

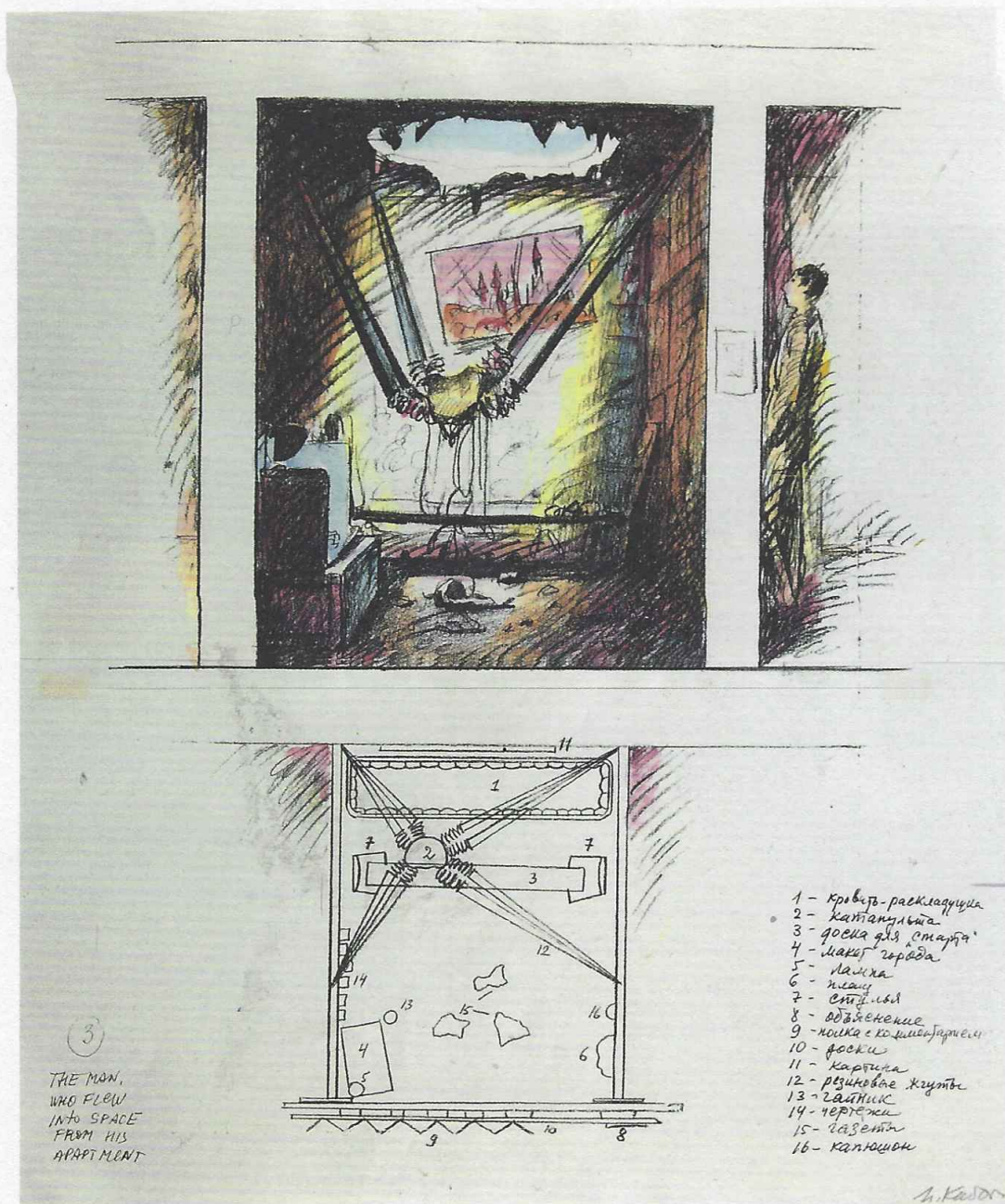
"NOT EVERYONE WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE FUTURE" ILYA AND EMILIA KABAKOV



I went to see this exhibition at Tate Modern with no expectations or real understanding whatsoever. I had caught a glimpse of the above photograph of the installation "The man who flew into space from his apartment" which really captured my attention. It's not everyday that you are faced with an installation that makes you feel that its narrative is truly genuine/might have actually happened. The chaotic nature of the work, really makes the piece believable in my opinion (*I'm struggling to call it "work" as it feels as if it is a real room inside somebody's apartment*). I really loved the way that the bits of dust/cement from the ceiling had been placed exactly where you would imagine them to have fallen as the man decided to catapult through the

roof. I also think it is so great that the artists considered a makeshift way to create a catapult, and a way to access it through a simple plank of wood and two (dining room) chairs, again this makes me think of a man that was running through his apartment, looking for whatever he could find in his desperation to catapult himself into space.

I was led to thinking about "Space" (galaxies and planets) and "Space" as a literal thing (personal space, privacy) perhaps due to the context of the man living in a tight, communal apartment, he is using (outer) "Space" metaphorically, in order to symbolise his desire for a private space of his own.



One of the most interesting elements of the piece for me, had to be the imaginary witness accounts from different characters. This is effective to me as we know that the man was living in a communal space, through these other characters we begin to understand character dynamics through their perceptions of each other.

Concept drawing for *The Man Who Flew into Space From His Apartment* 1985. Drawing dated 1985

Ilya Kabakov *The Man Who Flew into Space From His Apartment* 1985
Mixed media installation
Dimensions variable

The Man Who Flew into Space From His Apartment was created over a period of three years and was one of the only installations to be staged within the limited space of Kabakov's Moscow studio. The work was first presented outside of Russia in 1988 at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York as part of a multi-part installation called *Ten Characters*, a life-sized version of the character studies that Kabakov previously explored in his album works.

