

For Immediate Release: October 16, 2009

## VITALY KOMAR

### ***NEW SYMBOLISM***

**November 7 - December 24**

*We are all living in ruins. I'm dealing with the ruins of my life.*

The Feldman Gallery will exhibit paintings by Vitaly Komar from his new series, *New Symbolism*. The paintings visualize inexplicable ties between unrelated images and concepts that refer to the history of the former Soviet Union, religious iconography, and ancient symbols. The paintings are both representational and abstract. *New Symbolism* is intended to suggest a movement to restore the sundered connection between art and certain historical and timeless myths and to point to a new direction for the avant-garde.

In his new work, Komar synthesizes irony with spirituality based on his collaborative past and his recent concerns. Depictions of Lenin, Stalin, and state symbols of the former Soviet Union recall the ironic iconoclasm of SOTS ART (Soviet Pop/Conceptual art) founded by Komar and his collaborator Alex Melamid in the early 70's. Anachronistic details and heraldry comment on the historical continuum of unbridled political power. The paintings also reference Komar's last series, *Three-Day Weekend*, which honored the sacred days of the three monotheistic religions as a symbol of unity. In addition to religious subject matter – symbols, architecture, and Biblical figures – the paintings include geometric forms that contain within them a sense of beauty, balance, and harmony. Ancient symbols that stand for both the brevity of time (vanitas) and its infinity include an hourglass and an Ouroboros, the image of a serpent swallowing its own tail, which is set amidst a swirling cosmos.

The paintings combine classicism with Cubo-Futurism, an early Russian avant-garde movement in the beginning of the twentieth century, derived from Cubism and Futurism and characterized by the fracturing of the image. Komar has described his new paintings as “a representation of the world as a kind of vision through diamonds.”

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Vitaly Komar was born in Moscow where he studied at the Moscow Art School and graduated from the Stroganov Institute of Art and Design. He has lived in New York since 1978. Komar worked in collaboration with Alex Melamid from 1973 to 2003.

The Feldman Gallery's first exhibition of the work of Komar & Melamid was of their smuggled artworks from the Soviet Union in 1976. Komar's series, *Three-Day Weekend*, was shown at the Feldman Gallery in 2005 and at the following institutions: the Cooper Union Humanities Gallery, New York and Ben Uri Gallery at The London Jewish Museum of Art where he received their 2004 International Jewish Artist of the Year award. His work was included in the Second Moscow Biennale in 2007 and in *Medium Religion* at the Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany, 2008 - 2009. The work of Komar & Melamid is included in *1989. End of History or the Beginning of the Future?* at the Kunsthalle, Vienna through February 2010.

**During the exhibition, Vitaly Komar will give weekly tours and lectures about his Free School of Visual Symbols on Friday, November 13, 20, December 4, 11, and 18 from 4 - 6. To make an appointment for another time, please contact Deana Capozziello at [deana@feldmangallery.com](mailto:deana@feldmangallery.com).**

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There will be a reception on November 7, 6 - 8. Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 - 6. Monday by appointment. For information, contact Sarah Paulson: (212) 226-3232 or [sarah@feldmangallery.com](mailto:sarah@feldmangallery.com).