

GALERIE BRIGITTE SCHENK

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov / Boat of Tolerance

Sharjah Biennial 10, 2011

Under the Patronage of

H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, member of the UAE Supreme Council, Ruler of Sharjah and

H.E. Sheikha Hoor Bint Sultan Al Qasimi

Organized by The Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, and curated by Galerie Brigitte Schenk, Cologne.

March 17, 2011, 11 am -1 pm, inauguration at The Maritime Museum,

The artists will be present

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, acclaimed internationally for their large-scale conceptual installation art projects that address socio-political issues of our time, will send their site-specific *Boat of Tolerance* to Sharjah.

Boat of Tolerance has been traveling the world with the mission to create dialogue around the fundamental idea of tolerance since its initial launch in Egypt (Siwa) in 2006. It has since traveled to Italy (Venice Biennale) in 2007 and Switzerland (St. Moritz) in 2010, and following Sharjah in 2011, the artists will continue the journey to countries around the world.

Believing the quality of a society to be determined by the education of its children, the Kabakovs hope to “rally children worldwide with the message,

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‘Tolerance: Learn It and Live It’, at a young age to make many of the world’s problems obsolete in the future,” stated Emilia Kabakov. In each host country the artists work collaboratively with children aged six to twelve, inviting them to create drawings and other art works that are then integrated into the boat and the sails. The art represents the historical influences of each region as well as the concerns, dreams and desires for the future, inspired by the idea of tolerance, as envisioned by this next generation of influencers. This makes the project not only site –specific but also an interactive art piece that is substantially created by the people living at the respective site. The subject of tolerance, a key issue facing nations worldwide and of particular importance at the moment is further explored through talks and workshops with the children in each location with materials developed for on-going education campaigns.

H.H. Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah since 1972, has been committed to culture and education of its residents. Sharjah, the third largest emirate in the United Arab Emirates, received the UNESCO award of being the Cultural Capital of the Arab world for 1998 and boasts numerous museums exploring a range of art, science, and cultural disciplines. H.H.

The Artists

Ilya Kabakov (b. 1933) and Emilia Kabakov (b. 1945) are Ukraine-born, NY-based artists who collaborate on environments which fuse elements of the everyday with those of the conceptual. While their work is deeply rooted in the Soviet social and cultural context in which the Kabakovs came of age, their work attains a universal significance about the human condition.

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Ilya Kabakov was a leader of Moscow's unofficial underground art scene from the late 1950s on, and widely recognized as [someone](#) of the most important artists of our time. *ARTnews* named him as one of the greatest living artists. In 1988, Kabakov came to the west and began collaborating with his future wife, Emilia. The installations speak as much about conditions in post-Stalinist Russia as they do about the human condition universally. Their work has been shown [at](#) such venues as the Museum of Modern Art, NY, the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Documenta IX, the Whitney Biennial, 1997 and the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg among others. In 1993 they represented Russia at the 45th Venice Biennale with their installation *The Red Pavilion*. The Kabakovs have also completed many important public commissions throughout Europe and have received a number of honors and awards, including the Oscar Kokoschka Preis, Vienna, in 2002 and the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, Paris, in 1995.

The curator

Starting her career 1983 in the German branch of the “Dia Art Foundation” Brigitte Schenk worked with Joseph Beuys and A.R. Penck, and as a private curator until she launched her own art gallery in [Cologne](#) in 1992. Since 1999 a main focus [has become](#) the art transfer between the Arab world and [western](#) society. As a pioneer worker in this region Galerie Brigitte Schenk has [been a pioneer worker in this region in](#) organizing numerous exhibitions [there](#).

Workshop, [Elementary](#) school, Extract

1. Test your tolerance level. Think of yourself as an open-minded person! Be curious about the deep prejudices you may have buried away!

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2. Be an “Upstander.” Ignorance, intolerance and injustice pop up in casual conversation all the time, but most of us take the “bystander” position by letting these comments slide. Think of these situations and write them down.

3. What about you is “different?” If someone else were to step into your shoes for a day, what kind of prejudices are they likely to encounter? Now slip into their shoes.

4. Celebrate and honor other cultural traditions. Christmas, Dipavali, Chinese New Year’s, – traditions are windows into other cultures. If you don’t have a friend to host you, look for related public events like festivals, talks, and other events where you can experience the food, music and other traditions first-hand.

5. Experience another culture’s arts and entertainment. Take in the music, dance performances, theater and other cultural offerings from different cultures.