



BERLINISCHE GALERIE

LANDESMUSEUM FÜR MODERNE
KUNST, FOTOGRAFIE UND ARCHITEKTUR
STIFTUNG ÖFFENTLICHEN RECHTS

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Exhibition: 24 February to 28 May 2012

Boris Mikhailov

Time is out of joint. Photography 1966 – 2011

“What catch my attention are the ordinary, everyday things. I look for formal solutions to depicting these everyday things in photography.”
Boris Mikhailov

With a show of works by Boris Mikhailov, born in Ukraine in 1938, the Berlinische Galerie is acknowledging a major position in contemporary photography. Mikhailov establishes many links between documentation and conceptual art, and in so doing he has also made an important contribution to media theory in terms of the way we look at photography and the history of our responses to it. In the 1990s, “everyday” meant “existential”, “threatening”. When the Soviet Union collapsed, he turned his attention to the losers in this social transformation, taking portraits, displaying poverty and despair, and with that the consequences of the ruthless, repressive Soviet system.

In 2002, Ulrich Domröse was able, as Curator of Photography, to purchase eight works from the series “Case History” for the Berlinische Galerie. Four works from the Berlin series “In the Street” followed soon afterwards. Mikhailov, who came to Berlin in 1996 on a DAAD bursary for artists, returned to the city in 2000. Since then he has divided his time between Berlin and his home town of Kharkov in Ukraine. Building on the Berlinische Galerie holdings, an exhibition has been designed that not only reflects the gallery’s commitment to collecting contemporary art, but also documents personal relationships with Berlin as a backcloth to artistic experience, while presenting Mikhailov’s work through a selection from different series.

Since starting out as a photographer in the mid-1960s, the artist has produced a wide-ranging and impressively multi-faceted oeuvre. A virtuoso, Mikhailov has drawn on very different possibilities presented by the medium, depicting his immediate surroundings with both brutal bluntness and humorous irony. His constant exploration of new photographic techniques, his use of widely varying styles, but also his ability to switch between a conceptual approach and a documentary perspective, make him one of the most interesting artists of the present day.

The exhibition has been conceived as a retrospective and brings together a selection ranging from the experimental photographs of early years to works made recently in Berlin. It is the first comprehensive exhibition of the artist’s work to be shown in Germany.

David Saik who had already arranged the upper floor of the permanent collection of the museum space was again appointed to conceive the exhibition architecture.

An exhibition catalogue will be published by Distanz Verlag.
(approx. 170 pp., price: €24.80)

BORIS MIKHAILOV

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Photography 1966 - 2011



Boris Mikhailov: Untitled, 1997-98, from the series “Case History”.
Copyright the artist, Sammlung Berlinische Galerie

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OPENING
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OPENING TIMES
Wed – Mon, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
U1 / U6 Hallesches Tor
U6 Kochstraße / U8 Moritzplatz
M 29, 248

ADMISSION
Day ticket: 8 Euro / red.: 5 Euro
1st Monday in every month: 4 Euro
Free entry for under 18s

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Description of the exhibition chapters

Photography was not seen as an art form in the Soviet Union. People who took photographs were either amateurs or journalists. Nor was Boris Mikhailov (*1938 in Kharkov / Ukraine) known officially as a photographer in Soviet days. That did not prevent him from living his artistic inclinations to the full. The company that employed him as an engineer even let him make a short film about the factory, but when nude photos he had taken privately were confiscated on the grounds of “pornographic content”, he lost his job as a result. And yet those “forbidden” pictures brought him the freedom to engage in art photography beyond the confines of recognised art.

Mikhailov’s creativity resulted in a diverse range of photographs, from his first series “Superimpositions” (1968-1975) to the cycles that made his name, like “Red Series” (1968-1975) and “Salt Lake” (1986), and his most recent work produced in Berlin, “In the street” (since 2000). His techniques are as versatile and encompassing as his subject-matter: he experiments with slides and he alienates photographs by colouring them manually or combining them with handwritten notes. By constantly developing new approaches, Mikhailov has taken the medium of photography forward in conceptual terms.

