

THE BIG ISSUE

ART



The Knitting (2002)
by Leonid Tishkov

Past Future Perfect

Until June 16
Calvert 22

HIDDEN CORNERS

Another week, another non-profit art foundation. Calvert 22 is different from the recent slew of philanthropic venues to open in London in that, bankrolled by St Petersburg-born collector Nonna Materkova, it aims to introduce contemporary

Russian and eastern European art to the capital. If that brings to mind images of flashy oligarchs flaunting glitzy art, the tone of this inaugural exhibition couldn't be more different.

The five artists here, four Russians and one Ukrainian, prefer personal investigations to showy pronouncements and make art that appears to seek out dark corners in which to hide.

Haim Sokol uses carbon copy paper to draw wavering portraits from found photographs on small, rusting sheets of metal. Using the same method, he traces the text from old postcards and letters, folding some of these scavenged sheets of metal into 'paper' aeroplanes that lie crashed on the

floor beneath a solitary lamp.

Sokol's sombre, dejected work is in part about an inability to escape the past. Wired to a window frame is another rusting sheet – a disintegrating iron curtain that obscures the view.

In his City Of Russia paintings, Pavel Pepperstein is more upbeat, proposing a new capital between St Petersburg and Moscow unencumbered by history, or even gravity. However it's frustrating not to be able to read Pepperstein's handwritten texts, and difficulties of interpretation occur elsewhere.

You may recognise Vladimir Putin and Viktor Yushchenko in Stanislav Volyazlovsky's finely executed and apparently satirical drawings, but you'd

need a translator to explain another series that details the artist's opinion on the relationship between Russia and Ukraine.

Assuming simple, human forms, Leonid Tishkov's soft sculptures knitted from recycled cloth are easier to fathom, as is the work of artist/architect Alexander Brodsky, whose atmospheric model of an interior standing on a slick of motor oil leaves you in no doubt about the foundations on which Russia's prosperity is built.

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