GES–2 V A C

Exhibition *Still Life. Portrait. Landscape. After Genre* opens at GES–2 House of Culture in Moscow

On 15 October, the House of Culture presented a project devoted to three classical genres of fine art: still life, portrait, and landscape. These genres not only shaped the ways in which the world around us was described across different historical periods, but also anticipated many contemporary forms of visual communication: selfie culture, advertising, short-form video, video games, and other digital content.

Within the project, still life emerges as a reflection of the history of economic exchange and commodity fetishism. The portrait is considered above all as a tool for image-making. Landscape records the shifting relationship between humanity and nature from the Industrial Revolution to the digital age, encompassing the ecological crisis and resource extraction.

The project *Still Life. Portrait. Landscape. After Genre* brings together over 80 artists and around 100 works—ranging from masterpieces by Marcel Broodthaers, Jan Toorop, Kazimir Malevich, Claude Monet, Paul Signac, Frans Snyders, and Caspar David Friedrich to pieces created by contemporary artists and specially commissioned for the exhibition by GES–2. Among them are Alina Brovina, Ellina Gennadievna, Oleg Matrokhin, Roman Sakin, Anna Tagantseva-Kobzeva, Dmitry Tsvetkov, the Jonjoli Flowers collective, Ivan Chemakin, and others.

The exhibition has three thematic sections, each developed by a pair of curators. “Still Life” was conceived by Dmitry Belkin and Andrei Vasilenko, with the participation of Alexandra Tumarkina, who created a display featuring viral items of clothing and accessories. “Portrait” was curated by Andrei Vasilenko and Karen Sarkisov, whilst “Landscape” was developed by Dmitry Belkin and Andrey Parshikov.

Andrei Vasilenko, exhibition curator, GES–2 House of Culture and V—A—C Foundation:
This exhibition addresses pressing questions of our time—from overconsumption, the struggle for resources, ecological crises, and total digitalisation, to the question of what being human means in the era of late capitalism. The starting point here is the genre of still life, which, at the dawn of the modern era, captured a new type of social and economic relationship oriented towards the production of material goods.The section resembles a hypertext, where Flemish painting serves as a prologue to current artistic practices that reflect, among other things, the logic behind the generation and distribution of contemporary media content. And these processes, in turn, shape our everyday lives at the intersection of physical and digital realities.

Dmitry Belkin, exhibition curator, GES–2 House of Culture and V—A—C Foundation:
The landscape section begins with how, in the mid-nineteenth century, the classical landscape was transformed into an optical construction, and the pointillist brushstroke of the Post-Impressionists anticipated the pixel. The contemporary digital landscape has thus become as alluring as the natural one. How people inhabit both types of landscape is explored further in the exhibition. The narrative concludes by linking these processes to ecological crises.

Still Life. Portrait. Landscape. After Genre
Exhibition
15 Oct 2026—25 Apr 2027
Galleries C2—C5
12+

Press kit
Tickets
Curatorial text

Curators
Dmitry Belkin
Andrey Parshikov
Karen Sarkisov
Alexandra Tumarkina
Andrei Vasilenko

Authors
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Oleg Blyablyas
Jan Boeckhorst
Marcel Broodthaers
Alina Brovina
Erik Bulatov
Collective Actions
Ivan Chemakin
Jan Cossiers
Mascha Danzis
Nikolai Denisovsky
Liz Deschenes
Deus ExCavator
(Kerim Ragimov, Pyotr Shvetsov)
Dvizhenie
Olga Eiges
Ellina Gennadievna
Harun Farocki
Caspar David Friedrich
GeoGuessr
GeoguessRu
GeoWizard
Ian Ginzburg
Alexander Grigoriev
Guillaume van der Hecht
Benjamin Huseby
Yulia Ivashkina
Laurence Jenkell
Jonjoli Flowers (Piotr Diakov, Konstantin von Rieben, Alexander Tsikarishvili, Liza Tsikarishvili, RTKN)
Sergei Karev
Sangdon Kim
Viacheslav Koleichuk
Vitaly Komar, Alexander Melamid
Arkhip Kuindzhi
Robert Lazzarini
Florencia Levy
Liu Yujia
Vladimir Logutov
Sergei Lotsmanov
Valentina Lutsenko
Mikhail Maksimov
Rafał Malczewski
Kazimir Malevich
Anna Martynenko, Varvara Semenova
Oleg Matrokhin
Alexandra Mitlyanskaya
Andrei Monastyrski
Claude Monet
Andrei Mylnikov together with Alexander Korolev and Viktor Snopov
Lev Nussberg
Boris Orlov
Quayola

