

AWAKENING II: CONTEMPORARY WORKS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

Oleg Dou – Ivan Plusch – Olga Tobreluts

October 23, 2026 through January 3, 2027

Matney Gallery, Williamsburg, Virginia

Matney Gallery is pleased to present *Awakening II: Contemporary Works from Eastern Europe*, featuring Oleg Dou, Ivan Plusch and Olga Tobreluts. The exhibition continues *Awakening: Contemporary Works from Eastern Europe*, originated and presented by Deborah Colton Gallery in Houston in 2020.

Rather than restaging the original exhibition, *Awakening II* returns to the three artists six years later and considers the continuing development of their individual practices. The Virginia presentation brings earlier and more recent works into dialogue, creating relationships among painting, photography and digital media while looking at the different ways the artists approach the figure, identity, cultural history and the environments we construct and inhabit.

At Matney Gallery, the exhibition places particular attention on the visual relationships that develop across these practices. Classical imagery and contemporary technology, the human figure and altered portraiture, architecture, landscape, and constructed environments move through the exhibition without being reduced to a single theme. The works remain distinctly individual while allowing connections between Tobreluts, Plusch and Dou to emerge through their placement in the gallery.

The most senior of the three artists featured in this exhibition is Olga Tobreluts. Born in 1970 in Murino, Leningrad Oblast, Russia, Olga Tobreluts now lives and works in Budapest and St. Petersburg. An accomplished artist who works with photography, video, painting and sculpture, Olga is a pioneer of digital art movement in Russia and was one of the leaders of the Neo-Academism Group of artists, "The New Academy", in St. Petersburg after the Soviet Union dissolved. This movement, through traditionally pleasant and refined aesthetics, addresses ideas of the "beautiful" the acquiescent-recreative and hedonism. Olga uses new media as a

means of expressing her own system of poetics based on the dialectics of high and low academism: where the artist endeavors to strike a balance between high-style classical models and contemporary elements of abstraction.

Olga has had numerous solo museum exhibitions throughout the world, including in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Croatia, China, Spain, Singapore, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Her works have been exhibited at such prestigious institutions as the Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow; the Museum of Modern Art, Moscow; the Ostende Museum, Belgium; the Modern Art Museum, Stockholm; the Ludwig Museum, Budapest; the Parkview Museum, Singapore; VISIVA Museum, Italy and numerous others. Her works have been acquired by significant art institutions including at the MoMA, New York, the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg; the Ludwig Museum, Budapest, the Bornholm Museum of Contemporary Art, Bornholm; the Baron von Stieglitz Museum, St. Petersburg; Groningen Museum, Groningen; the Ibsen Foundation, Oslo; Women Art Museum, Bonn; V & A Museum, London.

Olga Tobreluts' first solo exhibition in the United States, *Focus on Russia I* at Deborah Colton Gallery during the 2012 FotoFest Biennial where her works was featured also. In 2015, Tobreluts created an international debut of magnificent abstract paintings at Deborah Colton Gallery in her solo exhibition, *New Abilities*, which later went to New York City and was shown at many museums in Europe thereafter. Her most recent exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery was *Pieta and Resurrection*. Many of these works were first exhibited at a Modern Museum of Art, in Debrecen, Hungary and then introduced to the United States at Deborah Colton Gallery.

Ivan Plusch, born in 1981, is a young Russian artist on the rise and is part of the Nepokorionnye Group. He is based in St. Petersburg and has studied in various art schools, such as the State Academy of Art and Design, the Roerich Art School and the PRO ARTE Institute. Ivan is among a generation of artists who were still children at the time of the fall of the USSR. He was marked by the consequent sudden sociological and economic changes in his country in the early 90s. His work is heavily influenced by the signs of these changes, from the freedom of speech, hard fought and regained with difficulties by the people and by their collective relationship with society, be it under the sign of alienation or of liberation. However, the work of Plusch is more involved than simply representing his sociological observations. He reinterprets the history of

art, reinterprets the norms of social realism, particularly those of monumental sculpture, and integrates them into his paintings that he inserts in installations. He is comfortable with all mediums, working with sculpture as well as painting. Ivan Plusch is a complete artist delivering work that is part of the trends of thought of Post-Soviet art. Playing with the image of a happy future, from elements of the former communist regime, Plusch questions, on a larger scale, the relationship of humans with their environment.