Upon entering a vestibule, the viewer encounters a doorway that has been incompetently boarded up, thereby offering a view into what seems to be the living quarters of a communal apartment—a form of domestic residence that still exists today in densely populated urban areas of the former Soviet Union, in which multiple households share the same

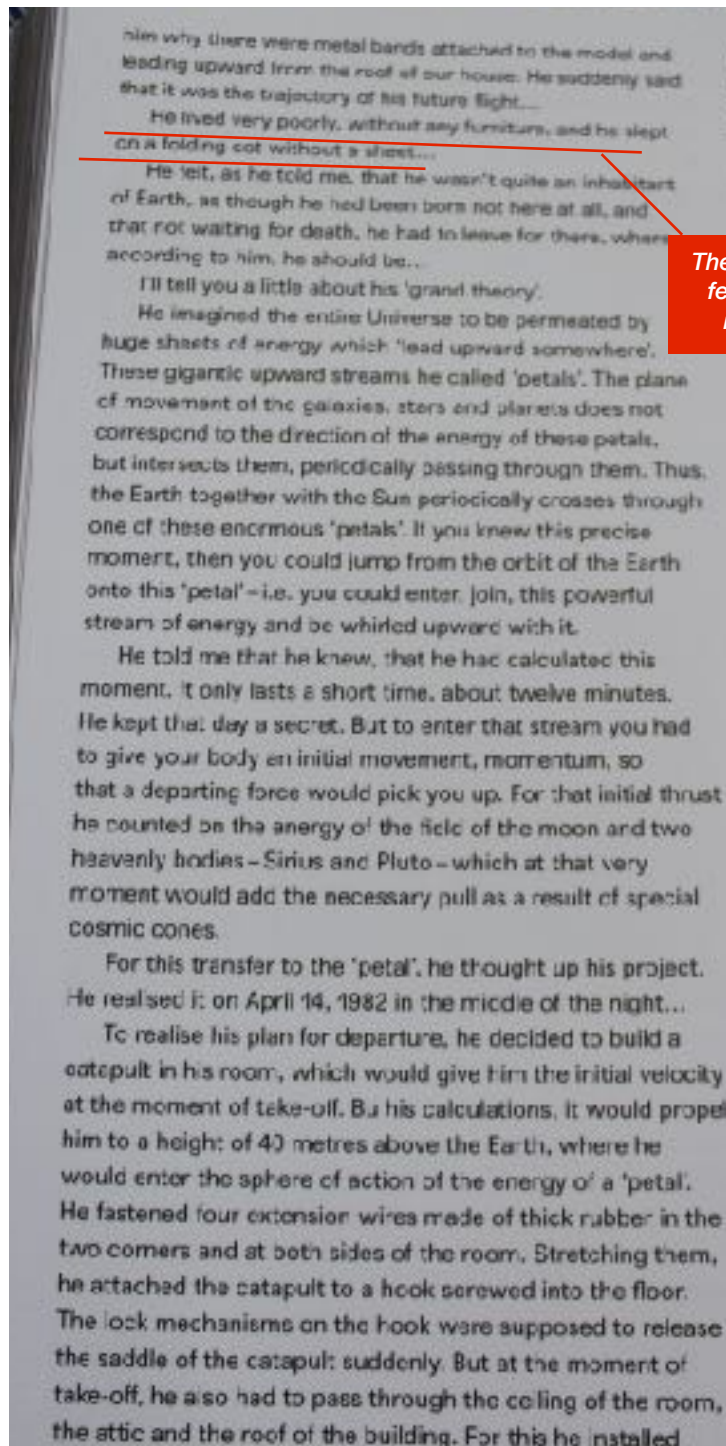
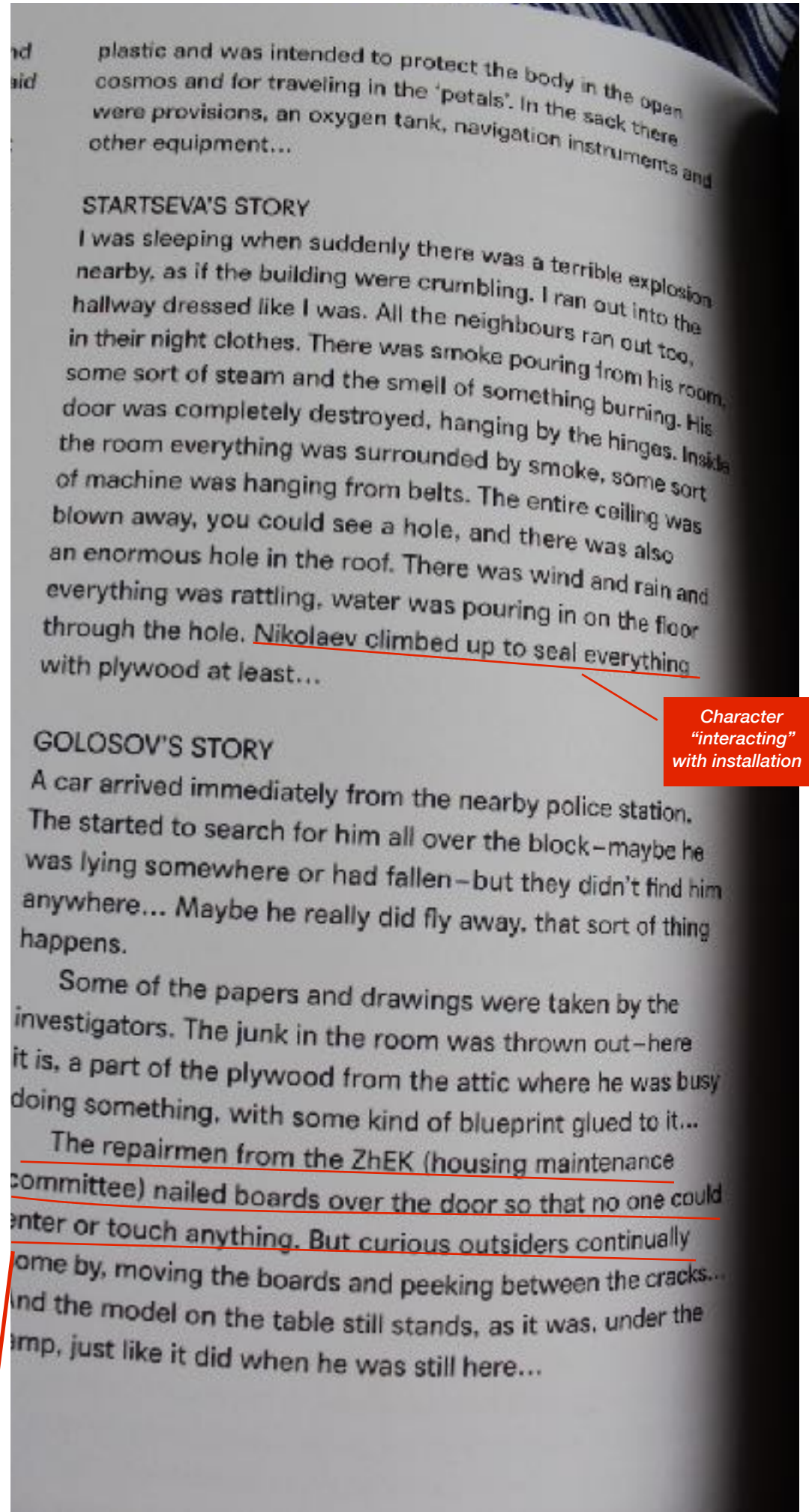
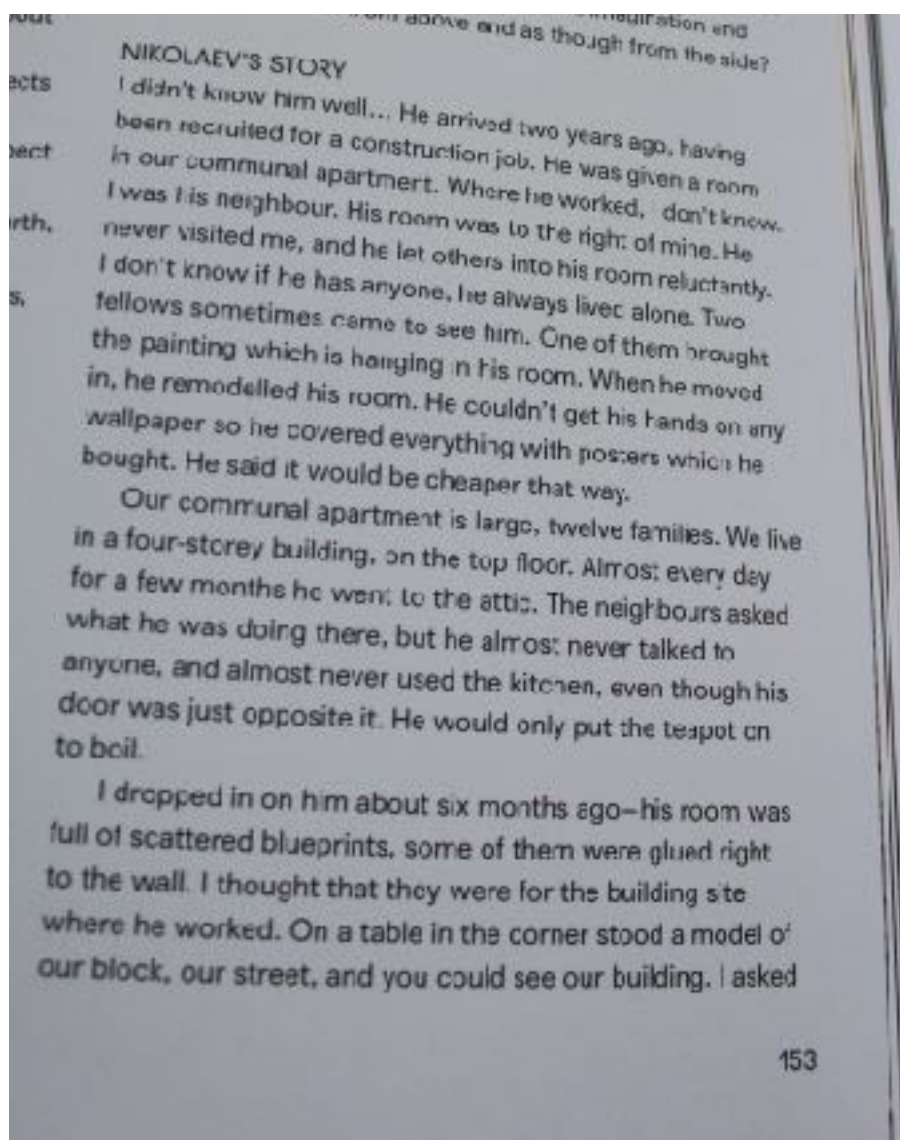
cooking and washing facilities in overcrowded conditions. This room, eclectically decorated from floor to ceiling with propaganda posters, has been left in a state of disrepair, the protagonist having achieved his dream of leaving the apartment forever by way of a catapult that has launched him through the ceiling. A written text presented in the room gives witness accounts from the neighbours, who are living in such close proximity with one another, and they are not on intimate terms with the man. The work therefore suggests a tension between the different characters championed by the Soviet Utopia, where the dream of travel is used literally to escape the supposed romanticism of communal living.

