

PRESS RELEASE

Boris Mikhailov
Triptychs

Preview 8 Feb, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
9 Feb – 5 Apr, 2012

SPROVIERI
23 Heddon Street London W1B 4BQ

Sprovieri is delighted to present *Triptychs*, the gallery's second solo exhibition by world-renowned photographer Boris Mikhailov.

Constituting a comprehensive overview of Mikhailov's complex and varied oeuvre, the photographs selected for this exhibition come from ten different series, spanning a period of fifty years.

Since the mid 1960s, Boris Mikhailov has explored photography's full range of possibilities and produced an uncompromising yet ironically humorous portrait of his close surroundings. His tireless investigations into photographic techniques and stylistic means, as well as his frequent alternation between conceptual and documentary work have contributed to make Mikhailov one of the most influential photographers living today.

This exhibition will showcase works from the series *Yesterday's Sandwich* (late 60s – late 70s), *Luriki* (1971–85), *Salt Lake* (1996), *I am not I* (1992), *If I were a German* (1994), *Case History* (1997–98), *Dedicated to Man Ray* (1998), *Look at me I look at Water* (1999), *Football* (2000) and *The Wedding* (2008).

The three series *Case History*, *Look at me I look at Water*, and *The Wedding* narrate the contingency of the poor and homeless of our time. The subjects are human beings, often undressed and defaced by the unease of their lives. Their gestures, poses and expression are never casual and have been carefully staged by the artist, who creates refined references to religious themes (for instance the composition of a Pietà or the image of a prophet) as well as daily subjects.

In the series *If I Were a German*, *I am not I* and *Football*, Boris himself plays the role of one of the main characters, creating humorous parallels between the subjects within the photographs and our ordinary lives. In *If I Were German* theatrical scenes inspired by the Second World War take place in real backgrounds with references to life in contemporary Ukraine, whilst in *I am not I* Boris poses in auto-erotic nude portraits reminiscent of the nineteenth century nude, which create a grotesque and ironic atmosphere. In *Yesterday's Sandwich* and *Luriki* Mikhailov's manipulation of the images overlaps elements and human subjects in order to produce surrealistic situations, which are nevertheless tied to reality.

Born in 1938 in Kharkov, Ukraine, Boris Mikhailov lives and works in Berlin. His recent solo exhibitions include Berlinische Galerie, 2012, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2011, and Kunsthalle Wien, 2010. A selection of his works is featured in 'Photography: New Documentary Forms' at Tate Modern until March 2012. Mikhailov is the recipient of the 2012 Spectrum International Prize for photography, the Citibank 2001 Photography Prize, the 2000 Hasselblad Foundation International Award and the 1999 Krazna-Krausz Photography Book Award for 'Case History'. Mikhailov participated in the Venice Biennial collateral projects in 2011 and represented Ukraine at the 2007 Venice Biennial.

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