Ivan Plusch has been exhibited worldwide, including in Hungary, Italy, France, England, Montenegro, the Netherlands, the United States and Germany. Museums that his work has exhibited at include the Budapest History Museum, Budapest, Hungary; Anikushin Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; Museum of Moscow, Moscow, Russia; The Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. His works are in the collections of Fondazione la Triennale Di Milano, Italy; Hermitage Museum, Russia; Kunst Im Rohnerhaus, Austria; Museum of Luther, Russia; Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Russia; National Center of Contemporary Art, Russia; Russian Museum, Russia. Plusch's works are in such prestigious private and public collections as the Prince of Spain and The Corning Museum of Glass in the United States.

Deborah Colton Gallery launched Ivan Plusch's work in the United States at the 2015 Houston Fine Arts Fair, and then at the 2016 gallery exhibition, *Between: Daniel Kayne – Ivan Plusch*. In 2019, Ivan Plusch had his first solo exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery, *The Promise of Eternal Life*.

Oleg Dou was born in 1983 in Moscow and started pursuing an artistic career at a young age. Through his strong concept and the originality of his artwork Dou, by 2012 was rated Number 3 under 30 of photographers worldwide by Art Market Insights, with his works being included in many museum and important private collections worldwide.

Influenced by his experiences as a Post-Soviet child also, Dou's work is continuously inspired by his interest in human individuality and self-expression and the attempts to solve the problem of identity in our age. Visually inspired by earlier art movements in Russia, his *Naked Faces* project is devoted to the relationship between a human's inner self and behavior within society. Dou proposes that the expectations of society set the standards of behavior and thought in terms of what is appropriate and acceptable.

Oleg Dou is an internationally recognized artist whose works have exhibited in such institutions as the Arts Santa Monica Museum, Spain; Museum Dr. Guislain, Belgium; Jeju Museum of Art, Republic of Korea; Multimedia Art Museum, Russia and Krasnodar Regional Museum of Arts, Russia. Additionally, Dou has won several International awards and his photographs have been represented at the photographic festivals including the Pingyao International Photography Festival, China; the Seoul Photo Festival, Korea; the FotoFestival Naarden, Netherlands; and the International Photography Awards.

Oleg Dou's works were debuted in the United States during the 2012 FotoFest *Focus on Russia*, where at the same time Dou had a solo exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery. Having been in several group exhibitions and art fairs with Deborah Colton Gallery since then, Oleg Dou's most recent solo exhibition at Deborah Colton Gallery was *Broken Mirror* during the 2016 Houston FotoFest since 2012, Deborah Colton Gallery has placed Dou's work in prestigious private and public collections nationwide and has exhibited his work in Dallas, Aspen and Houston.

Olga Tobreluts, Ivan Plusch and Oleg Dou are all represented throughout the Americas by Deborah Colton Gallery.

For the Virginia presentation, these histories are not treated as a closed chapter. *Awakening II* looks at what has continued to develop within the artists' practices and at the new relationships that become possible when their works are brought together again. Tobreluts' movement between classical representation and contemporary image making, Plusch's relationship between the human figure and its surrounding environment, and Dou's transformation of portraiture establish three distinct approaches to the instability of recognizable images.

The installation at Matney Gallery is conceived around those relationships rather than chronology alone. Earlier and more recent works will be positioned in conversation, allowing continuities and changes within each practice to become visible while also creating points of exchange among the three artists. The exhibition considers how inherited imagery, contemporary technology, human presence and constructed environments continue to shift across their work.

Awakening II extends the exhibition history established by Deborah Colton Gallery, bringing these three practices into a new curatorial setting in Virginia and into dialogue with work made and presented in the years since.

Opening Reception

Friday, October 23, 2026

Matney Gallery

Williamsburg, Virginia

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