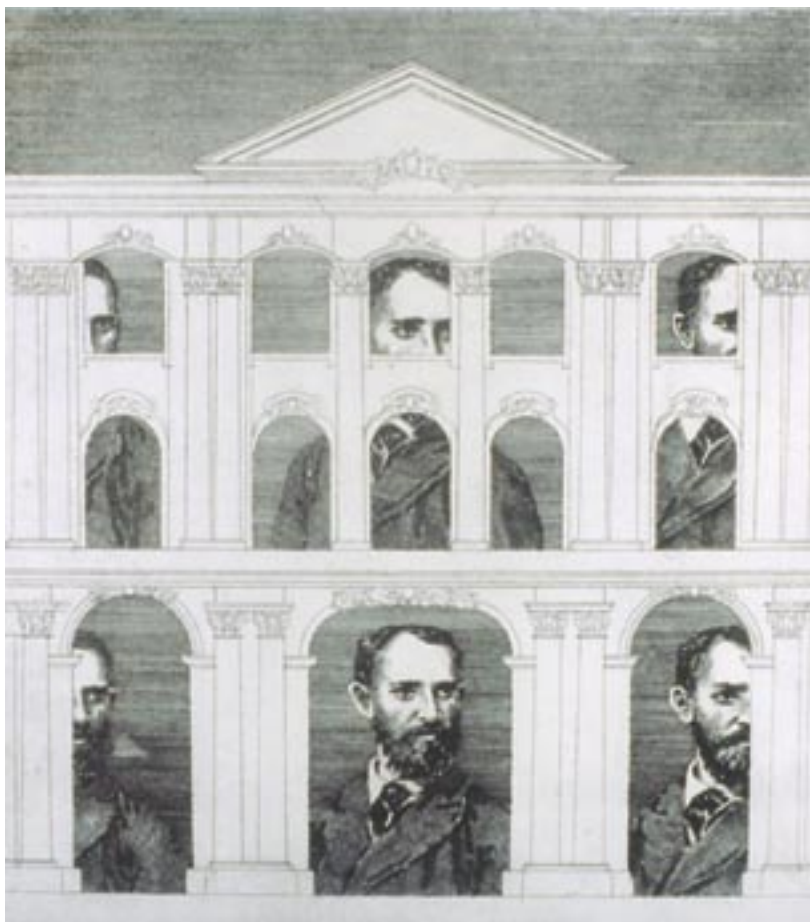


# MOSCOW GRAFIKA: ARTISTS' PRINTS 1961-2005



Selections from the  
Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art

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Andrei Filippov, *Rome to Rome*, 1990, Silkscreen, 22 13/16 x 29 7/8 inches

The work included in *Moscow Grafika* is as diverse as the megalopolis of Moscow itself. For over a century, Moscow has attracted artists from all parts of the former Soviet Union and Russia. There is no single style or school which unites the work of these artists. Instead the prints in *Moscow Grafika* construct a cultural image of Moscow from 1961 to today by presenting work by a wide range of artists documenting historic trends in non-conformist art. More than sixty prints by forty artists in various printmaking techniques are included in the show.

*Moscow Grafika* represents several generations of non-conformist and independent artists, beginning with the Soviet non-conformist artists who emerged during the post-Stalin “thaw” of the 1950’s, championing an alternative to Socialist Realism. In an atmosphere of spiritual awakening, new hope for freedom in the arts appeared. Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin in his “secret speech” in 1956, the return of political prisoners, and the easing of aesthetic restraints during the 60’s and 70’s provided an environment that encouraged artistic creativity.



Oleg Vassiliev, *Metro # 5*, 1961 - 1962.  
Linocut, 28 x 21 inches

Works in *Moscow Grafika* include prints by artists who began their careers during the “thaw” and took part in the first unofficial exhibitions, artists who began working in the *perestroika* (late 1980’s) and the post-*perestroika* periods, and artists who entered the scene during the post-Soviet years.

Most of the prints made in the 60’s and the 70’s were produced by the artists themselves in small editions due both to the absence of an art market and limited access to materials. For example, the Experimental Lithography Studio was accessible during Soviet times only to members of the official Union of Artists. Lithographic stones were numbered and inspected from time to time by state officials, making it very

difficult for non-members of the Union to gain access to materials. However, despite these difficulties Moscow artists persisted, creating prints and experimenting with varieties of styles and techniques.

