



DIMITRI KOZYREV

MARK MOORE GALLERY | *STATEMENTS*

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Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduces a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

Dimitri Kozyrev in *ЗЕРКАЛО (Mirror)* reexamines the themes and techniques he has explored through painting over the last fifteen years. Never satisfied with repetition, Kozyrev allows memory to fluidly take him on an uncharted path through his practice—at once familiar, yet shifted and splintered. In his latest paintings, Kozyrev applies techniques inspired by Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky. Tarkovsky’s film “Mirror” is devoid of typical plot; his work is a seamless, but disorienting narrative that flows between the past and present. Similarly, Kozyrev’s *ЗЕРКАЛО (Mirror)*, offers no facile summary of content—his work is simultaneously nostalgic and firmly grounded in the present.

Dimitri Kozyrev (born 1967, St. Petersburg, Russia) received his MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara (CA), and has since had solo exhibitions in New York, Santa Fe, Los Angeles, and Chicago. His work has been featured at the Krasnoyarsk VIII Biennale, Museum of Contemporary Art (Russia), the Tucson Museum of Art (AZ), Museum of Contemporary Art (AZ), Gulf Coast Museum of Art (FL), Santa Monica Museum of Art (CA), the Armory Show (NY), and Torrance Art Museum (CA). Kozyrev lives and works in Tucson, AZ.



Left: *Lost Edge 9, 2007*
Acrylic, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

STATEMENTS

DIMITRI KOZYREV



Interviewed by: Marielos Zeka, Mark Moore Gallery

Parallels have been drawn between your work and Cubism and Constructivism, especially in terms of your re-arrangement of pictorial space. Can you speak to your methodology and art historical vantage point?

These are two eras of art history that have meant a lot to me at one time or another, and I'm avidly interested in Constructivism right now and have been for some time. I don't think that it's just because I'm Russian, although that isn't irrelevant. It was a really important experience for me to see the Filonov exhibition at the Russian State Museum in 1987 after it was hidden in storage for decades. It was important to me as an artist...as a Russian...as a Russian artist.

When the Constructivists were working they were urgently, desperately, joyfully trying to embrace a whole new world order and bring it about through art. What must that be like, to be a part of something so very new and different from anything that came before and fervently believe that you can make it happen through your art?

Within your work is a thoughtful production of contradictory images that combine several binaries:

such as vibrant colors blended with muted tones and two-dimensional compositions that visualize three-dimensional aerial perspectives. What purpose do these juxtapositions serve within the overarching meaning of each piece?

Contradictions are interesting. Some people like logic and order and when things follow a clear narrative arc. Me? Not so much. I find it satisfying when contradictions cohere and coexist.

You know, another contradiction about my practice is that I'm simultaneously very purposeful and yet quite directionless. I can become quite obsessed with a technique, or color, or line that pleases me and spend hours working and reworking a surface. Sometimes I discover a theme or idea and I carry it with me on every painting I work on for awhile. And sometimes I just have fun painting and make images that please me. Often one leads to the other.

In your *Lost One* series you make a direct comment about the contemporary state of art and political history through your visual reference to a fortification site built to protect Finland from the advances of the Soviet military avant-garde (Mannerhiem Line).

Do your current works follow in this vein? Are you making any direct reference to particular time periods/places in these works?

I grew up in a country where World War II is a very real and living part of our history. In their early 20s, both of my grandfathers and my paternal grandmother fought in the war protecting Leningrad during the 900-Day Siege. My maternal grandmother collected children whose parents had died of starvation during the siege and brought them to the orphanages and she spent nights on duty extinguishing the firebombs that dropped on the roofs. And they did it all on rations that were sometimes only 4 ounces of bread a day. Their memories, the stories they told—and the ones they thought were too horrible to tell—are dying with the generation.

The war with Finland took place on the soil outside of my city before World War II, and when I discovered ruins of the fortifications from that war being reclaimed by nature, I was struck by how quickly these things are forgotten. Incidentally, the war with Finland is called “the Forgotten War” in Russia.

And in the world of art too—“Contemporary Art” has been a strong influence for only a couple of decades. What the Cubists and the Constructivists were fighting, striving for...it’s all very different what we seem to be struggling with now.

But that was *Lost One* series. In my new series, ЗЕРКАЛО (*Mirror*), I’ve really turned inward. I’m still working with memory, but the

work is much more self-referential.

In terms of reference can you reveal any specific narrative or memory that is recalled in one of the paintings?