BOOK SCAN ; "Not everyone will be taken into the future", Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, (2017), Tate Enterprises Ltd.

Pgs 153-154

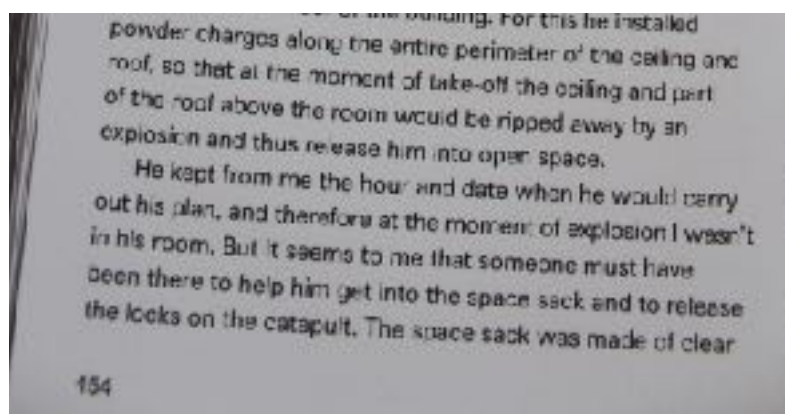
Neighbour recounts of "The man who flew into space from his apartment" by characters :

Nikolaev, Startseva and Golosov.