Oscar Rabin (b. 1928) was one of the leaders of the non-conformist movement and the organizer of the "Bulldozer Show" of 1974, when the Soviet authorities broke up the exhibition with bulldozers—destroying much of the artwork. Known for his depictions of desolate streets, suburban slums, and religious imagery, he is represented in this exhibition by *Book in the Cemetery* (1970). Both Christianity and Judaism, as spiritual and philosophical alternatives to Communist ideology, played an important role in the Russian cultural revival that took place from the 60's to the 80's. However, until *perestroika*, art which was in any way supportive of religion—Christian or Jewish—was disapproved by Soviet authorities. Dmitri Plavinsky's *Shroud of Christ* (1969) was one such example. Such works were often removed from exhibitions and banned from public display or even confiscated.



Vladimir Yankilevsky, *King of Darkness*, 1975  
Etching, watercolor, charcoal, 19 ¼ x 25 ¼ inches

Surrealism, reintroducing previously banned religious and erotic imagery, become popular in Moscow in the 1970's and is represented by Vladimir Yankilevsky's *King of Darkness* (1975), and by the work of Yuri Sobolev (b. 1928) and Oleg Tselkov (b. 1934). The heritage of the *avant-garde* Russian constructivist movement was suppressed by Soviet authorities, only to reappear in the late 60's and 70's in works such as Leonid Lamm's *Pentateuch* (1979).

The appropriation of images and text from Soviet mass culture led to the emergence of Soviet conceptualism in the early 1970's. "Can I Put My Chair Here and Sit Down?" asks Ivan Petrovitch Rybakov, and Nikita Efimovitch Yershov answers "You Are Welcome" in Ilya Kabakov's lithograph (1981-82). The language of the *communalka*, or communal apartment, infiltrates Ilya Kabakov's art, representing the realities of everyday life in Soviet Russia. Eduard Gorokhovskiy's *Group A Group B* (1982), a portrait of pre-revolutionary Russia, appropriates photographic images, referring to the destruction of the family unit brought on by Stalin's forced collectivization.



Leonid Lamm, *Pentateuch*, 1979, Lithograph, 23 ½ x 88 ¼ inches

The last group of artists, including Andrei Budaev (b. 1963), Sergei Mironenko (b. 1959) and Andrei Filippov (b. 1959), first became known during the *perestroika* period. With the birth of a free and democratic Russia and the lifting of the Iron Curtain in 1989, many artists were able to travel abroad

and work in print studios in Europe and America. In the post-*perestroika* period of the late 1980's and early 1990's, exhibitions of Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, and Gilbert and George took place in Moscow, and in 1991, American printer Dennis O'Neal opened the Moscow Studio where several artists included in *Moscow Grafika* made screenprints.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russian artists lost their prime target—and the central focus of their work. Many tried to recapture a sense of what it meant to be Russian by turning to personal narrative subjects. By the mid 1990's, Russia had become part of the international art scene with many of its artists addressing subjects and ideas similar to those of their counterparts in London and New York. While developments in technology and digital processes became part of their printmaking, the traditional techniques did not die. Many contemporary artists in Moscow continue to work in traditional processes such as etching and engraving. *Moscow Grafika* documents the Russian artist of today within the context of diversity of the Moscow art scene over the last four and a half decades.



Andrei Budaev, *Pyramid*, 1989,  
Serigraph, 32 2/5 x 23 1/2 inches

-Natalia Kolodzei



The Kolodzei Art Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit institution, organizes exhibitions in the United States, Russia and other countries, utilizing the considerable resources of the Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art.

The foundation also provides art supplies to Russian artists and organizes Russian-American cultural exchanges.

The Kolodzei Collection consists of 7,000 art objects (of which 2,000 are prints) representing the work of more than 300 artists from Russia and the former Soviet Union. The collection also includes paintings, drawings and sculpture. For more information about the Kolodzei Art Foundation or the Kolodzei Collection, visit [www.KolodzeiArt.org](http://www.KolodzeiArt.org), or call (732) 545-8425.

**IPCNY** International Print Center New York is a non-profit institution dedicated to the appreciation and understanding of the fine art print. With *Moscow Grafika*, IPCNY opens its 5th Anniversary Season, celebrating five years of exhibitions and services to the print community. IPCNY nurtures the growth of new audiences for the visual arts, offering a membership program, educational and information services. *Moscow Grafika* is the ninth in a series of exhibitions in our Chelsea space interspersing juried presentations of contemporary work. For further information visit [www.ipcny.org](http://www.ipcny.org), or call (212) 989-5090. Gallery hours: 11-6 p.m, Tuesday - Saturday.

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Front: Eduard Gorokhovskiy, *Portrait*, 1977, Etching, bronze, 23 3/4 x 22 inches