

Press release

Dasha Krotova

# Heritage

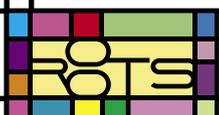
Installation

23.04 to 30.05 2010

# DASHA KROTOVA

## Heritage

Dasha Krotova focuses on the insignificant things of life, on that which has been lost. For her, the very material with which she works -ceramics -is precious through its peculiar, extreme fragility. Unlike bronze, marble, and all that which is used to impart longevity to an object, ceramics break easily. Ceramics have a strange type of eternity -that of remains, of the fragment, which the archaeologist will one day find during an excavation. The fragile and the ephemeral, the insignificant, the every-day suddenly become eloquent as the years and centuries go by. They do not so much speak of the tastes and aesthetics of the time, but rather of mankind itself. Ceramics are a testimony, a sign, burnt clay, malleable material, a metaphor for human flesh itself, which bears marks of time and change. That which has been discarded, lost, forgotten -in a way this is all about us; these are the traces of our changes and dramas, of our fate, which we try to erase and hide. In our race for eternal youth and beauty, those lost and discarded elements are what we literally eject from our lives and render invisible. Dasha Krotova focuses on the invisible -not in a mystical sense, but rather on the socially invisible. This social "evil" is not the one reported in newspapers. Rather, it is that which we banish from ourselves as anti-environment. Our contemporary lives are being recorded somewhere in a very different script -beyond everyday life. This script is not necessarily alphabetical. The French poet Francis Ponge, whom DK has translated into Russian, used to detect invisible signs beyond our consciousness, amongst the world of objects -in the sea, stones, the rain, an oyster: a strange message can be found in their very shape, a message addressed to each of us, and to nobody in particular, and which somehow is very moving. DK has set off along this somewhat strange, quiet path and has chosen this ancient, fragile material with which to make her notes on life. A material which seems to confirm the fragility and great age of the silent human cosmos, of all the marks and traces which we unwittingly leave behind for ever, in everyday or insignificant things that are found by chance, or that have been lost or forgotten. DK's hieroglyphic shapes, her sign-objects are always laconic; true to her mentor Francis Ponge, the object contains everything in itself, as does a drop of water, and is as solitary as a drop. Perhaps for the first time, the theme of one of her works is not just a simple object. The Thonet bentwood chair is a complex, architectonic, historical object; it is a construction which provides a historical testimony. This new object completes her collection of possible and solitary notes on mankind. In view of Russia's history, the concept of loss is felt very acutely. Rent apart, the country lost touch with the past for nearly a century. For this reason, many objects symbolizing the old way of life, a bygone era which vanished with the revolution, are perceived as particularly poignant by the "post-revolutionary generation". DK belongs to that generation, born in the '70s, who feel far closer to the end of the 19thC and the early 1900s, than to the "other" past. Furniture conveying a sense of comfort and embodying



a different fate for Russia - a fate which was never to be - continues to exist in the houses and dachas of grandparents and great-grandparents. This is not aristocratic furniture - there is little of that left in Russia - rather they are cheap, simple objects of that time, made for daily use. In that time, in that world, the Thonet bentwood chair was intended for cafés and for inexpensive private flats. The Thonet bentwood chair was an unfailing attribute in student gatherings, in revolutionary underground meetings, and in "Chekhovian theatre". Indeed, that was the preferred furniture of the new class of "dachniki" - or summerhouse residents - which was gradually impinging on the world of aristocratic country estates. And Chekhov was the bard of both the fading aristocratic world of country mansions, and of the burgeoning individualistic, active new social structure. That is why the Thonet bentwood chair - a popular, practical, light and dramatically shaped object - is the best embodiment of that period. But at that moment Russia suffered a fracture; in the poet Mandelstam's words, "the century broke its spine": these humble objects of everyday life became the only remaining things of that lost past, because they were widespread, and not only found in wealthy households. These chairs have become remains of something that has vanished. People feel nostalgia for them, as they embody a world that could have been, but was never to be. Later came the great terror, the time of grand dehumanized projects and of widespread uncertainty. Unlike other items of furniture, a chair is very much a person's "place". The Thonet bentwood chair is from the outset intended for a single very "individual" person, not for the representative of a clan or a family. On the whole, it is for a working person. But in Russia's cultural context, the Thonet bentwood chair also represents the survival of a person with a unique biography and moral relation to life, of an educated citizen, refusing to be part of the alienating machine of the newly emerging society. In other words, the chair acts as a link for today's city dweller, as with his twin in the far-away past. Made of wood rather than plastic, long out of production, the Thonet bentwood chair in Russia is necessarily an old Thonet bentwood chair, and therefore a unique one. With its bumps and cracks, it seems to preserve the memory of all that happened to it, of all those who were around it, and in this sense it differs from the contemporary "sterile" objects, mass produced in our consumer society, and requiring replacement as soon as they are broken.

