER RUSSIAN PROGRAMS – FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL

FotoFest's 2012 **International Fine Print Auction**, on **Tuesday, March 20**, will present vintage and contemporary prints by 25 leading Russian artists from the 1960s to the present. It is the first time that most of these works will be available to the U.S. and international markets. The works are carefully selected by the FotoFest and Russian curators, and donated by the artists. In conjunction with the Fine Print Auction, FotoFest is planning **special programs for Photography Collectors, March 19-20, 2012**.

Russian artists are being featured in many other Biennial programs, including artist-curator forums, book signings, films and exhibition tours. They are also participating in the Biennial portfolio review. FotoFest's Biennial Bookstores will feature books of contemporary Russian photographic art as well as historical books from the collection of the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography.

Directors of the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, journalists from Russia's leading news and information agency RIA Novosti and other leading art and online media sources, Russian collectors and officials will attend FotoFest 2012 Biennial programs. Founders of the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography in Moscow will make a presentation about the Center during the festival's opening week. Russian curators and artists will participate in FotoFest's **international Meeting Place Portfolio Review for Artists**. Four **Artist-Curator Forums** will feature dialogues between exhibiting Russian artists and the Russian curators. Russian artists will present artist books at special book signings in conjunction with the portfolio review. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas" are organizing a **Russian Film Program** of feature films and documentaries in April 2012. A public performing arts event **Russian Spring Celebration** will be presented with the Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas," featuring Russian music and dance at Downtown Houston's Discovery Green Park in April 2012.

**Russian Partners** for the FotoFest Biennial programs are: The Iris Art Foundation; Garage Center for Contemporary Culture; ROSIZO State Center for Museums and Exhibitions of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; Russian International News and Information Agency RIA Novosti; Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, Moscow; CANON Ru, LLC; Cultural Project "RUSS PRESS PHOTO", Moscow; Russian Chamber of Commerce of Texas; Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas".

Special support for the Russian programs has been received from Singapore Airlines, the Official Airlines of the FotoFest 2012 Biennial – Russia, and The Trust for Mutual Understanding, New York.



Igor Savchenko, From the *Faceless* series, 1989, Courtesy of Nailya Alexander Gallery, New York.

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## **FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL CATALOGUE**

FotoFest is co-publishing the two-volume 2012 Biennial Catalogue with European publisher **Schilt Publishing** (Amsterdam, The Netherlands). The 500-page catalogue features more than 300 full-color images by Russian artists and essays by Russian Curators Evgeny Berezner and Irina Chmyreva on the history of contemporary Russian photography, the re-emergence and evolution of the personal voice in Russian art photography in the late 1950s and the end of Stalinism through the Perestroika years into the present.

The FotoFest 2012 Biennial Catalogue will be available late February 2012 at [www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org). FotoFest plans to produce a hardcover book on the Russian exhibitions and in addition to the English edition, Russian and German editions of the book are also planned.

## **OTHER BIENNIAL PROGRAMS**

Concurrent with FotoFest's own exhibitions of Contemporary Russian Photography, over 100 independent venues, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Menil Collection, and the city's major commercial art galleries, will participate in the 2012 Biennial by mounting exhibitions of photography. A full list of Biennial **Participating Spaces** is available on the FotoFest website at [www.fotofest.org/2012biennial/spaces](http://www.fotofest.org/2012biennial/spaces).

FotoFest's pioneering Meeting Place, Portfolio Review for Artists is the largest and most international event of its kind in the world: It brings together 500 artists from 33 countries to show their work to 200 leading curators, gallery directors, publishers and collectors from around the world. The Meeting Place takes place March 16 – April 3, 2012 at FotoFest's Headquarters Hotel, the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Houston Downtown.

As part of the Meeting Place, FotoFest sponsors four public Evenings with the Artist - Open Portfolio Nights, where the public is invited to meet with artists participating in the Meeting Place, view their portfolios, and possibly buy work.

Throughout the first three weeks of the Biennial, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and photoEye in Santa Fe, NM, will have Bookstores with rare, vintage and contemporary photo books for sale. FotoFest will sponsor eight artist and curator Book Signings as well. The bookstores are located at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel with the Meeting Place.

FotoFest's three Workshops on media and photography are open to the public and participants in the Meeting Place Portfolio Reviews at the DoubleTree Hotel. Dates and details will be available at [www.fotofest.org/2012biennial/workshops](http://www.fotofest.org/2012biennial/workshops).

