

# “I’VE BEEN ABDUCTED HUNDREDS OF TIMES” BY GOSHA OSTRETSOV

Having been abducted hundreds of times, I can assure you of the fallacy of the formula according to which there is only the present, a formula much beloved by philosophers and mystics, including Russian philosopher and spiritualist Helena Blavatsky. I have to say it: There is either our personal experience with a subjective view of the past, or projections of the future and future plans, because the present can be only defined, and that with great difficulty, as a moment between these two notions. Furthermore, this moment [the present] is highly relative with regard to the other ten dimensions that we know to date.

I’m sure that the current period of human civilization will become diluted amid cosmic stagnation. Modern culture is too weak to impress the Universe with its alleged achievements, unlike the ancient times, when Moses lifted his staff to part the waters of the Red Sea. This artefact of the noble old tradition, when the forces of Cosmos were subordinate to intelligent people on Earth, is only one of many we have inherited from previous civilizations.

The art is an extrasensory and undeniable gift, which cannot be gauged but can change the spiritual nature of Man, making it supertemporal and at the same time current. We believe that we have systematized the world around us. We have created ideologies and political doctrines and are forcing the art to become their servant. The artistic discourse is divided into right and left dimensions, with the right/fascist/pro-government dimension currently prevailing. The West Semitic god Dagon, who is mentioned in the Nameless Cults of Friedrich von Junzt, “is closer to the Right Dimension – a kingdom of strict and unchangeable form, or pure power, which can only be seen by powerful sorcerers in the course of specific rituals.” The symbol of the Left Discourse is God Cthulhu, a “ruler of the Left Aspect of the Universe, Pure Chaos and Madness.”

The knowledge I acquired on board the aliens’ spacecraft, which I scrutinized during my abduction, provides invaluable information about the initial forms of protoculture that we inherited from the outside. There are huge obelisks that contain information about events on Earth and about the alien origin of life all over the planet. These cyclopean sculptures are still standing in many parts of the world. In this project you can see several reduced copies of these obelisks, the reproductions of protocultural artefacts which I’ve seen in the aliens’ world. They also let me see the future, which is an unimaginable chimera and a combination of diverse possibilities: EMP and biological weapons, new ways to edit the DNA, the ghost-like ery cities, an all-absorbing smart biomass, the temples of fate, and the trip to the inner self [the non-aging baby].

# “МЕНЯ ПОХИЩАЛИ УЖЕ СТО РАЗ” ГОША ОСТРЕЦОВ

# “AN ARCHEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE” BY SIMON NJAMI

Science fiction writers have always tried to invent a future that is beyond the reach of man, a future that is part of a futuristic picture of the world that is beyond the temporal framework of the present. This enterprise has always been doomed, because it was limited by these writers’ striving to project reality into the future. They cannot reach the level of pure creation, the level when you can project yourself into the unknown. Man is naturally limited by what he knows. He can imagine the future only as a pale reflection of the present. This is why science fiction is all lies and fakes that never look really convincing.

Gosha Ostretsov was certainly aware of this fatal flaw when he created the works presented at this exhibition. He has no sympathy for those who are dreaming of a different world, let alone spiritualists such as Helena Blavatsky, who organized the Theosophical Society in the late 19th century and claimed that the discoveries of “materialist” science had been anticipated in the writings of ancient sages.

Ostretsov’s intention is not to know – this brings us back to the limitations of science fiction – who invented the future and what it will be like, but to embrace as many dimensions as possible in a concrete and palpable replication, to be a visionary who is not seeing some metaphysical dimensions of the creation but the world around us, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty put it: “The enigma derives from the fact that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognize, in what it sees, the ›other side‹ of its power of looking.”<sup>1</sup>

Without a doubt, it is this hyper-vision that the artist describes as abduction: “Having been abducted hundreds of times, I can assure you of the fallacy of the formula according to which there is only the present, a formula much beloved by philosophers and mystics, including Russian philosopher and spiritualist Helena Blavatsky.” Abduction is certainly a metaphor used to describe the artist’s ability to see according to Merleau-Ponty. This ability gives him a sense of ubiquitousness, the ability to be present in different spatial and temporal media at the same time. In functional anatomy, abduction refers to a motion that pulls extremities away from the midline of the body. In other words, this motion implies leaving the comfort zone in a bid to develop a new vision.

