

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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ILYA KABAKOV

Ten Characters

April 30 - June 4, 1988

The first United States exhibition of the Soviet Union's most important unofficial artist.

Ilya Kabakov was born on September 30, 1933 in the Soviet Union in the city of Dnjepropetrovsk. He entered the Moscow Secondary School at age 11 and completed his studies in seven years. Since 1945 he has lived in Moscow where in 1951 he entered the W. Surikov Art Institute of Moscow to study graphics and illustration. Kabakov has become the leading unofficial artist in the Soviet Union.

Early artworks addressed such problems as the combination of words and images and the connection between the object and its meaning (small objects, including the sun). Kabakov has also developed a special interest in the seemingly banal. To deal with these questions, he invented different personalities with their own commentaries about what they witness. These individual commentaries have occasionally developed piece by piece into larger personal stories.

Ten Characters is an installation consisting of two large, communal apartments, which include hallways and kitchens. Ten tenants inhabit these apartments, each in his or her own room, and each one has developed a very distinct personality. For example, one wants to travel in space and has built a vehicle for this purpose. Another tenant has never thrown away anything because he is afraid to lose the memories connected with each object.

In 1982, Kabakov began to create installations. Since then, he has had several small solo exhibitions in the West. The first was at the Dina Vierny Gallery in Paris in 1985, and subsequent venues include the Kunstalle, Bern; the Kunstverein, Dusseldorf; and the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris. As a result of the new artistic climate in the Soviet Union, he was allowed to remain in Graz, Austria for three months to create and exhibit a new work (March 1988). Within the Soviet Union, he has showed his installation work in his studio to a small circle of friends and artists. This will be Ilya Kabakov's first exhibition in the United States. The gallery and Kabakov have been discussing and planning this exhibition for ten years.

Due to the size of the installation, admission may sometimes be limited depending on attendance.

Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 10 – 6, Mondays by appointment. For more information and photographs, please contact Susan Yung at (212)226-3232.