

Our group meets quite rarely and this piece was the result of one of those rare meetings

Actually, we've been wanting to make a piece about our community for quite some time, to tell about who we are and what we are doing.

A kind of self-analysis, in other words.

What inspired us was Viktor Popkov's marvellous painting "The Builders of Bratsk". But we didn't try to imitate the heroes of this painting.

This is why we called it "Builders". For us, the feeling that we're building something is important, so we tried to find out what exactly we are building...

Basically, this is Viktor Popkov's only commonly-known painting; everything he did later on is just more of the usual intelligentsia-fluff

People are standing there, monumentally, tiredly, standing and thinking of what they have done so far and what they will do in the future. But we're in a different situation...

I understand that I can derive some aesthetic pleasure from this painting, but it doesn't move me socially...

We aren't those people who Popkov depicted, and we're living in 2004, not 1961.

Socialism left behind a bad impression; it may have become fashionable again today, but the paintings of the time were boring...

...That's right, fashionable, but on the whole, things really sucked, and now whenever anyone hears about the social problematique, they all immediately imagine themselves in that silly painting...

I'm interested in the question of what we can do today with this brutal monumentalism? Because our interpretation isn't very brutal. A very un-brutal style.

Shit! What the fuck are we doing here?

...The image falls apart into chaotic actions that mean something completely different, because we're not a collective of Yuppies hanging out after work, but an artistic community...

...which falls under a completely different order of relationships, in which we can develop our civic position.

What's a community? Why don't you try to answer this question.

I don't like the word "community"; in my opinion it's reminiscent of something like...

The most excellent revolutionary movements in art took place through communities;

the surrealist, dadaists, and our futurists were groups of people that were pretty vibrant, different, and conflictual...

Our friendships are constructed on the basis of conflict, on encounters with the Other, the radical Other, even...

Who's our radical Other?

Well, for an example, you and I are radical Others; we are radically different people...

Why are we radically different, if we have so many things in common?

Everyone agrees in some what that there is a closeness between people that aren't producing knowledge or ideology, but are actually searching for something new...

At the same time, we have this need, I don't know where it came from, it's a part of the work-process, in which the most productive moment arises through conflict

Conflicts show what actually holds people together, what makes them overcome whatever...It's easy to say, "Why don't you all go fuck yourselves." I might leave and you might leave at some point in time, but later, you'll come back, and this is a really important moment, because you can ask yourself, "Why exactly did I return?"

This is why the community can become a kind of laboratory, a synchrotron in which we help ourselves to accelerate ourselves, using provocations to accelerate ourselves to the state of some critical mass, which can call one's own experience into question, one's own earlier achievements, in order to move on and to keep one's ears open.

Maybe there's also a feeling of weakness, when you understand that alone, you can't actually...

Denisov keeps coming to my mind, who once said that it's much easier than anything else to flock together...

...I have some strong inner resentment of communities, especially artistic communities, which usually are made up of some kind of assholes...

For me, it's always a great joy to work on a project. I think that working in a group is more productive, because it supplies everything that happens with a completely new kind of energy, a completely different feeling of self...

The utopia of friendship is the most important utopia.

This is something completely different; it isn't about seminars; it isn't about drinking with friends; it isn't performance, but something inbetween: inbetween art and literature,

between literature and philosophy, between philosophy and actionism, between actionism and sociology, and it's this inbetweeness that seems so exciting...

...So let's celebrate the anniversary of our first meeting, first speech etc. We could have easily frozen up in this kind of pose, but no, we immediately begin to argue, and the argument ends with Dima lying there like a Pieta, and it's completely unclear what to do with him, but then, some drunk assholes come and start to discuss something or another heatedly, and some kind of new, exciting life starts up again. I think that there's something extremely important in this...

The community is a-capitalist in the sense that it doesn't sell itself as a product. You could say that we don't have a quality of exchange for one another, but a consumer-value; one could say that we are consuming one another, but in the good sense of the word...

It seems to me that the effect that arises when we do something is far more important than some kind of personal career-matters. And this effect seems to consist in...

The project came about because we wanted to move the boundary of art: art is clearly separated from life and doesn't actually see anyone but itself, so one has to call up new people...

Bullshit...

Why bullshit? I don't think that it's bullshit...

I also don't think that it's bullshit...

...Revolutionary art is that which calls for a non-existing people and a new world. It yawns with the absence of this people and this world. But it is implicitly and covertly directed toward that boiling-point, that flaming-point, that inner pathos; its vector is directed at the creation of that people, maybe on a small scale, to become your co-creator...

...so you're saying that art could be something that can actually change something in life, are you?

Actually, we don't want to capture the fallacy and fakeness of socialist realism; what we want to capture is the mythological impulse, the point of departure, the impulse that formed socialist realism...

An attempt to renew a pathos, which is...

There are thousands of workers behind "The Builders of Bratsk", but who's behind us?

It turns out that the place at which they stand and look to the future has been vacated and that we have the same right to look to the future and hope...

We aren't going to adapt to this world; this world needs to adapt to us...

That's really true... But tell us, David, quickly, are we going to change the world?

There's no question that we will...
Are you sure?

I'm absolutely sure that we are going to change the world...

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