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Karen Sarkisov, exhibition curator, GES–2 House of Culture and V—A—C Foundation:
In the "Portrait" section, the conversation is deliberately narrowed to a single subgenre—the self-portrait. We invite the viewer to regard any genre as a variation of it: the self-portrait becomes the supreme genre of an era marked by an "epidemic of narcissism." The structure of the section is built on the tension between two approaches to the self in art, represented by a collection of Malevich's self-portraits and an action-based object by Monastyrski.

The architecture of the exhibition also follows a three-part structure, whilst at the same time emphasising the autonomy of each section. "Still Life", where the curators raise questions about the nature of things, is constructed on the principle of a game of imitation. Expensive finishing materials—marble and wood—turn out to be nothing more than high-quality printing on wallpaper. In the "Landscape" section, the architects played with painted wood panels whose texture replicates wall patterns found in computer games. The viewer seems to step into a digital labyrinth—an embodiment of the curatorial concept concerning the relationship between perspective and dead end. The final section, "Portrait", is spare and understated—the space is designed to balance and highlight the imagery of Monastyrski's conceptual object and Malevich's painterly experiments.

The principle of moving beyond the traditional genre system is also carried through the exhibition's public programme. Whilst the exhibition itself shows how genres have travelled from the art of the Old Masters to contemporary digital content, the public events put this optic to the test in practice: in dance, cinema, literature, fashion, discursive practice, and shared experience.

One of the key threads is performance and bodily practices. The first event in this programme strand will be the performance *TinaNaD* by the art group Jonjoli Flowers, who are among the artists featured in the exhibition. On 16 October, within their installation *Harvest Time—the Dance of Old Age*, they will be joined by dance artist Valentina Lutsenko to present a physical meditation on how inanimate objects and pond silt might dance.

Throughout the project, there will also be meetings with writers, film screenings as part of a special programme entitled *Genre Out of Its Element*, and academic discussions. The everyday fabric of the project's events includes mediated tours through the three sections, weekday sessions for children, and events for deaf, hard of hearing, neurodivergent, blind, and low vision visitors.

The full public programme is available on the website.

Sber is the official partner of the exhibition.

Anastasia Rebkalo
Martha Rosler
Roman Sakin
Sergei Sapozhnikov
Alexander Shaburov
Igor Shelkovsky
Stanislav Shuripa
Paul Signac
Elena Slobtseva
Frans Snyders
Ettore Sottsass, Michele De Lucchi, Masanori Umeda (Memphis Milano)
SYSTAIME
SZ (Viktor Skersis, Vadim Zakharov)
Anna Taganzeva-Kobzeva
Vladislava Tarasova
THIS IS LIFE
Anastasia Tsayder
Dmitry Tsvetkov together with students of the HSE Art and Design School: Alexandra Bocheverova, Kamilla Dzhafarova, Viola Iosifova and Varvara Poltorakina
Oleg Vassiliev
VD Games
Nikolai Vechtomov
Frans Ykens
Zach Choi

Architecture
sashakim.studio:
Sasha Kim, Ira Ten

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

Entry to the House of Culture is free of charge, by prior registration.

Follow GES–2 on YouTube.

Press contact
press@v-a-c.org

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Reference information

GES–2 House of Culture is an international institution opened in 2021. Its primary mission is to create conditions for the development of contemporary culture and the artistic community within the context of the city, country, and world, drawing on the values of accessibility, interdisciplinarity, and engaging everyone in cultural production.

GES–2 is the main venue of V—A—C Foundation, which has been operating since 2009. The House of Culture includes the Vaults Centre for Artistic Production, where new works are created for the GES–2 programme.

The GES–2 programme encompasses exhibitions, cinema, theatre, music, dance, and publishing projects. The public programme combines academic formats with lectures, meetings, workshops, and other events for adults and children.

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