

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Deborah Colton Gallery**  
**FotoFest 2012 Exhibitions**

March 16, 2012 – April 28, 2012

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 24, 2012, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Artist Talk: Oleg Dou, Saturday, March 17, 2012, 2:00 pm

Artist Talk: Olga Tobreluts, Sunday, March 25, 2012, 12:00 pm

Artist Q&A: Jay Rusovich with Deborah M. Colton, Sunday, March 25, 2012, 1:00 pm

**Deborah Colton Gallery**, a participating space in the FOTOFEST 2012 Biennale, is pleased to present a series of exhibitions showcasing Russian artists Olga Tobreluts, the Gallery's main exhibition, *Focus on Russia I*, and *Oleg Dou*, a Vignette Exhibition, *Focus on Russia II*. The Gallery will also feature the Solo Exhibition, *Unleashed*, by artist Jay Rusovich, as well as Vignette Exhibitions by French artist Jean-Daniel Lorieux, Suzanne Paul, Jonas Mekas and select Chinese contemporary artists. These exhibitions open on Saturday, March 16<sup>th</sup> with a public reception on March 24<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 9:00 pm

**Olga Tobreluts**  
*Focus on Russia I*

Born in 1970 in Murino, Leningrad Oblast, Russia, **Olga Tobreluts** (née Komarova) now lives in St. Petersburg. Trained as an architect, she graduated from the Architectural Technical Secondary School in 1989. In 1991, she enrolled in a course in computer graphics at the Art Com Institute in Berlin. Since 1993, she has actively worked with video and computer art. Since 1998, she has worked as a curator for a number of photography exhibitions at the photography center of the club "Mama."

An artist who works with photography, video, painting, and design, she is a pioneer of digital art in Russia and has belonged to the Neo-Academism group of artists in St. Petersburg since 1994. In her work, 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 low-brow, kitschy, and crude models.

From 1997 to 1998, she experimented with the adaptation of characters (primarily in the three-dimensional form of sculptures) within a digital virtual space. These experiments provided the basis for her most famous work—a series of paintings based on the play *Emperor and Galilean* by Henrik Ibsen, where she keenly creates commentary on historically established conceptions of beauty, as well as a variety of other works. Her work, *Emperor and Galilean*, was shown at the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg and Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo, leading to the publication of a book. From 1991 to 2005, she participated in over a hundred group exhibitions and had many solo exhibitions. In 2005, she stopped taking part in group exhibitions so she could work on a new series of paintings. Olga's works are in such collections as the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg; State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow; Ludwig Museum in the State Russian Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, New York, United States, and she has been featured in most major international contemporary arts and fashion magazines such as, W Magazine, Vogue, Vogue Paris, Vogue Russia, Vogue Germany, Art Actuel, Flash Art, and ArtReview, among others.

## **Oleg Dou**

### *Focus on Russia II*

Also on exhibition during the FotoFest 2012 Biennale, the Gallery presents FOCUS ON RUSSIA II, a Vignette Exhibition of photographic works from **Oleg Dou**.

Oleg DOU was born in 1983 in Moscow and graduated from the Moscow State Institute of Steel and Alloys in 2006. Since then, he has worked as an artist in cooperation with galleries and curators around the world.

Oleg'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 the culture of fashion and surrealists, his *Naked Faces* project is devoted to the relationship between a human's inner self and his behavior in society and proposes that the expectations of society set the standards of behavior and thought in terms of what is appropriate and acceptable.

His *Toystory* series features children in the character of cartoons or animations popularized and favored by children around the world. In this case, however, there's a hint to be detected of something calm, cool, and strangely dreadful. The faces themselves become the canvases by which Oleg expresses his interest in the human condition, adding graphic expression to photographic reality. These images, which look cute but wicked, poker-faced but subtly appealing, are yet another iteration of his creative consideration as he maintains his journey to explore the depths of human nature.

Since 2007 Oleg has won several International awards and his photographs were represented at the photographic festivals around the world including the Pingyao International Photography Festival (China), the Seoul Photo Festival (Korea), the FotoFestival Naarden (Netherlands), and the International Photography Awards. His works were exhibited twice at the Kandinsky Prize (2007 and 2008), the main contemporary art exhibition award in Moscow. His work is scheduled to be exhibited internationally in solo and group shows throughout this year. His work has also been featured in publications worldwide.

## **Jay Rusovich**

### *Unleashed*

**Jay Rusovich** is known for his conceptual, controversial style which can be described as intuitive, engaging, intense, direct, quick-witted...and tinged with irony. Jay Rusovich debuted at the Deborah Colton Gallery in the spring of 2005 with the visually provocative solo exhibition, *Inside Out*. Since then Jay has had numerous solo exhibitions, including a collaborative exhibition with the Dominic Walsh Dance Theatre last year. Jay Rusovich was born in New Orleans and has received degrees from Tulane University in English and Theater, and also attended Oxford University in England, The University of Arizona and Loyola University in New Orleans. After graduating, he moved to New York City where he studied Method Acting at The Lee Strasberg Institute. Rusovich also attended The Actor's Institute for Shakespearean Studies and TVI Actors Studio in NYC.