The "folding cot" features in the installation.

Character "interacting" with installation



Before reading about the piece, I was slightly critical of the boards over the door, obstructing the view of the installation partially- but after reading the "story" by Golosov, it makes sense... the boards over the door that I thought were there for "security" reasons become a part of the story that the "ZhEK" installed which adds to the story and makes it all more believable.

My photos of "The man who flew to space from his apartment"



SCAN OF TICKET AND PRESS RELEASE - CONTEXT

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov are amongst the most celebrated artists of their generation, widely known as pioneers of installation art.

Ilya Kabakov was born in 1933 in Dnepropetrovsk (now Dniprodzержavsk) in Ukraine, formerly part of the Soviet Union. When he was eight, he moved to Moscow with his mother. He studied at the Art School of Moscow, and at the VI. Surikov Art Institute.

1 Artists in the Soviet Union were obliged to follow the officially approved style, Socialist Realism. Wanting to retain his independence, Ilya supported himself as a children's book illustrator from 1953 to 1967, while continuing to make his own paintings and drawings. As an 'unofficial artist' he worked in the privacy of his Moscow attic studio, showing his art only to a close circle of artists and intellectuals.

2 Ilya was not permitted to travel outside the Soviet Union until 1987, when he was offered a fellowship at the Graz Kunstverein, Austria. The following year he visited New York, and resumed contact with Emilia Lekach. Born in 1945, Emilia trained as a classical pianist at Music College in Irkutsk, and studied Spanish Language and Literature at Moscow University before emigrating to the United States in 1973. Ilya and Emilia began their artistic partnership in the late 1980s, and were married in 1992. Together, they have produced a prolific output of immersive installations and other conceptual

3 works addressing ideas of Utopia, dreams and fear to reflect on the universal human condition.

Tate Modern, Bankside, London SE1
The Royal Opera Galleries, Boiler House, Level 3

ILYA AND EMILIA KABAKOV

NO PHOTOGRAPHY PERMITTED

07-November-2017 Tuesday

Admission from 10:30

VISITORS HAVE 30 MINS FROM THE STATED TIME TO ENTER.

Last admission one hour before closing.

Normal closing hours 6pm Sun-Thurs, and 10pm Fri-Sat.

£10.00

Ref: 18935665

Student (with ID)

TATE

2

The piece entitled "The man who flew into space from his apartment", is perhaps representative of the way that the artist himself might have felt being held almost "captive" in the Soviet Union for many years (I believe he was held captive for 54 years) after such time one might be desperate to escape both the physical and creative constraints.

1

If art has rules and is monitored/filtered, is it art? Or is it the transmission of bourgeoisie ideologies? Perhaps indoctrination? another form of propaganda?

3

I got the sense of the search for Utopia by the political propaganda that can be found throughout the exhibition. I got the sense of fear as I walked through **Room Eight** (*Labyrinth, My mother's Album*), I will speak about this in more detail.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Ilya & Emilia Kabakov



If you could live with only one piece of art what would it be?
Why do we have to choose?

What is your favourite title of an artwork?
This is a really strange question but, that said, *How to Meet an Angel* (2003), one of our own works, is the best.

What do you wish you knew?
Everything that's possible or impossible to know.

What should change?
Too many things to mention but, especially, people's ability to be compassionate and tolerant towards each other and protective of children, mothers and older people.

What should stay the same?
Culture.

What could you imagine doing if you didn't do what you do?
Being a musician: I think this goes for both of us. Ilya wants to play violin and I still dream of being a pianist.

What music are you listening to?
Classical, romantic, country and the music I can hear even when it's not playing: the music of the wind and water and the music of silence.

What are you reading?
Ilya reads Russian history, classical literature, poetry and biographies. I read poetry, romance and historical novels, detective stories, art articles and art history.

What is art for?
Art, music and literature are the things that make – and keep – us human ●

Emilia is interested in the preservation of culture, this definitely comes through in the exhibition.

What images keep you company in the space where you work?

EMILIA KABAKOV: We mainly are surrounded by paintings that are works-in-progress. But we do have one picture: *Talisman* by the Ethiopian artist Gedewon. He made it for me 20 years ago and it is absolutely beautiful and magical. I cannot live without this work and I do feel protected by it.

What was the first piece of art that really mattered to you?

It wasn't a particular artwork so much as the atmosphere of the museum. The sacred feeling of a temple you sensed the moment you entered. It stays with you forever.

