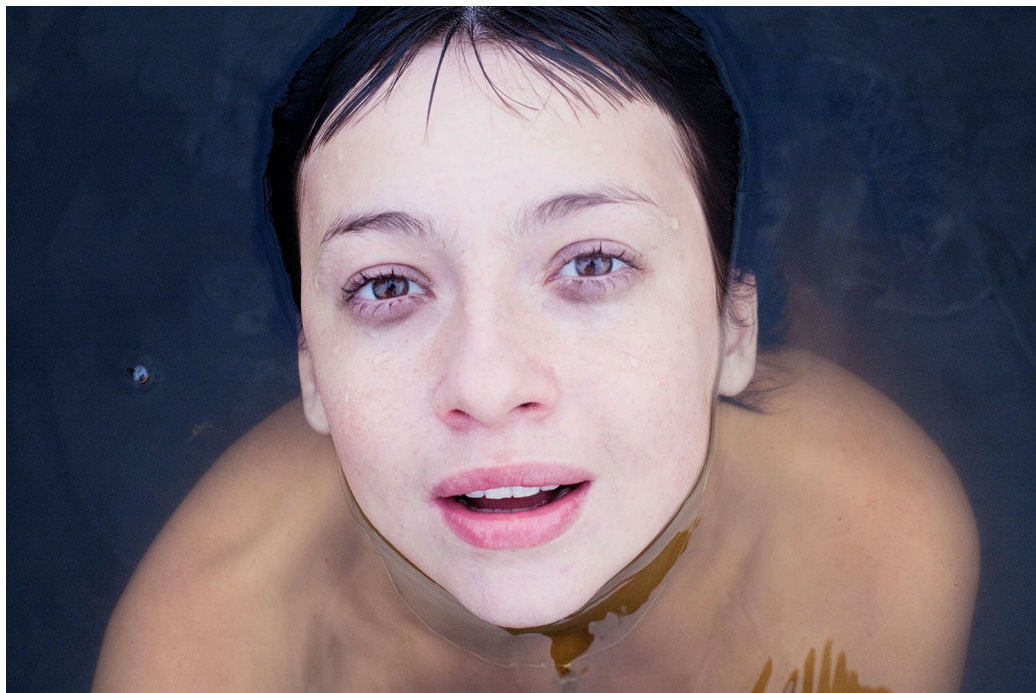




FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL | www.fotofest.org

For Information and Visuals: Vinod Hopson, Press Coordinator, 713.223.5522 ext 26, press@fotofest.org

Elizabeth Reina-Longoria or Rachel Patall-David, Blue Medium, 212.675.1800, elizabeth@bluemedium.com / rachel@bluemedium.com



Nikita Pirogov, *Natasha*, from the series *The Other Shore*, 2009-2011. Courtesy of the artist

For Immediate Release:

FotoFest 2012 Biennial

Contemporary Russian Photography

Exhibitions, International Fine Print Auction, Collectors Programs

March 16 – April 29, 2012

Houston, Texas, U.S.A.

HOUSTON, TEXAS, DECEMBER 8, 2011 – Russian artists, curators, art collectors and directors from leading Moscow art and news organizations will participate in the **FotoFest 2012 Biennial, the 14th International Biennial of Photography and Photo-Related Art**, taking place **March 16 through April 29, 2012** in locations throughout **Houston, Texas**. Three new exhibitions spanning **over fifty years of modern and contemporary Russian photography** will be the centerpiece of the Biennial.

“FotoFest 2012 will be one of the largest gatherings for Russian art photography in the U.S.,” says FotoFest Artistic Director and Senior Curator **Wendy Watriss**. “The Biennial exhibitions on **Contemporary Russian Photography** will present over 150 photographers from the 1960s to the present. They will include vintage works from a key modernist period in Russian photography that is almost unknown today, as well as some of the great experimental work from the Perestroika period of reform and the current generation of young photographic artists.”

Directors of Moscow’s **Garage Center for Contemporary Culture**, collectors from the **Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography** in Moscow, journalists from Russia’s leading news and information agency **RIA Novosti** and other leading art and online media sources, and Russian artists and curators will be part of the FotoFest 2012 Biennial.

“The Russian photography programs that FotoFest plans for its 2012 Biennial are very important,” says **Dasha Zhukova, founder of the Iris Foundation and Garage Center for Contemporary Culture.** “The exhibitions will showcase Russian artists that are unknown to most of the world, and the presence of their work in the Fine Print Auction will introduce Russian art photography to international collectors. Bringing serious international attention to contemporary artists from Russia is one of the main goals of the Iris Foundation and what we hope to achieve with Garage.”