Rusovich's career began with a used Nikon 35mm camera when he started booking photo sessions with fellow aspiring actors who were always in need of headshots. For the next 20 years, Rusovich traveled the world, photographing people for advertising agencies, Fortune 500 Companies and major publishing houses, principally in New York and Los Angeles. He is known for his controversial style, which can be described as "intuitive, engaging, intense, direct, quick-witted...and sometimes tinged with irony."

Rusovich hammers traditional paradigms through searing imagery that asks the viewer to suspend all judgment, as things are rarely what they seem. A woman enjoying a fresh bowl of bullets while surfing the Internet for Prince Charming -- to a woman carrying her child in her mouth like a wolf -- it becomes obvious that what we see on the outside is rarely a reflection of what's behind the curtain.

*"I see no reason to photograph anything that doesn't make a statement of some kind. Beauty for the sake of itself is, in the end, dismissive and ugly. And while my work does rely heavily on lighting technique and photographic balance, which are critical to great photography, I'm not a fan of anything that doesn't challenge me in some way..."* – Jay Rusovich

## **Jean-Daniel Lorieux**

### *The Master and Margarita*

French artist, **Jean-Daniel Lorieux**, is one of the masters of photography of his generation. His high-contrast style connects the models with fashion, with a subtle and distinguished eroticism. Jean-Daniel is sought after for his celebrity photographs and portraits ranging from former President of France Jacques Chirac, Actress Isabelle Adjani, International Models Karen Mudler and Claudia Schiffer, Prince Albert of Monaco, Fashion Designer Kenzo, and other iconic individuals. In 2011, Jean-Daniel had exhibitions in New York, Brussels, Paris, Dubai and Cannes. He is also releasing a book of photographs, published by Michel Lafon, and a documentary movie, retracing the atypical path of the artist

The exhibited series is based on the famous book, *The Master and Margarita*. It is a novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, woven around the premise of a visit by the Devil to the fervently atheistic Soviet Union. Many critics consider the book to be one of the greatest novels of the 20th century, as well as one of the foremost Soviet satires, directed against a suffocating bureaucratic social order.

## **Suzanne Paul**

### *A Moment in Houston*

**Suzanne Paul**, who passed away on March 14, 2005, was an important part of the Houston art world. Suzanne documented many of the artists, curators, collectors, gallery owners who shaped the Houston art scene since the 1970's through the millennium. A BFA from the University of Houston and then did graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley, Paul became active in the Houston art world when the Contemporary Arts Museum Director, Jim Harithas hired her to document artists and exhibitions for museum catalogues. Among her first artists she photographed were Dick Wray, Julian Schnabel, Terry Allen and Norman Bloom. Later she photographed artists such as Lucas Johnson, Richard Stout, The Art Guys, David McGee, Michael Tracy, Mel Chin, Edward Albee and Angelbert Metoyer, many of whom were featured in her FotoFest exhibit, *Being There*, in 2001. In addition she photographed Houston curators and patrons such as Jim Harithas, Walter Hopps, Anne Tucker, Alison De Lima Greene, Alfred Glassell and Edward Mayo.

Suzanne Paul has a remarkable way of capturing the spirit and soul of people with her camera" said *Being There* curator and Director of the Galveston Arts Center, Clint Willour. "Throughout her career, it was her black and white portraiture work that I think has always been her greatest strength as an artist" Suzanne continued her to photograph artists throughout her life. "They are people that I know and love", she said. "I am drawn to creative people because they are more on the edge..." Her feelings about artists were almost always reciprocated. She once asked Lucas Johnson why artists let her photograph them, and he responded "because you are an artist".

Before he passed away, Walter Hopps was quoted in the 2001 FotoFest *Being There* Catalogue, "Suzanne Paul should now be recognized as one of the finest photographers to come out of Houston. Her essential medium is black & white photography, and her most important subject matter is portraiture. The portraits in this exhibition largely focus on people associated with the arts of Houston or those who pass through. Not all photographers are skilled printers of their work. Paul is a superb printer achieving areas of deep black in lines with her instinct for the chiaroscuro lighting of the subject. Having been the subject of one of Paul's portraits, I have experienced the directness and honesty of her work. She has caught an unidealized view of who I am."

Suzanne Paul exhibited extensively for over 35 years before her passing in March of 2005. She was in numerous group and solo exhibitions in gallery and museum exhibitions throughout the United States and her work is many important private and public collections.