Each artist is subject to abduction, which means that they have the ability to project themselves into different worlds. But Ostretsov is completely aware of having this ability. To highlight this, he has deliberately embraced pop art, which, in his case, has acquired the true meaning of the word “popular” as distinct from the one used in the history of art. The aesthetics of his choice reflects on popular cartoons, characters and television serials. We see a desire to put a distance between himself and the codification of the art, which has proved to have a limited ability. Instead of pushing the spectator towards an intellectual analysis, he is using seemingly insignificant materials, which nevertheless have a powerful physical and psychological effect on the spectator.

This exhibition – personally, I see it as a travelogue – represents a well-argued criticism of our society, our zest for consumption and the short-sighted politics of our leaders, as well as a manifesto of human ecology. We are rushing hither and thither like wild animals, like the time-anxious White Rabbit in Lewis Carroll’s book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, who is always afraid of being too late for a very important date. In short, I would rather see this exhibition as retrospection, as archaeology of the future, which tells us about the things other “men have only dreamed they saw” as Arthur Rimbaud wrote.

Ostretsov is laughing at time, joyously intertwining the past with the future so as to give us a clearer view of the present.

# “АРХЕОЛОГИЯ БУДУЩЕГО” СИМОН НДЖАМИ

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *L’œil et l’Esprit*, Paris, Gallimard, 1964



## Gosha Ostretsov

Russian artist Gosha Ostretsov was born in Moscow in 1967. In the 1980s, he abandoned the Soviet-style study of academic art and joined a group of avant-garde artists who worked in a kindergarten. He went to Paris in 1988. It was the age of perestroika, and the West wanted to know about young Russian artists and what they had to say about their experience. Ten years later, Gosha returned to Moscow where he tried his hand at a variety of artistic forms, including performance, sculpture and painting. He found inspiration in illustrations for science fiction and religious books, comics, fiction, Soviet films from the 1950s and 1960s, icons, and much more.

Gosha Ostretsov tells us fantastic stories through his painting and performances. In 2010, he brought together a group of about 20 artists and called it VGLAZ. In 2012, art collector and gallerist Charles Saatchi chose some of their works for a group show called *Gaiety Is the Most Outstanding Feature of the Soviet Union*, and later bought some of them.

Ostretsov's works are on display at the Russian State Museum [St. Petersburg], the Tretyakov Gallery [Moscow], the National Center for Contemporary Arts [Moscow], the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, the Centre Pompidou [Paris], the Saatchi Gallery [London], the Zabudowicz Collection [London], the Tiroche DeLeon Collection [Tel Aviv], as well as several private collections



## Simon Njami

Simon Njami is a writer and an independent curator, lecturer, art critic and essayist.

He has published his first novel "Cercueil et Cie" in 1985, followed by "Les Enfants de la Cité" in 1987, "Les Clandestins" and "African Gigolo" in 1989. He wrote two biographies, about James Baldwin and Léopold Sédar Senghor, several short texts, and scripts for feature films and documentaries.

Njami is the co-founder of *Revue Noire*, a journal of contemporary African and extra-occidental art, and he was Visiting Professor at the University of California San Diego [UCSD]. He curated many international exhibitions and was among the first to show contemporary African artists' works on international platforms. He has served as Artistic Director of Bamako Encounters African photography biennial from 2001 to 2007. Njami is the curator of the Africa Remix photo exhibition that was on view in Düsseldorf [Museum Kunst Palast], London [Hayward Gallery], Paris [Centre Pompidou], Tokyo [Mori Museum], Stockholm [Moderna Museet] and Johannesburg [Johannesburg Art Gallery] from 2004 to 2007. The exhibition "The Divine Comedy: Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell Revisited by Contemporary African Artists" was shown at MMK [Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main], the SCAD Museum of Art in 2014, and at Smithsonian Institution's African Art Museum, Washington, in 2015. Simon Njami was the Artistic Director of the 12th edition of Dak'art, the Dakar Biennale, which took place in Senegal in 2016.

Invited to numerous art and photography juries, such as the World Press Photo Contest, Njami is the Art Adviser of the Sindika Dokolo Foundation [Luanda] and the Artistic Director of the Donwahi Foundation [Abidjan] and member of the scientific boards of numerous museums around the world.