His career as a well-known artist began with the collapse of the Soviet Union, when he was able to work and exhibit abroad with the aid of bursaries. In 1996, he spent a year in Berlin, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). In 2000 he made a permanent home in the city, and since then he has travelled back and forth between Germany and Ukraine, where he still produces most of his photographic work.

Superimpositions Early experiments with pictures

The series “Superimpositions” (1968-1975) was Boris Mikhailov’s first work of art. He created it in parallel to the series “Red”, and so a number of images crop up separately in “Red”, only to reappear in a combination in “Superimpositions”. When Boris Mikhailov showed this work, artists who were not on close terms with the Soviet regime welcomed it as refreshingly new. Experiments of this kind and such an innovative aesthetic were audacious and up till then they had been quite rare. But the “Super-impositions” are not content with a new look. By overlaying different pictures, Mikhailov was provoking ambiguous readings of these photographs, and therefore encouraging thoroughly critical perceptions. The original material was drawn from a big collection of transparencies. In Soviet years, Boris Mikhailov presented them – like the series “Red” – in the form of slide shows. He often accompanied them with a soundtrack, such as music by Pink Floyd. It was not until after 2000 that he decided to display the individual works as prints, usually in a large format.

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Black Archive

In his series *Black Archive*, compiled in Kharkov between 1968 and 1979, Boris Mikhailov contrasts private and public life. He photographs homes as a place where fun can be had, where people can move around naked and pose in the nude. Home, therefore, is a space of personal liberty, free of the coercion and regulation imposed by the regime. This characterisation of the home as a free zone is all the more evident when seen alongside Mikhailov's pictures of public space. Here the photographer seems to creep about like a spy, capturing people from the rear and pretending to point his camera at a distant building rather than the figures in the foreground. Despite this contrast between the private and public – or rather, state-monitored – sphere, there is nothing oppressive about life on the streets the way Mikhailov shows it here. Rather than presenting Soviet life as grey and despondent, the mood and atmosphere of *Black Archive* open our eyes to a life with inadequacies which people have grown accustomed to and taken in their stride.

SOTS ART – LURIKI – RED

Conceptual and documentary photographs from the 1960s to the 1980s

Boris Mikhailov is regarded as the founder of conceptual photography in the late Soviet era. He produced his first conceptual works in the 1970s with the hand-coloured series "Sots Art" (1975-1986) and "Luriki" (1971-1985). Starting with photographs he had found or taken himself, he added a painterly touch by colouring them in. His principal aim here is not to transform them aesthetically. Mikhailov is interested in manipulating and re-interpreting the images. The colour he applies to the photo is like a corrector's pen, commenting on a standardised visual aesthetic and inviting the viewer to read his pictures in a new light. He again makes striking use of colour as a visual stimulus in his "Red Series" (1968-1975), begun in the late 1960s. This time the artist is playing with the classical Soviet image of military parades and the colour symbolism at play. What significance does red retain as the colour of revolution if it is absorbed by everyday objects?

CRIMEAN SNOBBERY – SALT LAKE

Bathing as a metaphor

The series "Crimean Snobbery" (1982) and "Salt Lake" (1986) have two things in common: the nude bather (a theme with a long tradition in art history) and the brown sepia tone. This colour lends the works a historical and even nostalgic quality. This aesthetic evokes memories of early photography and engrains a sense of history into these pictures. In "Crimean Snobbery", the bathing excursions are shown in a glorifying mode, and beach life on the Crimea is depicted as the epitome of casual living. This is apparently one place where people can break free from everyday reality. The bathers in "Salt Lake" present quite a different picture: they seem to symbolise the uncongenial decay of everyday Soviet life. In contrast to the Crimea's reputation as a health resort, the irony of the salt lake scenario is particularly sardonic, for it is the factory effluent that gives the water in this lake its allegedly healing properties.



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Viscosity

In the late 1970s, when Boris Mikhailov met the Moscow Conceptualists, and in particular the artist Ilya Kabakov, he discovered the artistic technique of combining images with text. This method offered a platform for bringing together jottings and pictures, although the two components bore little relation to each other, for the paintings did not illustrate the texts, and nor did the texts explain the paintings. Mikhailov was intrigued by the process, and in the early 1980s he began adding handwritten notes to his photographs. *Viscosity* (1982) was made at a time when Ukrainians were being subjected to more stringent state control and repression than usual. In 1982 Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, the former head of the Soviet secret service (KGB), took office as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). There was no question now of living outside the norm or the rules imposed by the state apparatus. Everyday life was under surveillance, anything that did not fall within daily work patterns was kept to a minimum – life, felt Mikhailov, had become “viscous”. At a time like this, the jottings came to Mikhailov’s aid, enriching his pictures with stories and poetry and breathing life into them.