## **DISCOVERIES OF THE MEETING PLACE EXHIBITION**

In conjunction with the Meeting Place, a special and popular part of the Biennial is FotoFest's exhibition of work from the previous Biennial's portfolio reviews. Envisioned as a showcase for some of the best work discovered at the Biennial portfolio review, the 2012 Discoveries of the Meeting Place presents work chosen by ten reviewer/curators from the 2010 Meeting Place. It is the ninth exhibition of this series. Like the Meeting Place itself, the Discoveries exhibitions often travel beyond Houston and have been a launching pad for many photographic careers. The ten artists selected are:

Lamia Maria Abilama (New York, New York), chosen by Felix Hoffmann, C/O Berlin, Berlin  
Damion Berger (New York, New York), chosen by John Rohrbach, Amon Carter Museum, Ft Worth, TX  
Erika Dietes (Cali, Colombia), chosen by Charles Guice, Charles Guice Contemporary, NY  
Natan Dvir (New York, New York), chosen by Martha Schnieder, Schneider Gallery, Chicago  
Pablo Gimenez-Zapiola (Houston, Texas), chosen by Ricardo Viera, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA  
Bill McCullough (Austin, Texas), chosen by Stephen Mayes, VII Photos, NY  
Monika Merva (New York, New York), chosen by Alexa Becker, Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg, Germany  
Nancy Newberry (Dallas, Texas), Chosen by Ute Noll, On Photography & Illustration, Stuttgart, Germany  
Jhinryung Oh (Seoul, South Korea), chosen by Gemma De Santos, De Santos Gallery, Houston, TX  
Michael Tummings (Munich, Germany), chosen by Hannah Frieser, Light Work, Syracuse, NY

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Special tours are available for people of all ages throughout the Biennial. Special exhibition events, like the FotoFest Bike Scramble and Gallery Trek, are scheduled in April 2012. In April, the contemporary dance group, Michele Brangwen Dance Ensemble, will present a site-specific dance and music performance at FotoFest Headquarters at Vine Street Studios.

#### **ORGANIZERS - RUSSIA**

FotoFest 2012 Biennial - Russia is being organized by FotoFest in partnership with three Russian curators: Evgeny Berezner, Irina Chmyreva and Natalia Tarasova. Mr. Berezner, head of the "In Support of Photography in Russia" Project of The Iris Art Foundation, Moscow and Dr. Chmyreva, Senior Researcher at the Russian Academy of Fine Arts, have written extensively on Russian photography. Ms. Tarasova is a long time collaborator. Together, the team has curated and presented over 200 exhibitions of historical and contemporary Russian artists. As a precursor to the 2012 FotoFest Biennial, FotoFest initiated Russia's first international portfolio review in September 2011, co-sponsored and hosted by the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, the Iris Art Foundation, founded by Daria Zhukova in 2008, and Russian Information Agency RIA Novosti.

FotoFest, along with its Russian colleagues, have organized exchanges and exhibitions of Russian artists and art work for well over a decade. In 2002, FotoFest presented an exhibition of historic Russian Pictorialist photographers from the early 20th Century as part of its 2002 Biennial. Two years later, FotoFest sent artists and four exhibitions, including the well-known 911 memorial exhibition *Here is NY*, to Moscow and the city of Samara, and several Russian artists, including the art collective AES+F were featured at the FotoFest 2006 Biennial.

FotoFest 2012 Biennial Contemporary Russian Photography exhibitions begin March 16 in four places and continue through April 29, 2012 with programming for the public occurring every week. The full program is available online at [www.fotofest.org/2012biennial](http://www.fotofest.org/2012biennial).

#### **INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS (as of January 2012)**

Major Sponsors are: The Houston Endowment, Inc.; The Cullen Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; The Iris Art Foundation; The William Stamps Farish Fund; City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Eleanor and Frank Freed Foundation; Singapore Airlines – Official Airline of FotoFest 2012 – Russia; FotoFest Board of Directors, the National Endowment for the Arts; JP Morgan Chase; DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Houston Downtown; the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture; and Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, Moscow.

Additional Sponsors are: The Trust for Mutual Understanding; The Wortham Foundation; Houston Public Radio – KUHF News 88.7 & Classical 91.7; iLand Internet Solutions; HexaGroup; arts>Brookfield/Brookfield Office Properties; Vine Street Studios; Williams Tower Gallery; CANON Ru, LLC; The Greentree Foundation; Texas Commission on the Arts; American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP); Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau; The Oshman Foundation; Houston Downtown Management District; and Mrs. Mariya Hayward, Moscow.

Special Russian Partners: The Iris Art Foundation; Garage Center for Contemporary Culture; ROSIZO State Center for Museums and Exhibitions of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; Russian International News and Information Agency RIA Novosti; Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography, Moscow; CANON Ru, LLC; Cultural Project "RUSS PRESS PHOTO", Moscow; Russian Chamber of Commerce of Texas; and Russian Cultural Center "Our Texas".

Media Partners: Louise Blouin Media – Art + Auction, Modern Painters, Artinfo.com; Houston Public Radio – KUHF News 88.7 & Classical 91.7; PaperCity Magazine; CultureMap.com; European Photography Magazine; and Prefix Photo.