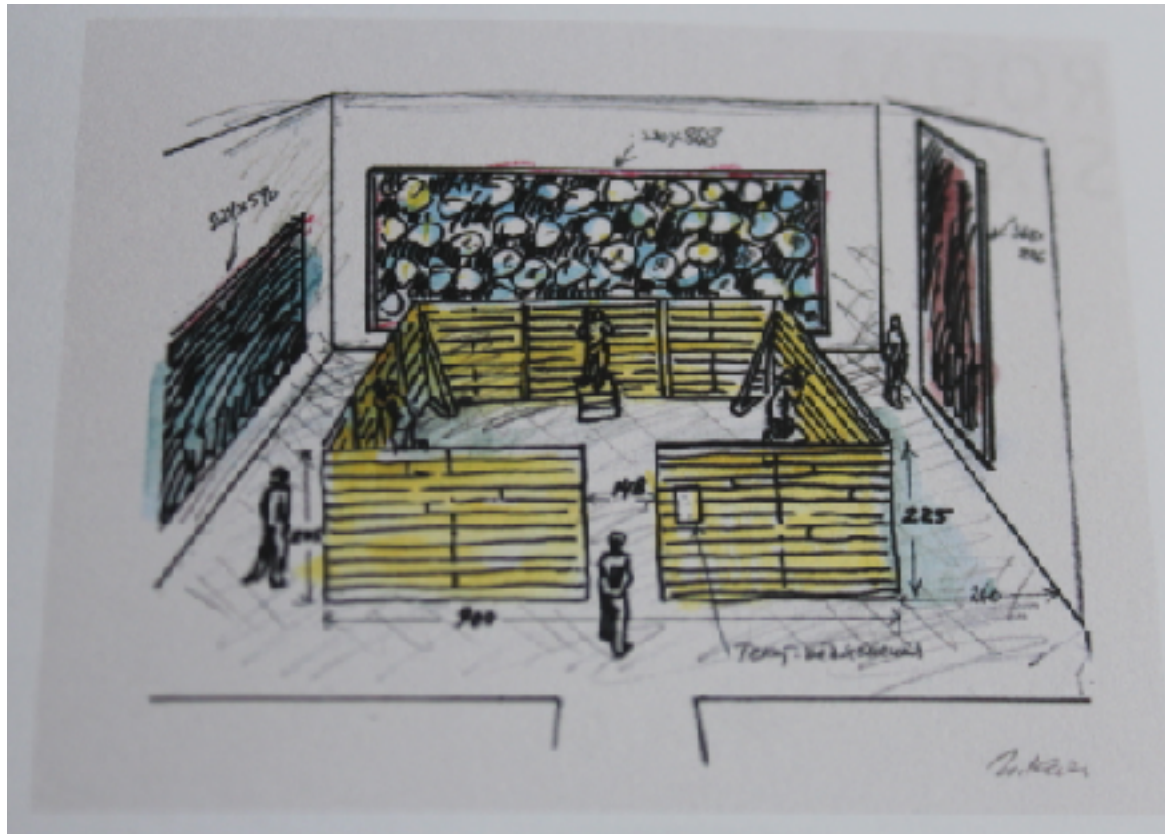
WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE LOOK OF?

"Water, always, in any weather. Calm, stormy, in the morning, at sunset, even at night."

Roan Horn, framed from the series 'Still Water (The River Thames. For Example)', 1999, lithograph on paper, 77 x 105 cm. Courtesy, American Acquisitions Committee 2005 © Tate, London 2017

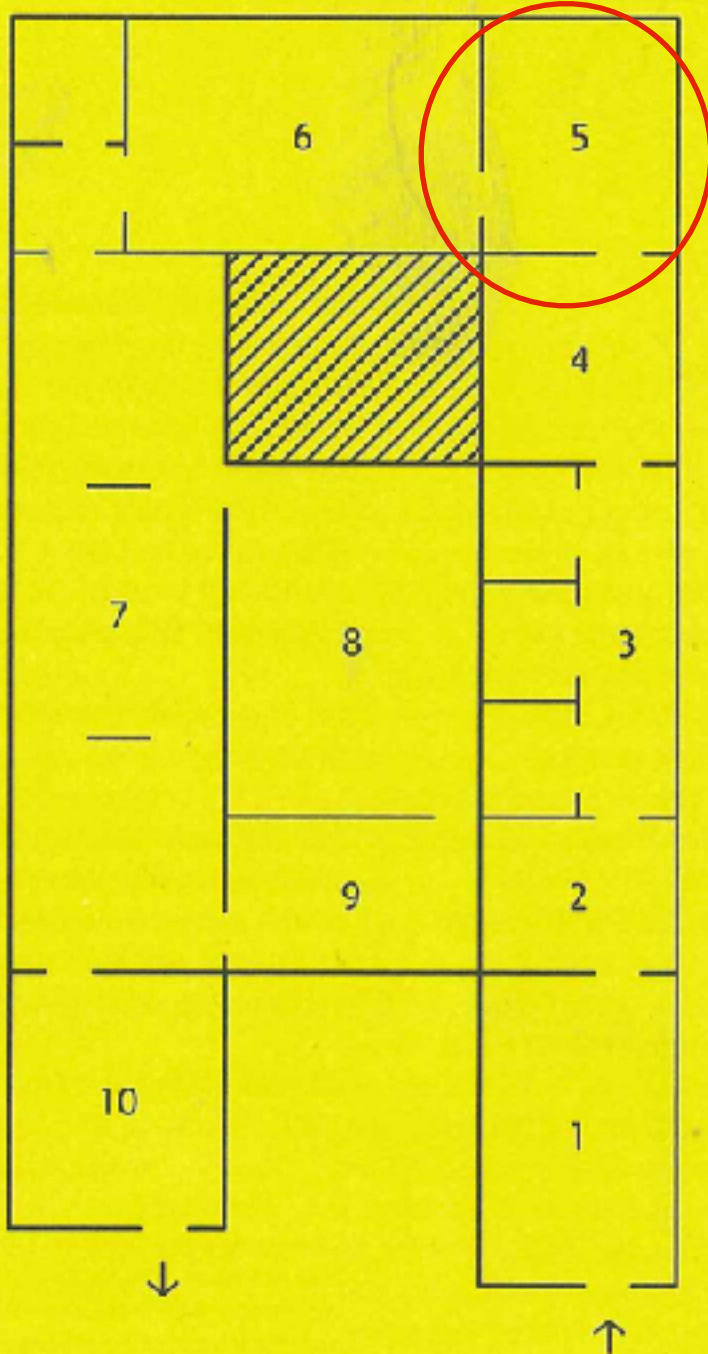
ILYA and EMILIA KABAKOV are in Long Island, USA. Their solo exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., USA, runs until 4 March 2018. Their retrospective at Tate Modern, London, UK, runs from 18 October until 28 January 2018; it will then travel to the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia, and the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia. Their concurrent solo shows at Thudis Art Gallery in London and Paris, France, open this month.