CASE HISTORY

People on the social margins

When Boris Mikhailov returned to Kharkov in 1997 after a period in Berlin, he found the city looking tidier and more like other European towns. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union had torn society down the middle, and the middle classes had all but disappeared. In their place, the ranks of the homeless had swollen dramatically. The elderly and above all children had lost everything: their homes, their future prospects, and the respect of their fellow citizens. Boris Mikhailov and his wife Vita got to know these pariahs, took their portraits and were shown their physical wounds and broken bodies. In most cases, they paid their homeless subjects money in return. The drastic nature of these pictures – almost 400 in the series – unsettled many viewers. The first shows sparked a wave of outrage. But Boris Mikhailov never sought to provoke with his “Case History” (1997-1999). Rather, he earnestly wished to reveal the depths of an abyss into which Ukrainian society had plunged after the Cold War ended, and the suffering of those who had no well-functioning social net to protect them from the fall.

BY THE GROUND – AT DUSK

The early 1990s after the demise of the Soviet Union

The two series “By the Ground” (1991) and “At Dusk” (1993) were produced in Kiev and in Boris Mikhailov’s home town of Kharkov just after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Equipped with a Horizon camera that can swing the radius 120 degrees to generate panoramic views, Mikhailov combed the streets of both cities. He held the camera hip-height, seeking to document everyday activities as inconspicuously as possible. Mikhailov’s declared intention, in using brown for his series “By the Ground”, was to evoke “historical associations”, or to be more precise, a link to pre-revolutionary Russia around 1910. Blue, on the other hand, has dramatic undertones for the artist. This is the colour of war, famine and blockade. Boris Mikhailov attributes this association to his childhood experience of anti-aircraft fire during World War II. While middle-class living standards are already showing signs of deterioration in “By the Ground”, in “At Dusk” all hope of better times seems to



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have been extinguished: the camera ruthlessly depicts the rat race triggered by capitalist conditions.

IF I WERE A GERMAN ... - IN THE STREET

Role play and street photography

In 1994, before Boris Mikhailov came to Berlin, he devoted some work to a chapter in German-Ukrainian history. "If I were a German ..." is a burlesque role play, for which Mikhailov directed younger artists and his wife Vita in staged scenes. For the first time, this series addressed a highly political issue that had been carefully ignored during the Soviet era: Ukraine's wartime occupation by the German Wehrmacht and units of the Waffen-SS. In particular, the group exposed the ambivalent attitudes of Ukrainians to the forces of occupation. The street photography in the series "In the Street", compiled after Mikhailov made Berlin a permanent home in 2000, illustrates a totally different perspective on Germany. This time the photographer is having a chuckle about some of the curiosities he has discovered in German life. With the small-format camera that Mikhailov always carries with him – from Checkpoint Charlie, to the Ku'damm with its married couples of elderly West Berliners, pausing to observe the tourists – he has constructed a portrait of German characters and the German capital.

If I were a German ...

When the Soviet Union came to an end, a period of unprecedented artistic freedom began for Boris Mikhailov and the new art scene in Kharkov. Now they could use performance and other artistic work to draw attention to the politics of the day and topics from Ukrainian history that had been swept under the carpet. In the early 1990s, Boris Mikhailov, his fellow-artists Sergej Bratkov and Sergej Solonsky, and Boris' wife Vita founded a group called "Fast Reaction". Alongside a number of performances, their major works included the provocative, fun-loving photo sequence If I were a German ... (1994). Interviews with Ukrainians who had witnessed the German occupation during World War II firsthand were the springboard for this series. The artists turned the interview questions on their head and stepped into the boots of the occupiers. What if I had been the German? These actors, then, are engaged in role play in the conditional form, and their burning questions are: How would I have treated those in my power? When would I have gone along with things and when not? What privileges would I have enjoyed? What would I have condemned? These protagonists are not passing moral judgment on the injustices suffered by their compatriots. They are trying to comprehend how individuals, common soldiers, behaved. Ignoring the generals and political bigwigs, they focus on those who (perhaps) might have been in a position to offer someone else a piece of bread.



