

PHILLIPS de PURY & COMPANY IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE FLY TO BAKU CONTEMPORARY ART FROM AZERBAIJAN

EXHIBITION CURATED BY HERVÉ MIKAELOFF

FEATURING TORA AGHABAYOVA, FAIG AHMED, LEYLA ALIYEVA, RASHAD ALAKBAROV, SANAN ALESKEROV, ELIYAR ALIMIRZOYEV, ENVER ASKEROV, RASHAD BABAYEV, IRINA EL DAROVA, HUSEYN HAQVERDI, ALI HASANOV, ORKHAN HUSEYNOV, AIDA MAHMUDOVA, FAKHRIYYA MAMMADOVA, MAMMAD MUSTAFAYEV, NIYAZ NAJAFOV, AGA OUSSEINOV, FARID RASULOV, ALTAI SADIQZADEH, MIRNADIR ZEYNALOV

VIEWING: JANUARY 17 – JANUARY 29, 2012

LOCATION: Phillips de Pury & Company, Howick Place, London, SW1P 1BB

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

London - Phillips de Pury & Company is pleased to announce Fly to Baku: Contemporary Art from Azerbaijan featuring 21 contemporary artists from Azerbaijan, curated by Hervé Mikaeloff.

"In the summer of 2011 my wife and I visited Baku for the first time we were struck by the vibrant art scene and the quality and originality of the artists we visited, which lead us to put together this groundbreaking show curated by Hervé Mikaeloff." Simon de Pury, Chairman, Phillips de Pury & Company.

Highlights include works by:

Altai Sadiqzadeh. Altai Sadiqzadeh was responsible for the concept behind the architectural design of the Museum of Modern Art in Baku. The interior space, with its sloping walls and without doors or corners, was designed especially with avant-garde art in mind, allowing the art and the building containing it to enjoy a symbiosis. His sculptural metal constructions, installations and painted canvases are incorporated into the museum. He has also been instrumental in selecting the museum's collection and curating its exhibitions. Sadiqzadeh is primarily known as a painter, who also engages in graphic work and stage design. In recent years, his flexible and visual imagination has led him to explore his ideas in monumental three-dimensional art objects – the series of welded metal constructions entitled *The Mechanics of Space*. This artist creates his sculptures as if they were multi-dimensional paintings. His work exemplifies a new discovery of the world through its colourful, self-constructing text, teeming with 'apparatuses', hieroglyphs, esoteric epistles, palm trees, anthropomorphic machines, extraterrestrial 'guardians', star observers and people.

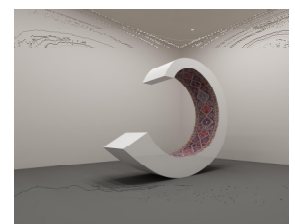
At the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011, Sadiqzadeh exhibited his monumental 'cosmic' canvases and sculptures at the Azerbaijan Pavilion. Looking at them, one sees humanity through the eyes of other worlds and it becomes evident that the possibilities of



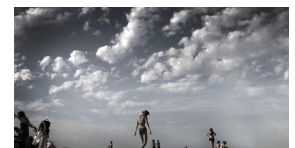
Altai Sadiqzadeh, *The Thinker*, 2011



Altai Sadiqzadeh, *Persona RR12*, 2011



Faig Ahmed, *Wave*, 2011



Fakhriyya Mammadova, *Déjà vu*, 2008

individual freedom and creative art forms are endless and cannot be limited by anything.

Faig Ahmed. A sculptor by training, Ahmed was able to find a new area of commonality between two such diverse spheres of art as abstract sculpture and classical Azeri rug making. Ahmed's work was among those that represented the art of Azerbaijan at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. That was the first year Azerbaijan took part in the exhibition, and so the nation's pavilion included works that most vividly incorporated the country's ancient and medieval art in its modern expression. Ahmed's works have been also shown in Baku, Dresden and Moscow.

Fakhriyya Mammadova. Photo artist Fakhriyya Mammadova is well known in the art world of Azerbaijan and beyond. A ceramist and designer by training, she is a member of the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan Association of Photographers, as well as the Wings of Time association, which brings together contemporary artists in Azerbaijan.

Her works are full of personal revelation, creating an intimate discourse with the audience, and emphasizing the individuality of opinion. She does it without affected pretence, nor does she force her opinion on the audience but rather invites them, subtly, to form their own – these are the primary points of Mammadova's creative credo.

A Few Days with Anya is a work of conceptual photography, marked by laid-back diary-style prints. But each image that comprises the work captures the viewer with its attention to detail, which builds to create a stereoscopic effect of mental perception.

