

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Deconstructing Perestroika**

*Hand-painted poster art examines Soviet ideology and its discontents 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union at The Craft and Folk Art Museum in Los Angeles*

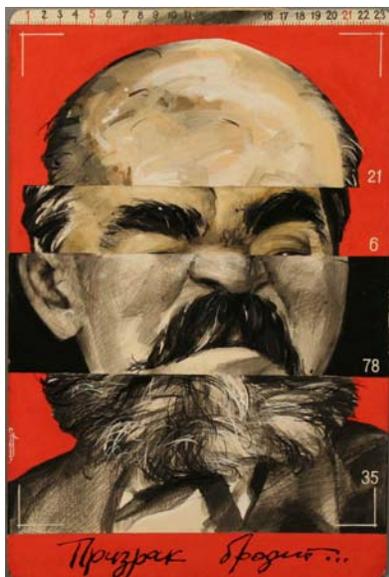
**January 28 – May 6, 2012**

VIP and Public Opening Reception

Saturday, January 28, 2012

6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

LOS ANGELES, CA—9 December 2011— In collaboration with the Craft and Folk Art Museum, The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War will present *Deconstructing Perestroika*, the first major exhibition in the United States of hand-painted Soviet-era political posters that were inspired by a new government policy of transparency in the former Soviet Union. Organized to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the former super power's demise in December 1991, this exhibition highlights some of the key political and cultural shifts that defined the era and ultimately led to the fall of the Soviet Union.



From left to right: *The Phantom is Haunting...*, wood, fiberboard, tempera paint, Aleksandr Amelin, 1990; *He Who Doesn't Work, Doesn't Eat*, cardboard, tempera paint, paper, Aleksandr Petrovich Utkin, 1990; *AIDS-No!*, wooden fiberboard, tempera paint, Aleksei Rezaev, 1991. Courtesy of Wende Museum

Curated by Dr. Ljiljana Grubisic, Director of Collections and Public Programs at The Wende Museum, the exhibition will showcase twenty-four original, hand-painted poster designs created by thirteen artists as visual responses to Mikhail Gorbachev's transformative policies of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Starting in 1985, Gorbachev's policies of *Glasnost*, or openness, started to liberalize Soviet society by allowing taboos to be questioned and, in the process, galvanizing people and encouraging them to talk and think freely for the first time. During this period, East-West hostilities started to evaporate and dissidents began to return from labor camps and exile. Gorbachev's parallel attempts to reform the economy through *Perestroika*, or re-structuring, perished like all other previous attempts.

*Deconstructing Perestroika* also illustrates the tradition of hand-painted poster design, known in Russian as *avtorskii plakat*. This art form can be viewed as an outgrowth of the traditional Soviet agitprop. The twenty-four works of art are unified thematically by a caustic satire that was made possible by *Glasnost's* very insistence on freedom of speech. Yet this razor sharp critique also stems from the deeply rooted tendency of the Russian psyche to view political and cultural endeavors through the prism of irony in order to subvert, reject, or give new meaning to an official ideology or previous work of art.



*The Great Appear Great to Us Because We Ourselves Are Standing On Our Knees*, cardboard, Valentina Egorovna Dorokhova & Viktor Konstantinovich Dorokhov, 1990. Courtesy of Wende Museum.

There will be an opening reception at CAFAM for *Deconstructing Perestroika* on Saturday, January 28 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

### **Public programs:**

Public programs are being organized in conjunction with the exhibition.

### **Saturday | February 25**

#### **The Craft of Poetry**

\$7.00 admission includes reception • 7 – 9:00 p.m.

A reading of original poetry created in response to *Deconstructing Perestroika*. Organized by Brendan Constantine with poets Ilya Kaminsky, Cecilia Woloch, and Arash Saedinia.

### **Sunday | March 11**

#### **Writing Workshop with poet Brendan Constantine**

1 – 3 p.m.

Create poetry inspired by art and politics.

Advanced registration required, online at [www.cafam.org](http://www.cafam.org) or email: [workshops@cafam.org](mailto:workshops@cafam.org)

### **Sunday | March 18**

#### **Exhibition Walk-Through with Dr. Ljiljana Grubisic**

3 p.m.

The **Wende Museum** was founded by Dr. Justinian Jampol in 2002 with a mission to preserve the cultural artifacts and personal histories of Cold War-era Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It is a hybrid organization, simultaneously an archive of material and visual culture and educational institution, fusing interdisciplinary scholarship with its programs. The Museum is independent and facilitates open access to its collection, providing a forum for exploration and engagement, and encouraging diverse interpretations from multiple perspectives.

For more information, visit [www.wendemuseum.org](http://www.wendemuseum.org).

**The Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** champions cultural understanding by presenting exhibitions and programs that bridge local and global cultures, and inspire a sense of inquiry and creativity within all people. Located on Los Angeles' historic Miracle Mile, it is the city's only institution exclusively dedicated to celebrating craft and folk art. CAFAM works to recognize emerging artists and make art accessible to all audiences, serving as a forum in which art can be presented and described by the artists and communities who create it. All exhibitions and public programs are developed in close collaboration with community cultural groups to ensure authentic expression.

For current program and exhibition information call 323-937-4230 or visit [www.cafam.org](http://www.cafam.org).

**Location:** 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

**Admission:** \$7 for adults; \$5 for students and seniors; free for CAFAM members and on the first Wednesday of every month

**Hours:** Tuesday – Friday, 11am – 5pm; Saturday/Sunday, 12pm – 6 pm; closed Mondays