

GES-2-----V

GES-2 House of Culture opens the *Square and Space. From Malevich to GES-2* exhibition—an international project guest curated by Francesco Bonami and Zelfira Tregulova.

From 20 June to 27 October, works by some of the most important artists of the twentieth century will be exhibited at GES-2, including Gerhard Richter's *Candle* (1982), Pablo Picasso's *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (1910), Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (circa 1923), and Francis Bacon's *Study for a Portrait* (1953).

In this exhibition, it is not just works from the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twenty-first century that have been brought into dialogue with works by iconic twentieth-century artists such as Francis Bacon, Erik Bulatov, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich, Pablo Picasso, Gerhard Richter, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Andy Warhol, but the building of the House of Culture itself. Reconstructed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano, the GES-2 building is at once the first work encountered by the viewer and the background against which the exhibition is perceived.

Zelfira Tregulova, curator of the *Square and Space. From Malevich to GES-2* exhibition:

The Square and Space exhibition presents the most important artistic innovations of the twentieth century, and the important role played by Russian art in this process. The exhibition begins with Malevich's breakthrough Black Square, which proved a vast influence on world art, and concludes with one of the best works by Ilya Kabakov, the creator of the concept of the total installation. The exhibition leads the viewer from the plane of the canvas with the black square, to an immersion in the architectural space of GES-2, and to within the work of art.

In *Square and Space*, two stories unfold in parallel. The first is about how the creative space gradually spills out from a small square canvas to fill a building the size of the House of Culture, and how the work that heralded the end of painting more than a century ago paradoxically served as an impulse for further artistic discoveries.

The second story is that of the relation between the work of art and the viewer over the last century and a half, during which the works of artists have been gradually displaced from the centre of attention to the periphery, becoming kinds of optional backgrounds for selfies. Kazimir Malevich foretold such changes in art, museums, and the perception of viewers at the start of the twentieth century, and, a hundred years later, the Italian architect Renzo Piano conceived of the transformation of GES-2 power station into GES-2 House of Culture in a way that underlined this anthropological shift.

Through his reconstruction, Piano sought to answer the question once posed by Malevich's painting: for whom and for where is art made? Each exhibit in *Square and Space* proposes its own answer, and each visitor—whether they are an enthusiastic viewer, a flâneur, or just a lover of selfies—will find something for themselves here.

Francesco Bonami, curator of the *Square and Space. From Malevich to GES-2* exhibition:

This exhibition tells the story of how the evolution of art and the museum have followed parallel paths. More and more, museums have become concentrated on architecture: once repositories of art, they have become backgrounds, cultural contexts in the widest sense of the word, and GES-2 House of Culture serves as a striking example of this transformation. Malevich, whose Black Square is a reflection on the nature of art in general and painting in particular, anticipated the role of architecture in the perception, reflection, and existence of art.

**Square and Space.
From Malevich to GES-2**
20 Jun—27 Oct 2024

[Press kit](#)

GES-2 House of Culture
15 Bolotnaya Embankment
Moscow
ges-2.org

Entry to the House of Culture is free of charge, by prior [registration](#)

Follow what's new at GES-2 on [Telegram](#), [YouTube](#) (in Russian)

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Artem Bondarevskii, General Director of V-A-C Foundation and GES-2 House of Culture:

In the Square and Space exhibition, GES-2 works with guest curators. Such a practice corresponds with collaboration and interdisciplinarity, principles important to the House of Culture—the experience of invited experts complements GES-2’s interest in work with contemporary culture and artistic experiments.

Catalogue

A catalogue will be published to document the exhibition—a kaleidoscope of the works of art exhibited accompanied by texts on the nature of creativity written by artists and theorists of both the avant-garde and our times. The curators of the exhibition, Francesco Bonami and Zelfira Tregulova, pose questions about the role played in the history of art by Malevich’s *Black Square*—how this painting anticipated the artistic experiments that gave rise to contemporary art as we understand it today. The designer of the catalogue, Evgeny Korneev, founder of the Rasdesign bureau, has given the catalogue the shape of a square, referencing this most important work.

Public programme

The themes of the exhibition provide a direction for the GES-2’s public programme. The programme will begin on 27 June with a discussion between the curators Francesco Bonami and Zelfira Tregulova. The moderator of the discussion will be Sergey Fofanov. In July and August, reading groups will take place, exploring the causes and mechanics of artistic transformations in contemporary art, and in autumn a poetic writing laboratory will take place. Participants will deepen their understanding of language, and of the different ways poetry can look and sound.

Throughout the exhibition’s run, mediator and school tours will take place, as well as events created especially for deaf, blind, and neurodivergent visitors.

For our visitors with families, we have prepared a children’s tour, and are developing a series of workshops with the artist Alexey Luka. You can learn more about our public programme on the House of Culture’s website.

Curators

Francesco Bonami

Francesco Bonami is an art critic and the artistic director of the *BY ART MATTERS* contemporary art museum (Hangzhou, China). He has curated over a hundred exhibitions, among them *TRUCE: Echoes of Art in an Age of Endless Conclusions* (2nd SITE Sante Fe Biennale, 1997); *Unfinished History* (Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, 1998); *Manifesta 3* (Ljubljana, 2000); the 50th Venice Biennale, *Dreams and Conflict: The Dictatorship of the Viewer* (Venice, 2003); *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist’s Eye* (Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, 2005); *Italics* (Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 2008); the 75th Whitney Biennial of American Art (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2010); *Modernikon. Contemporary Art from Russia* (Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2010).

Bonami is also the author of a number of books, including *Si crede Picasso: Come distinguere un vero artista contemporaneo da uno che non lo è?* (He believes himself to be Picasso: how to distinguish who is a true contemporary artist from who isn’t?, 2010), *Lo potevo fare anch’io* (I can do the same, 2007, Russian edition: V-A-C Press, 2017), *Bello, sembra un quadro. Controistoria dell’arte* (Pretty as a picture. Counterhistory of art, 2022).

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Zelfira Tregulova

Zelfira Tregulova is an art historian. From 2015 to 2023, she was the director of the State Tretyakov Gallery. Among the international exhibition projects she has curated are *Berlin–Moscow. Moscow–Berlin* (Martin–Gropius–Bau, Berlin; The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, 1995–1996); *Amazons of the Avant-garde* (Berlin–Bilbao–Venice–New York–London, 1999–2000); *Dream Factory Communism* (with Boris Groys, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2003); *Etonne moi! Serge Diaghilev et les Ballets Russes* (with John E. Bowlt, New National Museum of Monaco, Monte Carlo, 2009); and *Socialist Realisms* (with Matthew Bown, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 2011).

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