My experience of Room Five:



The limits of visual perception are explored in *Three Nights* 1989. The three large paintings all relate to the theme of night, whether it be a starry sky or a nocturnal insect. However, they are placed behind a large screen, allowing only a partial view of each work. Viewers must look through monoculars, which are directed at small apertures through which magnified images of little white men can be seen.

With its emphasis on preventing and enabling different ways of looking, Ilya has linked this work to two irreconcilable types of knowledge. He contrasts the information that you can learn from conversations or books, which can be broken down and analysed, and the mystical revelations that 'descend upon you', which can be almost impossible to comprehend or communicate to others.



When I entered Room 5, the wooden borders were almost touching the wall, we were not permitted to walk around the perimeters as illustrated by Ilya in his plan to view the works. I walked up to the monoculars, beside them on the ground in big black writing it said **“Do not touch”**. Perhaps they/the gallery decided people should not be able to interact... as such, I did not really enjoy this piece because I feel that I needed the intended element of interaction, from where I was stood inside the wooden confines I could not even view half of the paintings. Hopefully the gallery will decide to change this, so that the viewer can experience the piece fully.

My photos from the exhibition:

I noticed the reappearance of "Tested!" (1981) in "The window into my past" (2012) though its adaptation has a very different context. I feel that the 1981 piece was intended to capture a live moment in history, whereas the 2012 piece is about studying the history and reflecting on the past events.



Ilya Kabakov

Tested!
1981

Oil paint and enamel on Masonite

Tested! is based on a Soviet painting from the 1930s, which Ilya discovered in a book of reproductions. It shows a woman being handed back her Communist Party membership card, having successfully convinced the seated officials of her allegiance to the political regime. Ilya's mother had been through a similar experience. He was struck by the earnest style of the painting, which he saw as rooted in traditional religious imagery. The scene is presented as the Soviet equivalent of a sacred ritual, watched over by a bust of Lenin.

Translation available in folder

Using for or by: IlyaKabakovKunst_Aachen
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The Window into My Past
2012

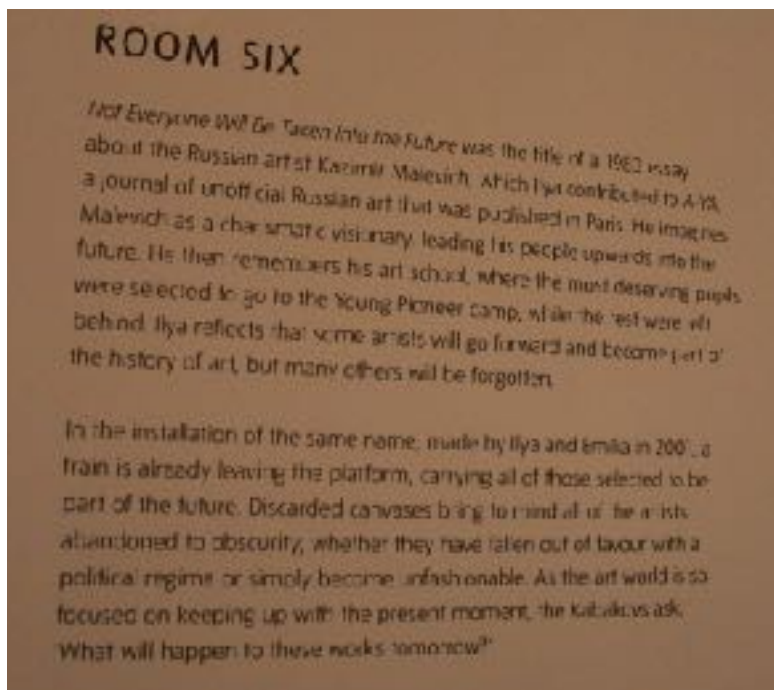
Oil paint on canvas

The Window into My Past represents a triple-layered memory. At the centre of the composition is Ilya's 1981 painting *Tested!* A depiction of a work by a minor artist from a forgotten book, *Tested!* is itself once removed from the original source and given new meaning by Kabakov's appropriation of it. Here, it becomes the centrepiece for a depiction of one of the artists' exhibitions, with visitors sitting at desks to study books relating to the works on display.

Private collection
30/247

ROOM 6:

(Scans from press release)



Not Everyone Will Be Taken Into the Future was the title of a 1983 essay about the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich, which Ilya contributed to A-YA, a journal of unofficial Russian art that was published in Paris. He imagines Malevich as a charismatic visionary, leading his people upwards into the future. He then remembers his art school, where the most deserving pupils were selected to go to the Young Pioneer camp, while the rest were left behind. Ilya reflects that some artists will go forward and become part of the history of art, but many others will be forgotten.

In the installation of the same name, made by Ilya and Emilia in 2001, a train is already leaving the platform, carrying all of those selected to be part of the future. Discarded canvases bring to mind all of the artists abandoned to obscurity, whether they have fallen out of favour with a political regime or simply become unfashionable. As the art world is so focused on keeping up with the present moment, the Kabakovs ask, 'What will happen to these works tomorrow?'



This piece really excited me, it made me feel like I was actually stood on a platform about to witness the events unfolding for myself, many other rooms with paintings on the wall felt as if I was in a gallery looking at an exhibition, this room for me was a real experience. I walked onto what felt like the platform for a train, it was dimly lit, with the exception of the brash glaring red words on the train. In place of the trains' destination were the words "Not everyone will be taken into the future". The piece was unsettling as it felt like we were just seconds away from the train speeding into the canvases and works of the "failed/forgotten" artists that had fallen into the way of the tracks. Though the train did not move, I feel that the viewer knew exactly what was about to happen and the destruction that would unfold, this was really quite intense.

After the exhibition, when I read more about the piece and the 1983 essay where only the most "deserving" art pupils were selected to go to the young pioneer camp whilst the rest were left behind. I thought about audience placement and purpose a bit... it is an art exhibition, many artists and art students go to see these exhibitions, Ilya and Emilia are aware of this (I'm sure). As an art student, I was stood on what I thought was the platform, not on the train...am I a part of this piece? are the artists trying to say that I (or indeed other artists/students) will not be taken into the future (of art)? that there is no room for most of us? that our works will be abandoned and disregarded?