In addition to the exhibitions, FotoFest’s 2012 **International Fine Print Auction**, taking place **Tuesday, March 20, 2012**, will present works hand-picked by the FotoFest curators and their Russian curatorial partners to highlight important Russian vintage and contemporary works. The auction will include prints by over 25 leading Russian artists from the 1960s to the present. Most of the auction works are being made available to U.S. and International collectors for the first time. The Russian artists selected for the International Fine Print Auction are also featured in the Biennial exhibitions.

“With the International Fine Print Auction, FotoFest is opening a new market for important but unknown works from Russia,” says **Anne Wilkes Tucker, Gus and Lyndall Wortham Curator of Photography at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston.** The Auction is led by **Denise Bethel, Senior Vice President, Head of Department, Photographs, Sotheby’s New York.**

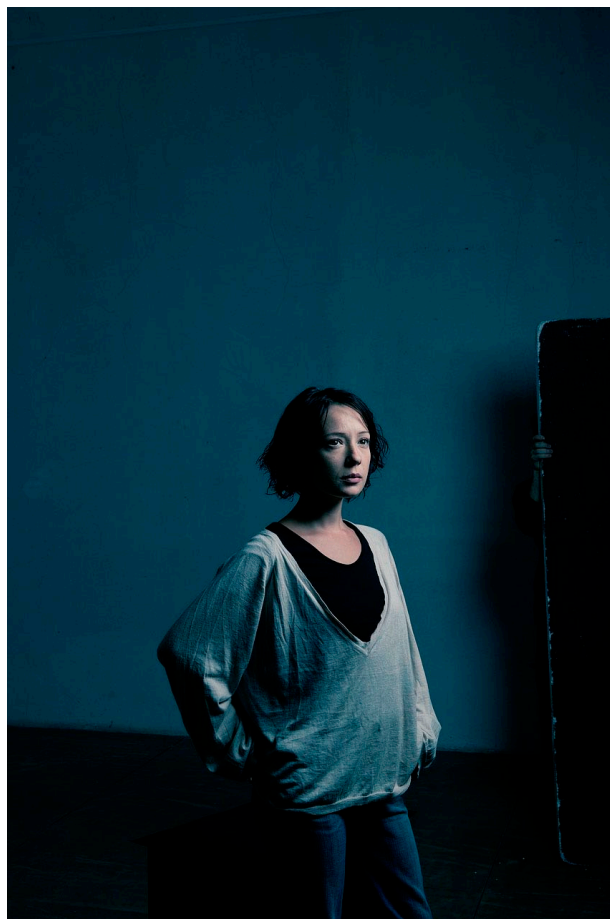
Concurrent with FotoFest’s own exhibitions of Contemporary Russian Photography, over 90 independent spaces in Houston will participate in the 2012 Biennial with exhibitions and programs of photography. Among the Participating Spaces are the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Menil Collection; the Station Museum of Art; and Houston Center for Photography. Participating commercial galleries include De Santos Gallery, John Cleary Gallery, Moody Gallery and Inman Gallery. Six Participating Spaces will be presenting the work of Russian artists, including the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston, which will present Anton Ginzburg’s *At the Back of the North Wind*, an installation work which premiered at this year’s Venice Biennale.

A full list of artists, details on the FotoFest 2012 Exhibitions, and the list of works in the International Fine Print Auction will be made available in January 2012.

FOTOFEST AND RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

FotoFest’s Russian Curatorial partners are **Evgeny Berezner, Irina Chmyreva and Natalia Tarasova.** Mr. Berezner, head of the **“In Support of Photography in Russia” Project, Iris Foundation, Moscow**, and Dr. Chmyreva, Senior Researcher at the **Russian Academy of Fine Arts**, have written extensively on Russian photography. Ms. Tarasova has written and worked on cultural affairs for Russian media over a number of years. Dr. Chmyreva and Ms. Tarasova also work with the “In Support of Photography in Russia” Project of the Iris Foundation. The team has curated and presented over 200 exhibitions of historical and contemporary Russian artists.

Russian artists and curators, many from FotoFest’s exhibitions, will also participate in the Biennial’s international portfolio review program, **The Meeting Place**, which brings together 160 professional reviewers from 31 countries and over 500 artists from across the globe.



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

The 2012 Biennial Russian programs are part of FotoFest's long-term involvement with Russian photography. Most recently, FotoFest and its Russian partners initiated Russia's first international portfolio review, **Portfolio Review Russia, August 2011** (www.portfolioreview-russia.com). Co-sponsored and hosted by the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, the Iris Foundation, founded by Dasha Zhukova in 2008, ROSIZO, the Russian State Museum and Exhibition Center and RIA Novosti, the event was considered an unqualified success, bringing the work of Russian artists to 55 leading art professionals from 18 countries and generating significant press coverage both inside Russia and around the world.

