

# The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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## CONTEMPORARY SOVIET ART ON VIEW AT MUSEUM

Contemporary Soviet Art, an exhibition of eight works selected from the collection of The Museum of Modern Art, will be on view in a small temporary show in the Main Hall from September 26 through October 20. Two of the artists represented are among those who were in the "nonconformist" art exhibition that was dispersed by bulldozers in a Moscow suburb earlier this month.

One oil by Shashurin was given to the Museum by the poet Yevtushenko. An oil and crayon drawing by Sitnikov was given by the American painter Jimmy Ernst. The works also include an assemblage by Varazi made from a pair of trousers soaked in glue, Cards on a Marquetry Table by Nemukhin, incorporating actual playing cards, and a study for a sculpture by Neizvestny; other works are a watercolor by Brui, a Russian-born artist who has lived in Paris since 1971, an oil by Plavinsky and a self-portrait by Zverev.

While official hostility and an insistence on Socialist Realism as the "approved style" has done much to suppress modern art in the Soviet Union, it has not been crushed, but, as this exhibition is intended to demonstrate, remains vigorous. The isolation of Russian modernists from one another and, above all, from the centers of avant-garde art elsewhere in the world, gives their art a markedly provincial character. The opportunity to see Western modern art is almost nil. Art books and magazines dealing with the 20th century are at a premium. "This has produced an eclectic kind of modernism based on varied and often contradictory stylistic sources. Although inevitably idiosyncratic, the work is often brought alive by its sheer intensity of feeling," according to the exhibition wall label.

The Museum's concern with the work of contemporary Soviet artists is a natural extension of its interest in the Russian modernism of earlier generations. The Collection, under the direction of Alfred H. Barr, Jr., acquired works by such Russian modernist pioneers as Chagall, Kandinsky, Malevich, Lissitsky, Larionov, Rodchenko, Gabo and Pevsner. Many of these may be seen in the galleries on the second floor.

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Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Michael Boodro, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019. Tel. (212) 956-7504; 7501.  
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