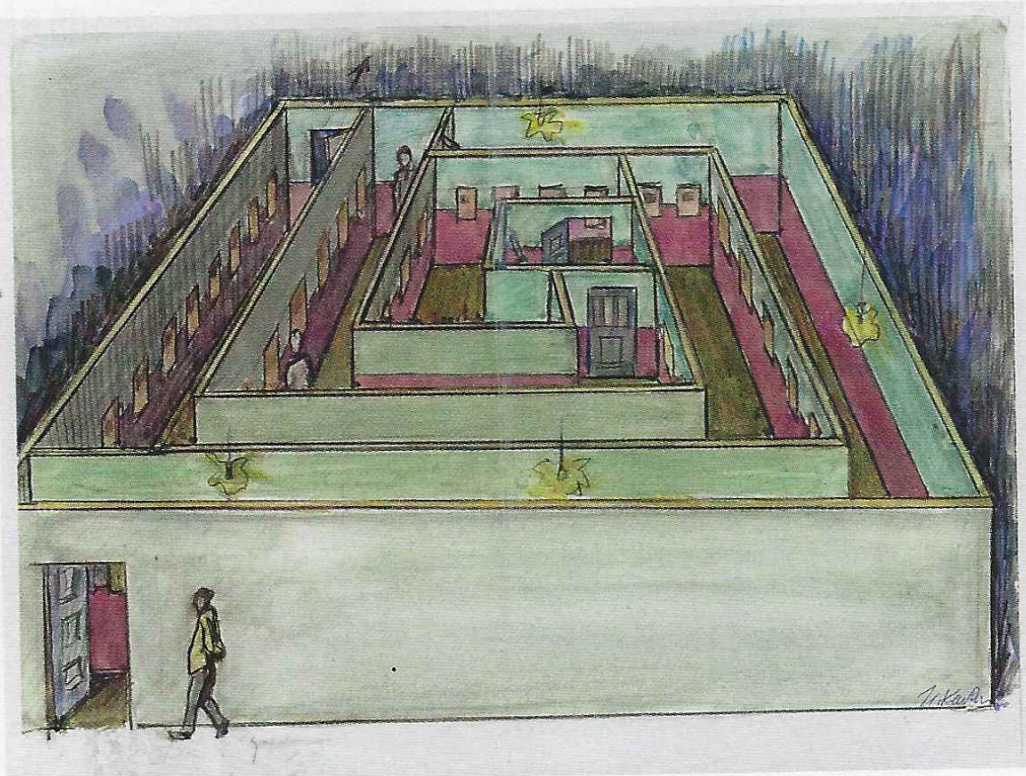
PHOTOGRAPHS I TOOK IN ROOM 6:



STILLS FROM A VIDEO I TOOK IN ROOM 6:



Emilia Kabakov on Ilya Kabakov's *Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)*



Drawing for Ilya Kabakov's *Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)* 1990

Ilya Kabakov
Labyrinth (My Mother's Album) 1990, a spiraling, fifty-metre-long installation containing the life story of the artist's mother in 76 framed works

I was already a curator and art adviser in New York when I started working with Ilya Kabakov, who had left the Soviet Union for the first time in 1987 for exhibitions in Europe and the US, before settling in New York in 1992. Ilya had matured as an artist in the Soviet Union, so Soviet visual culture – from children's books to propaganda posters – was very familiar to him. It shaped his and generations of artists' work.

All images in Soviet times were staged and retouched, and, for Ilya, they already constituted works of art. Due to censorship, photographs were cleaned of any undesirable elements before they were printed in a magazine or newspaper. This meant that all those depicting a happy Soviet life or the incredible achievements of the Soviet system, its workers, government and the like were actually works of fiction. Ilya despised the falsity of this propaganda – for him, the system represented a void. In his albums, begun in the 1970s, he absorbed these images and added another level of fictional narrative to them, recounting invented stories of Soviet life or Soviet personages. The *Ten Characters* 1970–4 series of illustrated texts, for example, explores the 'little man' in society, each album representing, in the style of a different 20th-century art movement, the suffering and eventual disappearance – by death or liberation – of an artist-protagonist.

At some point Ilya came into the possession of a group of photographs taken by his uncle Juda (Yuri Grigorevich Blekher) – some were images of Moscow, but mostly they were everyday views of the small coastal town of Berdyansk on the Black Sea in south-eastern Ukraine, where he lived. A provincial photographer who took pictures of weddings and was commissioned to take portraits, Uncle Juda was precisely the

proverbial 'little man' who featured in Ilya's stories – an archetype who also appeared in Nikolai Gogol's novels and was typical in the Russian empire and later Soviet society. He took all these official shots, but his passion was for photographing sculptural plinths, monuments and park sculptures, subjects that were colloquial and old-fashioned, favoured by the type of simple, honest men for whom life didn't give many opportunities for excitement and adventure.

In 1987 Ilya decided to create *My Mother's Album*, combining Uncle Juda's official views of a flourishing village with his mother Bertha Urievna Solodukhina's memoirs, which chart her poignantly tragic life – a very different reality. For Ilya, his mother represented millions of women in Soviet society who, because of war and revolution and problems in life during the supposed happy Soviet time, struggled to survive and protect their children. The juxtaposition of these images with the personal accounts of her misfortunes created unbearable tensions on each page.

Then, in 1988, Ilya created the first version of the installation *Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)* – a claustrophobic, maze-like corridor with 76 framed works hung along its walls. These showed images taken by Uncle Juda alongside fragments cut from 1950s Soviet postcards and typed excerpts from his mother's haunting memoirs. Reflecting Ilya's inability to protect his mother from poverty and homelessness, *Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)* is a dialogue – a tribute by a son to his mother, but also to all women in Soviet society.