Boris Mikhailov: List of exposed photography

Outside wall:

1) Superimpositions, 1968-1975
colour photographs
each about 159 x 119 cm

Loaned by the artist as well as Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin and Galerie Barbara Gross, Munich

First space:

2) Black Archive, 1968-1979
b/w photograph, coloured pencil
Various sizes ranging from 19,5 x 15 cm bis 25,5 x 16,5 cm

Loaned by the artist

3) Soz Art, 1975-86
Aniline dye on b/w photograph, hand coloured
each about 1 m x 1m

Loaned by the artist

4) Luriki, 1971-85
Aniline dye on b/w photograph, hand coloured
Various sizes ranging from 23,5 x 17 cm bis 58 x 50 cm

Loaned by the artist

5) Crimean Snobbery (Krimeischer Snobismus), 1982
b/w photographs, sepia toned
each about 18 x 12,5 cm / 12,5 x 18 cm

Loaned by the artist

6) Salt Lake (Salzsee), 1986 / 1997
extracolor professional prints
each 63 x 95 cm

Loaned by Art Foundation Bernhard Sprengel and Friends

7) Red, 1968 – 75
colour photographs
each 20 x 30 cm / 30 x 20 cm

Loaned by the artist

8) Viscidity, 1982

b/w photographs, partly sepia toned, partly pasted with coloured paper, all marked with coloured pencil and / or pencil
each 29,5 x 18 cm

Loaned by the artist

Second Space:

9) Case History, 1997-1999
Colour photographs
each 197 x 127 cm

Loaned by the artist

10) By the Ground, 1991
b/w photographs, sepia toned
each about 11,5 x 56 cm

Loaned by the artist

11) At Dusk, 1993
b/w photograph, blue tinted
each about 15 x 30 cm bis 50 x 112 cm

Loaned by the artist

Third Space:

12) If I Were a German..., 1994
Photographic project in cooperation with Vita Mikhailov, Sergej Bratkov and Sergej Solonsky, Kharkov/ Ukraine
b/w photograph, text
each 30 x 40 cm (Vitrine) bzw. 150 x 100 cm (wall)

Loaned by the artist

13) In the Street (Berlin), since 2000
colour photographs
Various sizes ranging from 108 x 68 cm bis 100 x 150 cm

Loaned by the artist as well as Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin and Galerie Barbara Gross, Munich and Collection Berlinische Galerie



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Boris Mikhailov

Biography

1938

Boris Andreevich Mikhailov is born on 25 August in Kharkov, Ukraine, the oldest son of Andrej Nikolaevich Mikhailov and Chaja Markovna Mikhailova. Both parents are engineers with senior positions; his father graduated with distinction and is one of the leading engineers in the country. Both from backgrounds without privilege, they have worked their way up into the middle classes. Boris Mikhailov's mother is Jewish, but unable to practise her religion in Communist Russia. She maintains at least a linguistic link with Jewish culture by speaking Yiddish. She supports her oldest son from childhood in his artistic interests, hoping he will become a writer. This affinity with artistic professions is rooted in her family: her grandfather once managed a small town theatre near Kiev, and other relatives worked apart from their occupation in the fine arts.

1941

Mikhailov's father is called up to serve in the Second World War as an officer, while the factory where his mother works is transferred to the heartland of the Soviet Union. As her specialist skills are indispensable to the company, Chaja Mikhailova is obliged to move with three-year-old Boris.

1943

Mother and son return to Kharkov.

1944

Birth of a younger brother, Anatolij Andreevich.

1957–1962

Boris Mikhailov begins to study engineering at the Technical University, graduating in 1962.