FotoFest, along with its Russian colleagues, have organized exchanges and exhibitions of Russian artists and artwork for over a decade. In 2002, FotoFest presented an exhibition of historic Russian Pictorialist photographers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries as part of its 2002 Biennial. Two years later, FotoFest took artists and five photography exhibitions, including the well-known 9/11 memorial exhibition *Here is New York*, to the Russian cities of Samara, Moscow and Togliatti. Several Russian artists, including the art collective AES+F, have been featured at the FotoFest 2004 and 2006 Biennials.

FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL PUBLICATIONS - RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

The FotoFest 2012 Biennial Catalogue will be co-published with **Schilt Publishing in Amsterdam**. The 500 page, two-volume Catalogue will feature more than 300 full-color images and essays by Russian Curators Evgeny Berezner and Irina Chmyreva on the history of contemporary Russian photography from the re-emergence and evolution of the personal voice in Russian 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.

A hardcover book on FotoFest's *Contemporary Russian Photography* exhibitions will be available in late spring 2012. This book will also be co-published with Schilt Publishing and will be designed by HvADesigns and Henk van Assen, who have previously produced books for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of the City of New York; and Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires.

FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL GRAND OPENING

The FotoFest 2012 Biennial Grand Opening, Friday on March 16, 2012 at FotoFest Headquarters in Downtown, is a free public celebration expected to be attended by over 3,000 people. FotoFest Headquarters is the site of one of the three principal exhibitions of the 2012 Biennial. Guests at the Grand

Opening will include many of the featured Russian artists, FotoFest 2012 Biennial curators, Russian Sponsors and public officials, international curators and artists participating in Biennial programs, civic, business and cultural leaders and member of the general public. Opening Receptions for the other principal FotoFest Biennial Russian exhibitions occur over the course of the following weeks and will be attended by featured artists and curators.

FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL COLLECTORS EVENTS

In conjunction with the Auction and the exhibitions, FotoFest is sponsoring three days of special programs for VIP visitors and photography collectors, from March 18-20, 2012. The program will include curatorial tours of the 2012 Biennial Russian exhibitions; a private viewing of highlights from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) with curator Anne Wilkes Tucker and a special preview of her much anticipated *War/Photography* exhibition scheduled for fall 2012; Curatorial tour of the MFAH exhibition *Utopia/Dystopia*, curated by Yasufumi Nakamori, MFAH Assistant Curator of Photography; cocktail receptions at private collectors' homes; and a panel discussion on the art market and collecting prints and books. For information on Collector's events please contact FotoFest Fine Print Auction Coordinator Liz Wickersham at projects@fotofest.org or 713.223.5522 ext 14.



Sergey Petruhin, *Three Sailors's Striped Vests*, 1968. Courtesy of the artist

ABOUT FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1983 and based in Houston, Texas, FotoFest is a non-profit organization promoting photographic arts and education. FotoFest is recognized for its discovery and presentation of important talent, contemporary and historical, from around the world, its commitment to presenting important social ideas through the photographic arts, its groundbreaking exhibitions and its portfolio review program, The International Meeting Place. FotoFest has curated and commissioned exhibitions of photo-based art from Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. In addition to year-round art exhibitions and programming, FotoFest's school-based education program, Literacy Through Photography, uses photography to stimulate visual literacy, writing and analytical thinking.

The FotoFest Biennial is the first international Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Art in the United States. Through the FotoFest Biennial and its year-round art programs, FotoFest is known as a platform for Art and Ideas, combining museum-quality art with important social and aesthetic issues. FotoFest curated exhibitions give priority to the works of important but little-known photographic artists from the U.S. and around the world. FotoFest has pioneered the format for the international portfolio review program for photographic artists that have been emulated around the world. It was the basis for the 2011 Portfolio Review Russia event.

FOTOFEST 2012 BIENNIAL SPONSORS (as of December 1, 2011)

The Houston Endowment, Inc; The Cullen Foundation; The Brown Foundation, Inc; The William Stamps Farish Fund; National Endowment for the Arts; The City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; JP Morgan Chase, DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Houston Downtown; Texas Commission for the Arts; The Wortham Foundation; American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP); Iland Internet Solutions; HexaGroup; Vine Street Studios; arts>Brookfield/Brookfield Office Properties; FotoFest Board of Directors; and Individual Contributors.

Russian Partners

Garage Center for Contemporary Culture; the Iris Foundation; ROSIZO State Center for Museums and Exhibitions of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; and RIA Novosti.

Media Partners

Art+Auction, Modern Painters; Artinfo.com, 88.7 FM KUHF; European Photography Magazine; PaperCity Magazine, Culturemap



Alexander Gronsky
Untitled, n.d., from the series *The Edge*
Courtesy of Gallery Photographer.ru