Orkhan Huseynov. Orkhan Huseynov is an artist who is equally prolific in painting, drawing and many other media. From the outset, the focus of his work became his love of his country's folk tradition and history. Culture, art, everyday life, monuments, traditional games – all found reflection in his works. Civil themes of a more serious nature also find expression in his work – the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan and its history. However, the ethnic canvas of Huseynov's works is much wider in geographic and temporal terms and his themes achieve a universality.

Rashad Babayev. Rashad Babayev's work is permeated with the spirit of high philosophy, primarily conveyed by colour and line which dominate his work. His works have already been given their due by collectors of his native country, as well as those in Russia, France, Turkey and Iran. Babayev's works are primarily infused with an exotic harmony of bright tones. His Titian-like golden nudes recline on flame-coloured brocade. His landscapes are ignited with colours of endless sunsets.

Some of Babayev's work is densely saturated with symbolism; others, on the contrary, are brimming with austerity in all aspects – from the filling of the background to the density of tones. And because the artist prefers, as a rule, large-format canvases, giving his paintings the impression of boundless worlds, examined through a powerful telescope. Here, the minutiae loom large. This could be seen in *St. Sebastian* and *Room with Plants and Two Persons*. The variation on a religious theme portrayed in *St. Sebastian* diverges far from its source. In Babayev's version, the saint is presented as an inanimate target for shooting practice. Sacrificed beliefs are the allegory in this case. The sombre, even grim monochromatic palette of the canvas gives it a similarity to graphic art, evoking an association with a political satire.

Aga Ousseinov. Aga Ousseinov is an Azeri who has lived in New York for the past two decades, but who continues to retain ties to his native land. He exhibits actively in Baku and abroad and was among the artists representing Azerbaijan at the 2011 Venice Biennale.

Ousseinov works in graphics and sculpture, and uses collage elements in his two-dimensional pieces. Inspired by Medieval, European and early Muslim scientific drawings, Ousseinov creates expressive, dream-like works, which he calls 'inventions' that pay homage to his life in the Soviet Union. Through his poetic creations, which often incorporate vessels and other machines, the artist invites the viewer to embark on



Orkhan Huseynov *Splash*, 2011



Aga Ousseinov, *Diving Lesson*, 2010



Rashad Babayev, *St. Sebastian*, 2009



Melik Aghamalov, *The Skull*, 2011

a journey and escape from that world of utopian ideals. Produced with the use of linen, wire, burlap and fresco, the multilayered works convey a fragility and appeal to the viewer's sense of humour.

Melik Aghamalov. Works by the painter Melik Aghamalov, one of the most popular makers of contemporary visual art in Azerbaijan, have been shown and purchased by museums and collections in Azerbaijan, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Russia and the UAE. His work is marked by a piercing, inimitable individuality.

The artist loves fragmentation, but these fragments, like cells in an organism, are arranged in a strictly regimented order. There is something of the comic book in this, if only one could fit philosophical ruminations and antique mini-mixes into a comic strip. Most of his works are replete with symbolism – for example, a triptych that brings together three meaningful and interrelated elements, such as a shell, a skull and a pomegranate. The skull symbolizes the impermanence of all things. The shell, on the contrary, is a symbol of eternity. The pomegranate has for millennia expressed man's wish for fertility. Thus, in these three simple symbols, the artist expresses the relationship between time and the continuity of existence.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Hervé Mikaeloff

Independent Art Consultant and Curator, Hervé Mikaeloff currently advises and curates for the LVMH group, most particularly for Louis Vuitton. In 1991 the native Frenchman graduated from l'Ecole du Louvre in Paris and then worked for two years at La Fondation Cartier for Contemporary Art as Assistant Director. He later spent three years developing his career as Deputy Director at the renowned Parisian art gallery Emmanuel Perrotin. His first work as curator began at the Caisse des Dépôts Art Collection. He was in charge of the collection and the exhibition program included many shows in France, Portugal, USA, Brazil and Japan.

His most recent work, however, includes a range of exhibitions at the Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton for which he has curated, including "India of the Senses" in 2006, "Moscopolis" in 2007, "Orient without Borders" in 2008, "Silent Writings" in 2009, "Chile, Behind the Scene" in 2010, "Who are you Peter" and "Transfigurations- Indonesian Mythologies" in 2011. He was curator of the exhibition Louis Vuitton and Art at the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 2009.

Hervé Mikaeloff is also curator of "Futurologia", an exhibition which gathered 15 projects by contemporary Russian artists at the Garage CCC in Moscow from 5th March to 23rd May 2010 and since March 2010 is the Art Curator of the Royal Monceau, Paris.

Hervé Mikaeloff was a Board Member of the American Center Fondation from 1999 to 2009 and since 2009 is a Board Member of SAM Foundation

Hervé Mikaeloff received "l'insigne de Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres" by the French Ministry of Culture in 2011.

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Melik Aghamalov,
Pomegranate, 2011



Melik Aghamalov, *The Seashell, 2011*

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