Ilya and Emilia Kabakov (born 1933 and 1945, Dnepropetrovsk) are artists living and working in Long Island, New York.



ROOM EIGHT

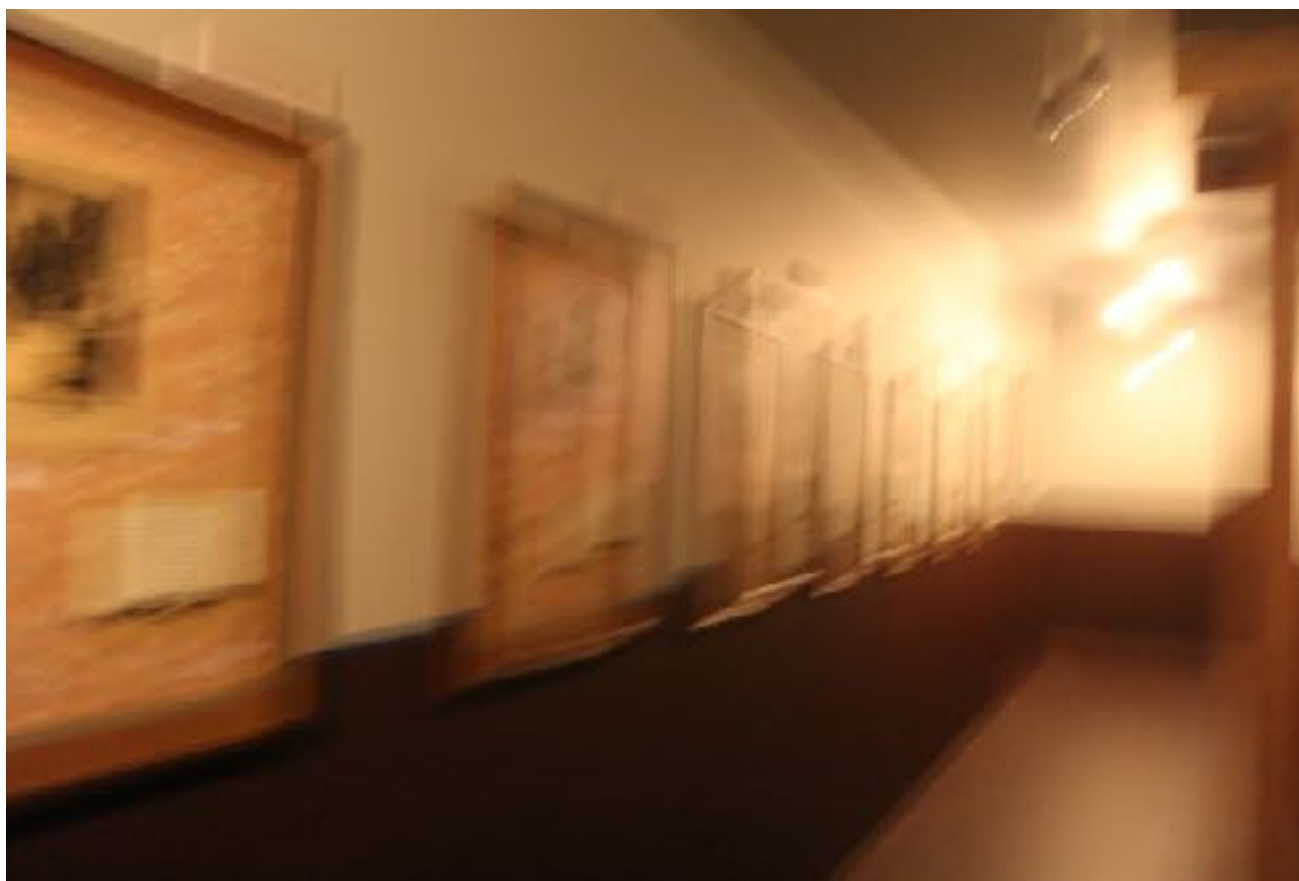
'When I think about that world in which my mother's life passed', Ilya has said, 'what arises in my imagination is a long and semi-dark corridor which is twisted like a labyrinth, where behind each new turn, behind each bend, there is not a bright exit glimmering in the distance, but just the same grubby floor, the same grey, dusty, poorly painted walls illuminated by weak, 40-watt light bulbs.'

Labyrinth (My Mother's Album) 1990 is one of Ilya's few directly autobiographical installations. Resembling the décor of a communal apartment building, the walls are lined with photographs taken by Ilya's uncle, and a memoir by his mother, Bertha Urievna Solodukhina. The text recounts her struggle to survive and bring up a son during the Soviet era. The corridors curve in a double spiral, first leading into the centre, then winding out again. As the visitor approaches the centre, an audio recording of Ilya himself can be heard, singing Russian romances half-remembered from his childhood.

Please do not use mobile phone torches in this installation.

By Ilya
Labyrinth (My Mother's Album)
1990

ROOM 8: My photos



Room 8 sent me into a panic, as you can probably tell from the blurred photo. I was unsettled from the moment I walked through the pitch-black creaky corridor. When I got to the labyrinth, I felt panicked. It was so narrow and dingy...you could not see around any corner, then I noticed the noise. I have been to a Greek Orthodox church before in my childhood...the sounds and “songs” the priests would sing always unsettled me and felt so eerie. I believe that the Russian Orthodox church shares many similarities, a big one being the sounds and songs...so when I heard Ilya’s singing I got the memories from the church during my childhood which sent a shiver down my spine. This singing combined with the fact that I could not see whether there might be someone physically/something within the labyrinth around the corner that I didn’t anticipate made me so uncomfortable. I instinctively walked as fast as I could through this room. As I walked, the singing seemed to get louder and louder...I was anticipating something, I did not know what, but I didn’t want the surprise...I was so relieved when I exited the labyrinth. It was after I left and was reading about the piece that I found it was the voice of Ilya singing romantic songs. The corridors themselves felt uneasy...though this is a memoir which usually would be positive, I felt deeply distressed. Perhaps this means the memoir is honest.

