

Ian Ginsburg

## "The Mechanical Beetle"

When you see this exhibition there are some simple questions coming to your mind: why did Ian Ginsburg, an artist who was born in perestroika, tends to recognize himself through the avant-garde movements of the Soviet Union? Why did he, after all, went back to the basics of Moscow conceptualism? Nowadays, it may seem that this is either an author's banal speculation on famous / marginal names, or another naive nostalgia for the Soviet era, which is actively cultivated today against the backdrop of the collapse of the liberal economy in the country. But for the author of the project it became significant exactly after the acquaintance and friendship with Joseph Ginsburg, the half-mythical and forgotten nonconformist.

Joseph Ginsburg, the one of the key figures of nonconformism, who had given his life to the method of automatic drawing, left the public field of art in the mid-70's. His works were lost, and many people were convinced that he had also disappeared. Even being penniless, he continued his "introvert" artistic activities. "Whether you decided to become an artist, isn't the point being an artist to the end," so begins Ian's story about Joseph. They met in 2015, when the Soviet unofficial art has long been a brand. But in the person of Ginsburg, the young artist met with nonconformism: "intelligent, principled, ready to put up with hardships and, despite the difficulties, being able to engage in art." The rapprochement with the hero of the Moscow underground gave Ian the lessons of life during the "eternal stability". Sheltered the elderly artist in his room of the communal flat, he began a painstaking job of saving his heritage. In 2016, after the disease, Joseph Ginsburg died. To save the memory of him, Ian took his name as a student and heir.

Perhaps, the introvert nonconformist would stay unknown in the world of art, if not his young friend. The struggle for a place in the history of art, from which Joseph deliberately refused, was won by the star of Moscow conceptualism, Ilya Kabakov. The leader of post-Soviet art, whose recognition "in the West" became the talk of the town, managed back in the 70's to understand the deep connection between the role of symbolic and financial capital. The paintings "Beetle" (1982) and "Suite Number" (1981) are the two most expensive paintings by the living artist from Russia. A screening of the documentary on "The First Channel" about Kabakov confirmed the media power of art. These pieces of art today have not only a physical form, but also spreads through hyperlinks on the network tissues of the actual culture. But the project of Ian Ginzburg dismantles the manipulative power of images. the "Mechanical Beetle" reveals the connection between price and value investigating how an art unit fuses with a multilayered connection with diverse structures of culture and society. Like a redecorated postcard gains a multimillion dollar value, so the faded sweater of a homeless artist in an institutional temple increments symbolic capital.

Building the research on work with several sources, Ian tries to avoid the schematization and simplification of the dichotomy of success / loss, star / marginal. In a chaotic order images from books, albums, communication with living interlocutors and auction Internet sites (e-bay, avito) come together. As a result, the project "Mechanical Beetle" reveals the conditions for the formation of the artistic power of Kabakov and Ginzburg. "Not every artist has the ability to speculate on the power of art, but everyone can and, in my opinion, should do it... ", reflects David Josliet on the modern methodology of art. Combining in different fields of different types of artistic strategy, the author of the project fixes his own power / impotence over the history of culture.

Today, works of unofficial art become the material for network modeling of a new type of plastics. The artist is likened to the "miner" of modern crypto currency. And the surplus value of the project "Mechanical Beetle" is based on the unscrambling of the mechanics of Ilya Kabakov's paintings. The works of Ian Ginsburg are not only analytical, but also romantic. A live meeting and friendship with the bearer of the

nonconformist spirit of the 70s opened the possibility of another optics to the image of Russian art. What is now an institutionalized classics could have a completely different "garbage" line of development. However, the memory of this possibility slips only through pieces of paper, fragments and scraps that infect the spirit of a new generation.