



Lc. 15: 11-32

ALEXANDER SOKUROV AND
ALEXANDER
SHISHKIN-HOKUSAI



CURATED BY
MIKHAIL PIOTROVSKY
GENERAL DIRECTOR
THE STATE HERMITAGE
MUSEUM

COMMISSIONED BY
SEMYON MIKHAILOVSKY

11 MAY TO 24 NOVEMBER 2019

OFFICIAL INAUGURATION
CEREMONY 3PM, 8 MAY

Lc. 15: 11-32 is a new exhibition conceived and created for the Russian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, featuring the work of Alexander Sokurov and Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai. Commissioned by Semyon Mikhailovsky, the Pavilion is curated by The State Hermitage Museum, General Director Mikhail Piotrovsky.

The exhibition's title references both the bible chapters of The Parable of the Prodigal Son within the Gospel of Luke and Rembrandt's painting of this subject, which has become a central masterpiece at The Hermitage. Awaiting visitors is an immersive experience which brings some of the most recognisable features of the iconic museum to Venice, reimaged by contemporary artists who take the collection of The Hermitage as a departure point for their works.

In the first room of the pavilion we see exact replicas of the legs of one of the Hermitage Atlantes, ten huge muscular figures which, since 1848, have supported the roof of the portico above the entrance of the New Hermitage. This building was built specifically to house the imperial collection. The granite figures themselves have over time become a shrine in their own right, with pilgrims from all over the world coming to worship art at their feet.

Rembrandt's 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' is the main theme of a new installation by the celebrated film director Alexander Sokurov. Simultaneously representing one of the halls of the Hermitage and an artist's studio, a tension is created between this safe haven where the characters of Rembrandt's painting acquire new form and meaning, juxtaposed with the turmoil of war in the modern world that lies beyond.

The inner staircase sends us down into the world of the Flemish School brought to life by artist Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai, dedicated to the intricate mechanisms in the Winter Palace such as the famous Peacock Clock. Influenced by the Dutch Old Masters in The Hermitage collection, his signature plywood sculptures with cut-out human figures move on mechanical constructions. The scene is arranged as a theatrical mise-en-scène, blurring the boundary between reality and imagination. A scenographer as well as an artist, Shishkin-Hokusai is renowned in Russian theatrical circles.

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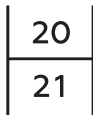


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Alexander Sokurov (born 1951, Podorvikha, USSR) lives and works in St Petersburg, Russia. A celebrated film director, his most significant works include a feature film, *Russian Ark* (2002), filmed in a single unedited shot, and *Faust* (2011), which was honoured with the Golden Lion, the highest prize for the best film at the Venice Film Festival.

Alexander Shishkin-Hokusai (born 1969, Leningrad, USSR) lives and works in St Petersburg, Russia. He works as a theatre artist and creates paintings, installations and performances. From 2010, he was a participant of the artistic group «Art. Parazit gallery». In 2011 his project «Juices! Light!» was nominated for the Kandinsky Prize. His installation «Shooting Range» was presented at the Busan Biennale in 2012.

Mikhail Piotrovsky has been General Director of The State Hermitage Museum since 1992. A renowned Arabist, he is author of more than 250 works including catalogues of Arabic manuscripts, publications of Medieval monuments and ancient inscriptions, works on Islamic political history and Arabic culture, and the archaeology of Arabia. Born in Yerevan, ASSR in 1944, he lives and works in St Petersburg, Russia. The Hermitage 20/21 project's goal is to collect, exhibit and study contemporary art as well as building the museum's contemporary art collection.

Semyon Mikhailovsky is Rector of the Repin Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, where he serves as Associate Professor at the Chair of Architectural Theory and History. Curator, co-curator and organiser of exhibitions of Russian art in Stockholm, Venice, Taipei, Miami, Ravenna, Bologna, Rome, and Madrid, amongst other cities. Born in Leningrad, USSR in 1961, he lives and works in St Petersburg, Russia.

The Russian Pavilion in the Giardini in Venice was designed by Alexei Shchusev and ceremonially opened by Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia in 1914. Russian artists have been participating in the Art and Architecture Biennale from the first International Art Exhibition of 1895 and since then, over 800 Russian artists have participated from leading names like Repin, Malevich and Kabakov to emerging artists. Semyon Mikhailovsky was appointed Commissioner of the Russian Pavilion at the Art and Architecture Biennale in 2016 and will hold the post until 2021.

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For all press inquiries please contact **Sophie Campos** or **Eleanor Gibson**
 sophie@pelhamcommunications.com | eleanor@pelhamcommunications.com
 +44 (0)20 8969 3959 | @pelhamcomms