



## **ALEXANDER BRODSKY**

### **IT STILL AMAZES ME THAT I BECAME AN ARCHITECT...**

30.06 – 03.10.2011

OPENING: WED 29.06.2011, 7PM | PRESS CONFERENCE: WED 29.06.2011, 11AM

*"Even though architecture may always be bound to arrive at something more or less solid and grounded, the works of Brodsky force the viewer to believe in the creative potential, that, as described by Vladimir Nabokov, lies in... all the trash of life". Alexei Muratov*

Alexander Brodsky is the most prominent proponent of an architectural and artistic position that has been working for decades on the crossover between architecture and art, transcending the boundaries between these two disciplines on a daily basis. His architectural and artistic manifestations provide a testimonial to the search for a different Russian identity. In his projects — which are dominated by clear simplicity and theatrical power, never kitsch and never outdated — he often combines sharp criticism of the system coupled with subtle irony. Brodsky's characteristic "Humanism of the insignificant" (Alexei Muratov) presents itself with restraint in his architectural vocabulary when he visibly inserts used or old items into his work. A key example for this practise is the Vodka Pavilion, completed for a cultural festival in 2003, which is constructed entirely of the window frames from a demolished factory and was intended to be dedicated exclusively to the ritual of drinking vodka.

### **THE EXHIBITION**

The internationally widely respected and highly acclaimed work of this exceptional artist/architect is also to be shown for the first time in Austria. Remaining true to the tradition of exhibiting unconventional individuals who operate beyond the mainstream, the Az W is bringing Alexander Brodsky to Vienna. In Autumn 2011 another proponent of what Dietmar Steiner has called "slow architecture" is being presented at the Az W in the form of a large cross-section of works: the Australian architect and Pritzker Prize-winner Glenn Murcutt. Alexander Brodsky has realised a space-filling installation for the exhibition hall at the Az W that is intended to fascinate visitors: Day becomes night, and the dimensions of space and time appear to slowly dissolve as one paces an artificially created chamber of wonders. The installation, specially completed for the Az W, represents a further development of Brodsky's work with Ilya Utkin, which was realised in the USA for the 1990 exhibition 'Between Spring and Summer: Soviet Conceptual Art in the Era of Communism'.

The Az W is showing works by Brodsky in his capacity as an artist and as an architect — united for the first time in one exhibition. The installation is embedded in a large number of quotations from earlier works — sketches, plans, drawings and examples of his now famous 'paper architecture' show the scope of his work and the flowing transitions between art and architecture. Photographic interpretations by Yuri Palmin

(photographer and long-time companion) illustrate the subtle, restrained approach of his architecture. His style is characterised by a strong relationship to traditional building techniques while using locally sourced raw materials. Brodsky's architectural oeuvre to date is restricted to Russia, and his clients consist of a small circle of wealthy individualists who deliberately choose to avoid the popular Russian style of building.

### **ALEXANDER BRODSKY**

Born into an artist's family in Moscow in 1955, from 1968 he studied at the Moscow art college and switched to the Moscow Architectural Institute in 1972. Back in the 1980s Alexander Brodsky achieved international recognition, with Ilya Utkin, as one of the most prominent representatives of the Russian 'paper architects'. With their utopian and imaginative designs they looked for ways out of the tristesse of the architecture of the Khrushchev era and the period of stagnation under Brezhnev. With their etchings, most of which were completed for submission to competitions, they refused to participate in the state structured and soul-deprived production process. Brodsky and Utkin have subsequently been shown worldwide and achieved an international reputation. Brodsky concentrated on his artistic activities during the 1990s, and moved to New York in 1996. Brodsky can look back at a considerable number of exhibitions world-wide — both solo shows and, more recently, in collaboration with Ilya Utkin. Probably not least to provide a visionary counter-position to the building boom of the New Russia, in 2000 he founded his unconventional architecture office back in Moscow, and began accepting commissions for restaurants, single-family houses and temporary architecture installations. In 2010 Brodsky was honoured with one of the highest artistic awards in Russia, the Kandinsky Prize.

Issue 50/51 of 'hintergrund' is being published to accompany the exhibition, and contains more in-depth essays on Alexander Brodsky and his works (in German and English). 'Hintergrund' is the Az W journal, published quarterly and combining a focus on architecture theory with the documentation of the key features of the Az W Programme.

On the evening of the exhibition opening the Az W is throwing its traditional Summer Party, with Russian delicacies in the courtyard of the Architekturzentrum Wien. Admission is free from about 8pm.

Regular guided tours are scheduled to accompany the exhibition

On Wednesdays: 06.07 / 20.07 / 03.08 / 17.08.2011, beginning at 6pm; tickets: 2 Euro



curator of the exhibition: Katharina Ritter  
concept: Alexander Brodsky  
exhibition texts: Katharina Ritter and Andrea Seidling  
exhibition graphic design: Thomas Kussin, buero8

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**PLEASE NOTE — PRESS IMAGES**

Press photographs of the exhibition for publication are available as high definition downloads from the press page of our website.

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