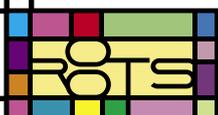
In this sense, the artist writing in clay, creating a whole set of different states of an object, not only re-awakens our nostalgia, but also seems to record us, as we ourselves gradually turn into the past. The artist attempts to preserve that part of us which is individual, unique, solitary, and terribly ephemeral - that timeless part, which, in the end will be the only remaining trace of us once we have gone. Perhaps the artist is motivated by a "nostalgia for people". Maybe an object is added to her collection when she has been able to detect traces and marks of the human in our world - of that which she calls the soul.

*Ksenia Golubovich*

Francis Ponge

*"...lorsque la vie, par la bouche des êtres qui en reçoivent successivement et*

*pour une assez courte période le dépôt, laisse croire qu'elle envie la solidité indestructible du décor qu'elle habite, en réalité elle assiste à la désagrégation continue de ce décor."*



# Daria Krotova



**Daria Krotova** was born in Moscow. She has studied in Russia, USA and France, and holds degrees in History of Art and Psychology. She has translated articles and books in philosophy, poetry, esthetics, psychology. Dasha has practiced ceramics since 1997 in France and Moscow, where she now lives and works as an artist.

## **EDUCATION:**

Various art studios (France, Russia), 1997-2008, Professional training in ceramics, drawing and painting  
University of Aix-Marseilles, 1993-1998, Advanced degree (DEA) in History of Art, Russian Avant Garde  
University of North Carolina, 1991-1993, Master in Psychology (minor in Art)  
Moscow State University, 1989-1991, Bachelor of Science, Psychology of development  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dariakrotova/>

## **PERSONAL AND GROUP EXHIBITS:**

### **2009**

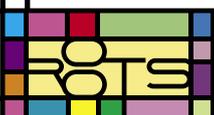
Gallery Ravenscourt, Installation, Art-Moscow  
Central House of Artists, Group exhibition "Fast Art 3", Art-Moscow  
Krokin Gallery, Group exhibition "tractorist", Moscow  
3rd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow  
Triumph gallery, Group exhibition "Simple things", Moscow

### **2008**

Red October, Group exhibition "Invasion-Evasion", Baibakov art project, Red October Factory, Moscow  
Winzavod, Group exhibition "Fast Art 2" – Archeology of culture, Moscow

### **2007**

Central House of Artists, Group exhibit "Joyful morgue" - Introspection- Art-Moscow  
2nd Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow





*Photos by Vladimir Mishukov*



roots contemporary

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# ROOTS CONTEMPORARY

Founded by Samantha Ripa di Meana, Roots Contemporary exhibits works by Chinese and Russian artists exploring the transformation underway in their countries after decades of isolation from the outside world.

China and Russia share a history of communist rule and are now forging strong national identities. Works shown at Roots Contemporary interpret the reaction of society and the individual to the evolving transformation and the clash between tradition and modernity as global influences flow in.

With their "roots" anchored in two profoundly different civilizations, Russian and Chinese artists approach the same underlying themes from entirely different poles.

## NEXT

**23 april - 6 june** Daria Krotova - "Heritage" porcelain installation / Russia

**10 june - 11 july** Zhang Hai Tian - "Landscape calligraphy" ink on rice paper / China

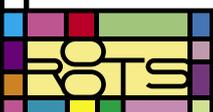
**15 july - 5 sept.** Alexey Iorsh - "Whales" mixed media / Russia

**16 sept. - 24 oct.** Group Exhibition - "Ink & Paper" / China

**28 Oct. - 5 dec.** Vladislav Efimov - "St. Peterburg Constructivism" installation / Russia

**9 dec. - 16 jan.** Irina Zatulovskaya - "Siberian Diary" drawings and painting / Russia

**20 jan. - 13 mars** Andrey Volkov - "Russian Abstracts" oil on canvas / Russia



The exhibition:

# "Heritage"

porcelain installation by Dasha Krotova  
from **23.04** to **30.05. 2010**

At:

Roots Contemporary  
33 rue du Collège, 1050 Brussels  
Tel: + 32 474 611263  
sam@r8ts.eu  
www.r8ts.biz

Open on Saturday 2 pm to 7 pm  
Or by appointment tel 0474 611263



*High definition pictures are  
available:  
annuschka.leung@gmail.com*