Suzanne Paul's Memorial Reception was on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at sunset on Good Friday at the Deborah Colton Gallery's original Gallery space at 2500 Summer Street. "This was the way Suzy had wanted it. We hosted an exhibition highlighting her work along with a Memorial Room where we had beautiful light shining through our large industrial windows looking out at the Houston downtown skyline. Suzy used to spend the most time in this room when she was visiting me and she came often. Hundreds of people came that day to pay their respects to someone we all loved", says Deborah M. Colton. Suzanne Paul left us with a compelling visual documentation of our City's art history and in doing so, of humanity itself.

## **Jonas Mekas**

**Jonas Mekas** was born in 1922 in Semeniskiai, Lithuania. In 1949 he emigrated to the U.S. together with his brother, settling in New York. He has been one of the leading figures of American avant-garde filmmaking playing various roles: in 1954 he became editor-in-chief of *Film Culture*; in 1958 began writing his "Movie Journal" column for the *Village Voice*; in 1962 co-founded the Film-Makers' Cooperative (FMC) and in 1964 the Filmmakers' Cinematheque, which eventually grew into Anthology Film Archives. His own output includes, among other films, narrative films (*Guns of the Frees*, 1961) to documentaries (*The Brig*, 1963) and to "diaries" such as *Walden* (1969), *Lost, Lost, Lost* (1975) and *As I was Moving Ahead*, and *Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty* (2001). Known as an artist, filmmaker, art critic, curator and icon of contemporary American Culture, Mekas documented the era that promoted peace through his acclaimed independent film and still frame photography, which features Yoko and John in *Happy Birthday John* and *Bed-In for PEACE*. His films have been screened extensively at festivals and museums around the world. In 2005 he represented Lithuania at the Venice Biennale, the exhibition was noted with Special Mention price for extraordinary presentation of contemporary classic artist.

In 2011 Jonas Mekas was honored at the Los Angeles Film Critics Association's award ceremony for his significant contribution to American film culture and had a solo exhibition at Ludwig Museum in Cologne, Germany. His previous projects include extensive presentation at Serpentine Gallery, London in 2010. This year in Mekas, now about 90 years old, is exhibiting portrait works with his longtime friend, photographer Robert Polidor at the Edwynn Houk Gallery in New York.

Through his accomplished career as a filmmaker, visual artist, writer and organizer, Jonas Mekas has received awards from New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, as well as the Golden Medal from Philadelphia College of Art, "For the devotion, passion and selfless dedication to the rediscovery of the newest art."

Mekas is also the honored recipient of the following awards: Guggenheim Fellowship in 1966, Creative Arts Award in 1977, Brandeis University in 1989; Mel Novikoff Award at San Francisco Film Festival, 1992; Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from Ministry of Culture, France in 1992 and 2000; Lithuanian National Award, 1995; Doctor of Fine Arts, Honoris Causa from Kansas City Art Institute in 1996; Special Tribute, New York Film Critics Circle Awards in 1996; Pier Paolo Pasolini Award, Paris in 1997; International Documentary Film Association Award, Los Angeles, 1997; Governors Award, Skohegan School of Painting and Sculpture, 1997; Artium Doctoris Honoris Causa, Universitatis Vytauti Magni, Lithuania in 1997.

## **Contemporary Photographers from China:**

Qing Qing, Xu Yong & Yu Na, and the Gao Brothers

Chinese contemporary art reached a turning point in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. FotoFest 2008 highlighted these revolutionary changes that were revealed so clearly in the artist's photographic expression. During this time, Deborah Colton Gallery presented, *China Under Construction, Contemporary Artists from the People's Republic*. This exhibition was featured in Houston during same time as the MFAH's *Chaney Family's Collection Red Hot China Exhibition* in the summer of 2007 and was revealed in even a stronger representation during FotoFest 2008 at Deborah Colton Gallery as *China Under Construction II: China's Contemporary Art of the Everyday Comes of Age*. The curator of both exhibitions was art critic, curator and writer, Maya Kavskaya. Both exhibitions gained a great deal of local, national and international press and attention which is revealed under Past Exhibitions of the [www.deborahcoltongallery.com](http://www.deborahcoltongallery.com) website, Reviews for these exhibitions. A catalogue was also published.

Both exhibitions at Deborah Colton Gallery were at the forefront of the new trajectory. Though after the 2008 FotoFest exhibition, most of the work in these shows were either sold or sent back to China, there were select works that could not be sent back due to their content. In FotoFest 2012, the Deborah Colton Gallery presents these provocative and challenging visually and conceptually photographic expressions that address the artist's view of the current issues in China and reveal now also a bit of history.

**Deborah Colton Gallery** is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance and conceptual future media installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.