

HEMPHILL

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Ilya & Emilia Kabakov, *The Ship of Tolerance*, 2006, wood, cotton, bamboo, 23.5" x 70.75" x 19.75", Ed. 3

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KABAKOV

September 10–October 29, 2011

Washington, DC—HEMPHILL is pleased to present *KABAKOV*, the work of Ilya and Emilia Kabakov in their first commercial gallery exhibition in Washington, DC. *KABAKOV* opens with a public reception from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm on Saturday, September 10, 2011 and will remain on view through October 29, 2011.

The HEMPHILL exhibition marks the Kabakovs' first DC show since the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden's 1990 exhibit of Ilya Kabakov's *Ten Characters*, an installation recreating the conditions and attitudes of the communal apartments that sprung up and flourished just after the 1917 revolution in Russia.

Ilya Kabakov (b. 1933, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine) began his career as an illustrator of children's books in 1950s Moscow. His government-sanctioned career provided him with the resources needed to pursue secret artwork in his spare time. In these private works, he explored the illustrator's role as an interpreter of text and image, often highlighting the inevitable discrepancies between the two kinds of information. As he says, "I see this fundamental conflict—of speech devoid of meaning and meaning not given form by speech—in everything that surrounds me, and above all, in myself." Through fictional characters, his works examine societal transitions between construction and decline, two opposing and linked forces that form a similarly imperfect cycle.

Emilia Kabakov (b. 1945, Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine) and Ilya have worked collaboratively since 1988. Their work has been shown in more than 170 museums in more than 40 countries, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Centre Pompidou and the Stedelijk Museum. In 1993, they represented Russia at the 45th Venice Biennale. Their work is the subject of more than 40 published books. In 2004, the Kabakovs became the first living Russian artists to exhibit at The State Hermitage Museum. Earlier this year Ilya and Emilia gifted to the museum *The Red Wagon*, an installation first exhibited in 1991 at the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, Germany. The gift is in celebration of the museum's upcoming 250th anniversary.

KABAKOV features a scale model of the "Ship of Tolerance," a proposed project to construct and launch a life-size ship following an ancient Egyptian design. Children's drawings depicting social, cultural and political tolerance decorate the ship's masts. The project was conceived as a worldwide event and was first realized in Siwa, Egypt, in 2005. Launches from several ports across the globe have been made, and future launches proposed. Also on view: a scale model, drawings and schematics for "The Large House of Humanity," 1998, a project designed for Washington, DC that was never implemented. The model shows a traditional American home with a mansard roof. Suspended from the ceiling inside the house are wire letters that read: "Since home we have but one, this earth we live upon. With our home in constant motion we are striving toward the stars."

HEMPHILL opened as a commercial gallery in September of 1993. The exhibition program features contemporary art ranging in media by emerging artists, contemporary artists, and modern masters. In addition to solo shows of gallery artists, HEMPHILL mounts exhibitions of historically significant artwork and socially relevant subjects. The diversity of the exhibition schedule is designed to showcase important talent and provide collectors the opportunity to be directly involved in the artists' community as well as the creative process.

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday–Saturday, 10:00am–5:00pm, and by appointment

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