1963–1968

After graduating, he works as an engineer on missile construction. This work does not satisfy his artistic ambitions, so he suggests making a film about the factory. His employers respond by giving him a film camera and a camera for stills. Alongside the filming, he soon starts taking photographs of celebrations and other gatherings at the factory. Inspired by German and Czech photo magazines, he emulates artistic styles and privately tries taking nude photographs. However, as he uses the factory laboratory to develop them, they are discovered and confiscated by the KGB. Loyal to the regime and not wishing to lose status as a model company, the management dismisses him without notice.

1968–1976

Boris Mikhailov finds a new job as an engineer and begins devoting much of his free time to photography. He teaches himself how to use a camera, tries out dark room

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techniques and experiments freely with his material. This results in the late 1960s in his series *Superimpositions*, where the artist superimposes one slide transparency over another. This sandwich technique is prompted first by a sense of ambivalence – widespread among citizens of the former Soviet Union – and second by the pleasure he takes in playing with random associations. With this series Mikhailov creates a completely new visual idiom, and the response among Soviet photographers and connoisseurs is overwhelming. It is soon followed by the *Red Series*, which Mikhailov sees as an ironical commentary on the use of the colour red in the official visual culture through which the Soviet Union presents itself. Parallel to this playful criticism of the regime, Mikhailov is working on a very private series *Suzi et cetera*, where his choice of themes and modes of representation, including nakedness, casual pleasures, and the highangle perspective, project a counter-image to the officially prescribed aesthetic.

1976–1980

Mikhailov gives up his job as an engineer, now working only as a technical photographer. In this position he takes official portraits, enlarges old family photos and reproduces or hand-colours them. These activities motivate the series *Luriki* and *Sots Art*, where he retrospectively colours in either photographs he has found, as in *Luriki*, or ones he has taken himself, as in *Sots Art*. The way he applies the colours here seems to observe the official rules, but in fact Mikhailov is turning the regime's aesthetic demands into kitsch, casting it in an ironic light. The series *Black Archive* is finished in the late 1970s. Nowadays it looks like an eye-witness record of everyday life in Soviet Kharkov, but rather than documenting the public space it presents the private sphere as a space of liberty, permitting a bohemian existence and the kind of freedom and humour that the regime was keen to curtail. During this period the artist joins a small photographic milieu in Kharkov that does not have a public presence in the form of publications or exhibitions. It behaves more as a private group of enthusiasts where works are discussed and exchanged. Rather than the Ukrainian community, Mikhailov pursues contacts with photographers in the Baltic countries, where cultural policy took a more liberal view of aesthetic ventures and an interesting visual aesthetic has been evolving.

1978

The series *Dance* offers a foretaste of what later characterises the series produced by Mikhailov in the 1980s – such as *River Pastorale*, *City without Central Street* and *Series of Four*: he dispenses with all manual interventions, be it colouring or superimposition. These series will consist of unprocessed documentary photographs, relying entirely on observation and the reproduction of everyday images.

1979

For the first time, Boris Mikhailov makes contact with the Moscow Conceptualists around Ilya Kabakov and Erik Bulatov when he accepts an invitation from a group of artists calling themselves the "Aesthetic Institute" and travels to Moscow to exhibit his photos. Moscow remains important in later years as an artistic location, as the city's international qualities permit greater freedom in cultural matters. Kabakov is impressed by the *Red Series*, and also *Black Archive*, and invites Mikhailov to his studio. They become friends and stay in touch, but never exhibit together during the Soviet period.

1981

The series *Beach at Berdyansk. Sunday 11 am to 1 pm* is made during a trip to the port of Berdyansk on the Sea of Azov. It is the first time Mikhailov has devoted work to exuberant compatriots enjoying a swim.



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1982

The series Viscidity and Horizontal Pictures, Vertical Calendars are the first where Mikhailov combines photographs with handwritten texts – a strategy he came across during his encounters with work by the Moscow Conceptualists. This year also sees the series Crimean Snobbery, produced in Gurzuf on the Crimean peninsula. In these stage-set photographs, Mikhailov depicts himself and his friends in comic or erotic poses, generating a hedonistic universe that suggests a moral, aesthetic and personal freedom unthinkable in the Soviet Union. Crimean Snobbism is published in the Japanese Rat Hole Gallery in 2007 as an artist's edition. Horizontal Pictures, Vertical Calendars is published in the Düsseldorf Richter Verlag in 2000 under the title Äußere Ruhe. (Drucksache N. F. 4).

