



The Ukrainian Museum 222 E 6th Street, New York, NY 10003-8201 • Tel. 212 228-0110

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Contact:

Hanya Krill

212.228.0110

it@ukrainianmuseum.org

Borys Kosarev: Modernist Kharkiv, 1915-1931
First Ever Exhibition of Kosarev Works

Presented at The Ukrainian Museum in New York City, December 4, 2011 through May 2, 2012

New York City, October 31, 2011 — The first comprehensive exhibition of avant-garde artist **Borys Kosarev** will be presented in New York City at The Ukrainian Museum opening December 4 and on display through May 2, 2012. ***Borys Kosarev: Modernist Kharkiv, 1915-1931*** includes 82 works on paper by Kosarev, an outsider of the Eastern European Modernist movement and a survivor of Stalin's intellectual purges in 1930s Ukraine.

Borys Kosarev (1897-1994), also known as Boris Kosariev, was a contemporary of prominent Kharkiv, Ukraine artists David Burliuk (1882-1967), Vladimir Tatlin (1885-1953), and Ilya Repin (1844-1930), as well as other celebrated Ukrainian artists such as Kazimir Malevich (1879-1935) and Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964). A master graphic artist, painter, designer, photographer, and book illustrator, Kosarev worked with luminaries such as theater director Les Kurbas (1887-1937), poet Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930), and cinema pioneers Alexander Dovzhenko (1894-1956) and Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948). One of Kosarev's closest collaborators in the Kharkiv avant-garde was Volodymyr Bobrytskyi, who emigrated to New York and became a renowned designer, known as Bobri.

“Kosarev is barely known in his own country. This first ever exhibition brings to light Kosarev's prodigious talent and exposes the fundamental relationship between the artist and the site of his creative stimulus, his beloved city, Kharkiv,” said Maria Shust, director of The Ukrainian

Museum. “The exhibition will return to Ukraine to be shown at the Kharkiv Museum in 2012. Kosarev’s extensive contribution to Ukrainian Modernism will finally be given its due.”

Borys Kosarev’s name will forever be associated with the city of Kharkiv—the place of his birth, death, and a long life devoted to the visual arts. A native son of the fiercely independent Kharkiv territory, which produced some of Ukraine’s most creative cultural personalities, Kosarev epitomizes the spirit of the area and its regional diversity. The contents of the exhibition coincide with the period of Kharkiv’s status as Ukraine’s capital city (1919-1934) and the rise of Constructivism as an ideological aesthetic. It was also the period of Ukrainianization—a government policy that encouraged the revitalization of national culture, only to be quashed through a series of orchestrated purges of its proponents, the Ukrainian intelligentsia, beginning in the 1930s. While it flourished, Ukrainianization brought with it a renaissance of art and culture, serving as an unprecedented gateway into global Modernism through the aesthetic of Constructivism.

Sheltered from excessive official scrutiny by working in theater design and as a teacher until his death in 1994, Kosarev survived the Stalin purges and later repressions by intentionally staying “under the radar.” Sadly, his own reticence, coupled with the pressures exerted by the political landscape of the times, left Kosarev virtually unknown as a contributor to the Modernist movement. Not unlike Anatol Petrytsky (1895-1964), whose works were called a “serendipitous discovery” by the *New York Times* (Glueck, Grace. “Ukrainian Modernists, All Alone, Here at Last.” *The New York Times*, November 4, 2006, B7), Kosarev and his art are yet to be revealed and considered among the important Modernists of the early 20th century.

Borys Kosarev: Modernist Kharkiv, 1915-1931 is augmented with several works by his colleagues Vasyl Yermilov (1894-1968) and Maria Syniakova (1890-1984). The exhibition, comprising 88 objects in total, is curated by Myroslava M. Mudrak, Professor of Art History, The Ohio State University.

Organized by The Ukrainian Museum (New York), the Kharkiv Art Museum (Ukraine), and Rodovid Gallery (Ukraine), the objects in this exhibition are drawn from the collections of Nadia Kosareva (Kharkiv), the Museum of Theatre, Music and Cinema Arts of Ukraine (Kyiv), the Kharkiv Art Museum, Borys and Tetiana Grynyov (Kharkiv), the VovaTania Gallery (Kharkiv),

Dmytro Horbachov (Kyiv), and Oleksander Myzhin (Kharkiv). *Borys Kosarev: Modernist Kharkiv, 1915-1931* is accompanied by a catalogue authored by Professor Mudrak with additional essays written by Tetiana Pavlova and Valentyna Chechyk, who co-authored the 2009 monograph *Borys Kosarev 1920s: Vid Maliarstva do Tea-Kino-Photo* (Borys Kosarev 1920s: From Painting to Thea-Cine-Photo). The exhibition is funded in part by the Stedley Art Foundation (Ukraine) and individual sponsors in the United States.

About The Ukrainian Museum

The Ukrainian Museum acquires, preserves, and exhibits articles of artistic or historic significance to the rich cultural heritage of Ukrainian Americans; its collections include thousands of items of folk art, fine art, and archival material. At its founding in 1976 by the Ukrainian National Women's League of America, the Museum was hailed as one of the finest achievements of Americans of Ukrainian descent. Since then, and particularly since its move in 2005 to a new, state-of-the-art building in Manhattan's vibrant East Village, it has become known as one of the most interesting and dynamic smaller museums in New York City. Each year, the Museum organizes several exhibitions, publishes bilingual (English/Ukrainian) catalogues, and presents a wide range of public and educational programs, including concerts, films, lectures, courses, workshops, and special events.

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The Ukrainian Museum

222 East 6th Street (between Second and Third Avenues)
New York, NY 10003

T: 212.228.0110

F: 212.228.1947

E: info@ukrainianmuseum.org

W: www.ukrainianmuseum.org

Museum hours:

Wednesday–Sunday

11:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Gift Shop * guided tours * school and family programs * reduced admission for students and seniors