Usually I try to work with images that I have a personal connection to, such as a specific site I’ve visited or a photograph either I took, learned about through a extensive research, or found in my family’s archives. For example, I was doing some research regarding my Great Uncle who became MIA during the siege of Leningrad. He was 19 when he enlisted, six months later he was presumably killed. He could have stayed out of the war but he insisted on going; this kind of human sacrifice moved me to make many of my works in the *Last One* series. I did not find much but I found some photos that may as well depict him: dead young soldiers.

One of these photos was the inspiration for my painting *Last One 10*.

Speaking of memory, the notion of fractured recall plays an integral part in these newer works. How might you be grappling with the rupture of human recollection through painting?

I think if we all stop and think about it, what we remember about something is really more real and lasting than the lived moment. As a painter, I make things that last, and I can look back at them, but I can’t really reproduce the time, emotions, motivations, and interests

that brought them about. So, when I take those memories—the physical memory of the techniques, the mental memories of the ideas behind them and combine them with the new skills, ideas and interests that are part of my makeup now, something new has evolved.

If you ever watch *ЗЕРКАЛО (Mirror)*, Tarkovsky's movie, (and I highly recommend that you do), you quickly realize that it isn't enough to suspend disbelief. You have to really untether yourself and allow yourself to float along with the director in the images, sounds, and memories. It will frustrate you if you try to find a story or explain the logic behind it. But if you just immerse yourself in the experience of the film, you'll really be rewarded. I hope that viewers will have a similar experience with this show. Enjoy the pieces, enjoy the whole, but don't feel obligated to find the red thread or the one line that defines it.

Tell me more about Tarkovsky's ЗЕРКАЛО: (Mirror). How did you first become familiar with this movie? How are you translating or addressing Tarkovsky's film techniques in your paintings?

It is hard to say when I saw it for the first time...perhaps, during the early eighties when I became aware of his films. For a Russian audience Tarkovsky is a tragic cult figure. One who is interested in cinematography cannot avoid learning about him. I remember I was so captivated by some of the visuals of *ЗЕРКАЛО* (pronounced: zerkalo) that I tried to refer to those visuals in my very early drawings. For example: a barn on fire while the whole scene is motionless; a woman pulling her wet hair out of a bath; a boy

looking at his reflection in the mirror and it opens to another scene. These stills to me work as completed paintings!

I don't address them directly because cinematography and painting are different mediums. Watching his film can be meditative, like a self-reflecting journey, so to speak; from "Mirror" an individual can reflect on their life, both past and present and from these reflections can sometimes foretell the future...I looked at my past works and decided to revisit some of my old ideas, mix it through my present way of working and try to sneak into the future.

How would you describe any changes in your most recent body of work, or any evolutions since the beginning of your practice?

There are some great critics, observers, and commentators who do such a good job of articulating the changes and evolutions in my work. I just like making paintings that I think are great paintings.

Lastly, How might the trajectory of your practice evolve from this point forward?

This body of work has taught me to be freer as an artist and has loosened me up. In future works, I expect to continue to be less directed by themes than I have been. The act of painting, the visual language, is what is important. One of the first lines in Tarkovsky's film is, "Now I can speak loud and clear." That is true for me about my visual language now.





Each part of each painting is handled differently. Sometimes, the delicacy and detail of super-realistic watercolors predominate. At others, the rough-and-ready messiness of mortar-slathered bricks takes over. Everywhere, the jostling planes of Cubism meet the giddy instantaneousness of the Digital Age.

– David Pagel, *Los Angeles Times*,
March 2009

Left: *Last One 19*, 2012
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 inches

Opposite Page: *Lost Edge 27*, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 46 x 48 inches (detail)



Left: *Last One 16*, 2012
Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 72 inches

Black Square Series, 2004. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches





Landscape painting often evokes quietness, stillness; bringing solitary contemplation onto a distant horizon. In the hands of Dimitri Kozyrev the scene breaks up and is shattered like glass, as we are rushed through a terrain familiar, if not desired--the collision of what we hope we know and what we may fear.

— Scott Andrews, *Art Ltd. Magazine*,
November 2010

Right: *Last One 12*, 2011
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

Opposite Page: *Last One 4*, 2010
Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 60 inches (detail)





Above: *Last One 2*, 2010
Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 84 inches

Left: *Last One 13*, 2012
Acrylic, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 inches

Opposite Page: *Last One 11*, 2012
Oil on canvas, 60 x 72 inches



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Images can be teased out of the vertiginous geometric shapes, and his palette ranges from vibrant colors to muted grays and whites. The payoff here is that Kozyrev's intellectual approach is matched by his virtuoso skill.