1984–1985

The series Unfinished Dissertation, now the best-known example of Mikhailov's combination of text and image, dates from the winter of 1984. The texts and images, with autobiographical elements and extracts from art, science and philosophy journals, appear on the back of an unfinished dissertation discovered somewhere, hence the name. A curator and photography expert from Prague comes to the Soviet Union to research and collect material for an exhibition on independent Soviet photography. This is the first time Mikhailov's work is to be displayed in another Communist country. He accepts the invitation with mixed feelings.

1986–1988

The sepia photographs for the series Salt Lake are taken in Slavyansk. Again Mikhailov turns his attention to people at leisure. Whereas earlier series were set at the seaside, in Salt Lake the focus is on lively pursuits by an – allegedly salty – industrial lake, around encroaching pipes from an adjoining soda water factory. When Gorbachev introduces his glasnost policy, Scandinavian curators start taking an interest in unofficial Soviet art and photography. Two lecturers from the University of Art and Design in Helsinki travel repeatedly to the Soviet republics in the period up to 1988 collecting material for the exhibition Ny sovietisk fotografi, shown first in Odense, Denmark, and then in several Swedish towns. The invitation to Boris Mikhailov to participate in this group exhibition means that for the first time his work can be seen by a Western audience.

1991

Just after the break-up of the Soviet Union, Mikhailov works on the series By the Ground, with over 100 sepia-tone photographs. These pictures are graphic expressions of the incipient urban degradation of the artist's home town Kharkov and the hardships people are facing in the wake of an economic collapse brought to a head by the demise of the Soviet Union. Lynne Cook invites Boris Mikhailov to the exhibition Carnegie International at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, the first display of his work in the United States.

1992

In the self-ironical series I am not I Mikhailov parodies the artist and intellectual as a pitiful and isolated individual. Salt Lake goes on show at the Stadtforum in Graz (Austria).



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1993

In analogy to his series *By the Ground*, Mikhailov publishes 100 blue-tone photographs entitled *At Dusk*. While *By the Ground* heralds the looming disintegration of the Soviet Union, in *At Dusk* the economic decline of Kharkov is blatant. High unemployment, poverty, faces betraying depression and urban neglect are the hallmarks of this series. The Museum of Modern Art in New York asks Mikhailov to show *By the Ground* during the exhibition series *New Photography*. The Soros Center for Contemporary Art opens in Kiev, breathing new life into the Ukrainian art community in the 1990s with a completely novel exhibition programme. Socialised in the West, artistic director Marta Kuzma not only brings a dispassionate and open-minded perspective from the United States to Kiev, she also makes production budgets available to promote the work of Ukrainian artists and inject greater independence into the local art milieu.

1994

With his wife Vita and fellow-artists Sergej Bratkov and Sergej Solonsky, Mikhailov founds the "Fast Reaction Group". They work together on series like the burlesque stagings of *If I were a German ...*, an over-the-top re-enactment of the relationship between German troops and the civilian population based on interviews with Ukrainians who had lived through the Nazi occupation during World War II. They also comment on how the art sector operates in their country with actionist art that attracts press attention. These years witness tremendous freedom and creativity in the group itself and also in the young art community as a whole, with provocative responses to political events a major component of artistic output. As part of the "Light Work" programme, Mikhailov spends a month in residence at the University of Syracuse in New York State. The German magazine *Stern* publishes a lengthy article about his work along with the series *At Dusk*. Curator Inka Schube initiates an exhibition of *Salt Lake* at the *Galerie in der Brotfabrik*, Berlin. Mikhailov is invited to the *Photo Biennale* in Rotterdam.

1995

Mikhailov's one-man show at the *Portikus* in Frankfurt am Main, which moves on to the *Kunsthalle* in Zurich, is the first presentation of his work in the West to offer a broad overview of his photographic oeuvre. This exhibition attracts the attention of Munich gallerist Barbara Gross, who invites him to collaborate. Mikhailov counters his own growing visibility in the Western art world by opening the *Up/Down Gallery* together with Sergej Bratkov. For their shows they invite young photographers from both Europe and the former Soviet Union.

