

RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS INC

KOMAR & MELAMID

AMERICAN DREAMS

October 18 - November 15, 1997

The American Dreams installation aims to create, in the Komar and Melamid socialist realism style, the "new cult of personality" of George Washington. The artists see history as a dream-like reality similar to the Halloween parade on Washington Square where real and not real heroes of different eras and nations superimpose to take on the same identity. According to Komar & Melamid, any image of a state leader is Pop Art.

The installation includes paintings, sculpture, sketches, and collages with merging images of patriotic symbols of the former Soviet Union and the United States; the artists' collection of George Washington memorabilia; and sketches for *The Naked Revolution*, an opera with sets by Komar & Melamid, to premiere at the Kitchen in October.

Emigration and the post war caught Komar & Melamid, as well as many other Russian emigrants to the United States, in a fated and absurd realization that Lenin and George Washington may be one and the same phenomena. The artists became fascinated with their dream tableau in which the archetypal role of the father figure was assumed by the fathers of nations; that is, by images of the founding fathers of the artists' original and adopted homelands. Subsequently, they were gripped by the similarity of their dreams to those of an emigrant taxi driver, as related to a psychiatrist, in which images of Soviet leaders and patriotic emblems of America -- the Bald Eagle, the Stars and Stripes, historical monuments, the face and poses of George Washington, etc. -- had merged.

For years, the artists have been collecting images of George Washington, their adopted father or "Stepfather George." This collection of ready-mades -- more than 200 engravings, souvenirs, postcards, children's books, illustrations, ice-cream molds, whiskey and perfume bottles, medallions, etc -- reveals the surreal nature of reality and is the analogue to the paintings, sketches, and collages based on the dream imagery of Russian emigrants.

In 1917, atop the Washington Square Arch, Duchamp proclaimed the independence of Greenwich Village, the same year as Lenin's revolution. Komar & Melamid became aware of a symbolic connection between three revolutions: Russian, American and cultural (Modernism). For them, it is equally important that Duchamp was an emigrant, as well as an artist, and that the Washington Square Arch is the site of the Halloween parade.

Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid have been represented by the Feldman Gallery for more than twenty years. *The People's Choice*, in which they survey public opinion to determine what types of paintings are preferred and then fabricate the product, was recently exhibited at the Venice Biennale and the Ludwig Museum in Cologne.

The Naked Revolution, an opera inspired by the concepts and dream tableau of Komar & Melamid, will premiere at The Kitchen through October 18th. For information call 255-5793.

A slide presentation by the artists, *The Iconography of the George Washington Image*, will take place on Saturdays: Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, and 15 from 4 - 5. Open to the public, this is a call to artists to create works about George Washington for a jubilee group exhibition in celebration of the 200 year anniversary of his immortality since 1799.

There will be an opening reception on Saturday, October 18 from 6 - 8. Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 6:00. Monday by appointment.

31 Mercer Street, New York, N.Y. 10013, (212) 226-3232. FAX (212) 941-1536