–Kate Deimling, *ArtInfo*, 2011

Right: *Last One 15*, 2012
Acrylic on canvas, 46 x 48 inches

Opposite Page: *Last One 8*, 2010
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 inches (detail)



Last One 3, 2010. Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 72 inches (detail)





Last One 14, 2012. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches (detail)

BIO

Dimitri Kozyrev

Born 1967, Leningrad, USSR
Lives and works in Tucson,AZ

Education

2000 MFA, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA
1997 BFA, Ohio University, Athens, OH

Solo Exhibitions

2012 *ЗЕРКАЛО (Mirror)*, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA
2011 *Lost One*, Benrimon Contemporary, New York, NY
2010 *Retrospective*, David Richard Contemporary, Santa Fe, NM
2009 *Lost Edge*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
2006 *Space/Vision/ Perception*, Gulf Coast Museum of Art, Largo, FL
2005 *Cirrus Gallery*, Los Angeles, CA
2004 *Scope Art Fair*, New York, NY
Journeys II, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2003 *Chicago Art Fair*, Chicago, IL
Drawings, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2002 *Journeys I*, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2001 *Lost Landscapes*, Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA

Group Exhibitions

2011 *80 Days-Logistics in the Declaration of Customs*, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA
Open: 25th Anniversary Show, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA
Long Beach Community College, Art Gallery, Long Beach, CA

2010 *Gimme Shelter*, Mixed Greens, New York, NY.
2009 *Trouble in Paradise: Examining Discord between Nature and Society*, The Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ
FAST FORWARD 2009: The Berkus Collection, Santa Barbara County Art Commission, Santa Barbara CA
2008 *Looky See*, Ben Maltz Gallery, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA
PULSE New York Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, New York, NY
Art Chicago, Houldsworth Gallery booth, Chicago, IL
2007 *PULSE London Contemporary Art Fair*, Mark Moore Gallery booth, London, UK
Ultrasonic International II: Translating Transience, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Raid Projects, Los Angeles, CA
2006 *ArtWalk*, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Reboot, Red House Gallery, Venice, CA
Scapes Environments Interpreted, The Irvine Fine Arts Center, Irvine, CA
2005 *North by Northwest*, Hunslaker Schlesinger Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
2004 *Incognito*, Santa Monica Museum of Art, SM, CA
Armory Art Fair, New York, NY
Scope Art Fair, New York, NY
Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA
2003 *Raid Projects at Pond Gallery*, Chicago, IL
Indoor/Outdoor, Limn Gallery, San Francisco, CA

Road Show, George Adams Gallery, New York, NY
 Chicago Art Fair, Chicago, IL
 Abstracted, Limn Gallery, San Francisco, CA
 Miami Art Fair, Miami, FL
 2002 *Elizabeth Leach Gallery*, Portland, OR
Flat Files Rendez Vous, Post vs. Pierogi Gallery, Post, Los Angeles, CA
 Chicago International Art Fair, Chicago, IL
Faculty Show, UCSB Art Museum, Santa Barbara, CA
 The Armory Show, New York, NY
 Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA
 2001 *Flat Files*, Post Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
 Chicago International Art Fair, Chicago, IL
Auxillary Settings, Cirrus Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
 Group Exhibition, LA Art Core, Los Angeles, CA
Invitational Exhibition, Contemporary Arts Forum,
 Santa Barbara, CA
 2000 Villa Montalvo Center for the Arts, Saratoga, CA
MFA Exhibition, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
Group Exhibition, Gartner, Santa Monica, CA
Group Exhibition, The Fielding Institute, Santa Barbara, CA
 1999 *Juried Exhibition*, LA Art Core, Los Angeles, CA
College Art Association MFA Juried Exhibition, LA Municipal
 Gallery, CA

Public Collections

Berkus Family Collection, CA
 Wellington Collection, MA
 UCSB Art Museum, CA

Awards

2005 Art Omi Residency
 2000 Abrams Prize, University of California, Santa Barbara
 1999 Levitan Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara
 KCBX Graduate Art Fellowship, University of California,
 Santa Barbara

Right: *Last One 7*, 2010. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches (detail)

Front cover: *Last One 18*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72 inches

Back cover: *Last One 17*, 2012. Oil, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72 inches

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