1996

Following a recommendation by Inka Schube and Matthias Flügge, Mikhailov visits Berlin on the programme for artists run by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). His departure from Ukraine ends his collaboration with "Fast Reaction". With Brigitte Kölle, who, together with Kasper König, organised his exhibition in Frankfurt as curator at the *Portikus*, he publishes two artist's editions of the series *By the Ground* and *At Dusk*. He receives a bursary from the *Landeskulturzentrum Salzau* in Schleswig-Holstein and also the *Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award* from the *Coutts Bank* in Switzerland. Marta Kuzma organises a comprehensive retrospective of his work at the *Soros Center for Contemporary Art* in Kiev.

1997

Mikhailov starts work on the extensive series *Case History*, in which he takes over 400 portraits of homeless people in his home town.



Boris Mikhailov

Time is out of joint. Photography 1966 – 2011

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1998

Over the next few years, Boris and Vita Mikhailov commute between Kharkov and Berlin. The DAAD helps them apply for a work visa. Publication of the series Unfinished Dissertation is facilitated by funding from the Dietrich Oppenberg Stiftung in Essen in the form of the renowned Albert Renger-Patzsch award.

1999

With the DAAD's support, Mikhailov is able to publish his prolific Case History as an artist's edition, presenting parts of it at the daadgalerie in Berlin. Prompted by the Heiner Müller Gesellschaft, he starts work in the series Look at me I look at water in homage to the German poet and playwright. Mikhailov combines the photos in this series with diary-like entries that express not only his sense of being torn to and fro between East and West, but also his views on the general social climate in both countries.

2000

Mikhailov wins the Kraszna-Krausz-Buchpreis for the book version of Case History. In November he receives the Hasselblad Award for his major achievements as a photographer; an accompanying exhibition opens when he receives the award at the Art Museum in Göteborg. Mikhailov begins to work in Berlin on the episodic series In the Street, documenting everyday life in Berlin for the first time.

2001

Case History wins the prize for best photographic book at Les Rencontres d'Arles Photography Festival.

2002

Boris Mikhailov accepts a guest lectureship at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig for the winter semester of 2002/ 2003. He begins collaborating with the Galerie Barbara Weiss in Berlin, where his first personal show is devoted to the work TV Mania. This consists of almost 250 direct shots of the TV screen, where he explores the new media environment for images relevant to photography. Producing it in his living room helps him overcome certain problems he has understanding and communicating with Western society, which are still preventing him from going about his characteristic street photography in Berlin. Salt Lake is published by Steidl Verlag, Göttingen.

2003

The Fotomuseum in Winterthur stages a Mikhailov Retrospective which then travels to Boston, Barcelona and Amsterdam. Mikhailov is awarded the Art Prize of the General Satellite Corporation for his contribution to the development of contemporary Russian art at a ceremony in the Russian Museum in St Petersburg.

2004

Look at me I look at water is published by Steidl Verlag.



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2006

The Superimpositions series is published as Yesterday's Sandwich by Phaidon Verlag, London. In winter 2006 Mikhailov visits Japan, where he captures everyday life in Japanese cities in a photographic series, Banzai!, compiled in Tokyo.

2007

Suzi et cetera is published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne. Mikhailov is one of several international artists invited to exhibit in the Ukrainian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

2008

Boris Mikhailov is admitted to the Fine Arts section of the Berlin Academy of Arts. He and his wife Vita move to Braunschweig for three months, where theatre director Claudia Bosse has invited him to portray the 300-strong amateur chorus in Aeschylus' Persians. All taken in profile, lending full expression to the chin, nose and forehead, the portraits suggest that Mikhailov is working on an analytical template of the German face.

2009

Maquette Braunschweig is published by Steidl Verlag.

2011

Tea Coffee Cappuccino, Mikhailov's extensive documentation of everyday life in Kharkov in the years between 2000 and 2010, is published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne. In this series, Mikhailov returns thematically to the early days of his photographic career, but this time he uses colour film in order to capture as realistically as possible the new look that is emerging in the public space and the changes wrought by a capitalist economy. Back in Kharkov, Mikhailov has recently started working on a series of stage-managed photographs which explore in depth the KGB, the Soviet domestic and foreign intelligence service, between 1954 and 1991.