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August 5, 2016

Alexander Ponomarev's hit NYC exhibit breaks the ice for the inaugural Antarctic Biennial

By Joey Ney



Alexander Ponomarev (b. 1957). Icebreaker, 2016. Monumental mixed media installation. Image courtesy of the Richard Taittinger Gallery.

NEW YORK, NY.- Having only cast anchor on its Ludlow Street location in the Lower East Side arts

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district last year, the Richard Taittinger Gallery has already made an quite an impression in its consecutive visibly painstaking preparation and launching of exhibitions, to this date each endeavor leaving an aura of nothing less of the competence of a true museum show. The downtown Manhattan arts district's many neighboring hopefuls so far seem to have been completely overshadowed by the Taittinger space. Its most recently completed exhibition deserves every accolade it has received so far and more, with the impressive one-man exhibition entitled "Stored in Ice" by Alexander Ponomarev (b. 1957, Dnepropetrovsk [a city now part of today's Ukraine]).

Undoubtedly leaving an indelible mark on the visual memory of the exhibition's many visitors during its run, "Stored In Ice" dominantly featured two significant, monumental indoor installations that set the mood for this New York solo debut by this famed Russian-born artist. The staggering heavyweight largest art installation, "IceBreaker" (2016) was heavily complimented by the show featuring ten large, powerful mixed media graphic works utilizing actual maritime oversized maps in the ingredients of their creation by the artist.



Alexander Ponomarev, *Stored in Ice*, 2016. Foam, plexiglas, epoxy, aqua-resin, metal. Courtesy of Richard Taittinger Gallery.

ArtNews Magazine declared the show to be one of the few select must-see shows in the same week as "Steve McQueen" being held at The Whitney Museum of American Art as well as "Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs" hosted by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Likewise, the New York Observer also included it within the ten art events in New York City that must be seen, in the same breath as "But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the

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Middle East and North Africa” at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum on Museum Mile.

One of the most visibly active artists in Moscow’s art world, Ponomarev actually also received an education at the Nautical Engineering University College during the Soviet Era as well as studied at the Orel Art School. He was selected to represent the Russian Federation at the 52nd edition of the Biennale di Venezia in 2007; two years later, he stationed his submarine (the ‘SubTiziano’) by the Grand Canal as an Official Collateral Project during the 53rd Edition of the aforementioned Biennale.

Ponomarev’s works are in major public collections worldwide, not just in top private and public collections in the Russian Federation such as the Stella Art Foundation and the State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, but internationally such as the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, amidst many others.

The Richard Taittinger Gallery show was accompanied by a beautifully designed, 52-page full-color catalogue containing original text contributed by Matthew Drutt, the well-known art historian and writer, who recently had again shown his special expertise in Russian art studies by curating an acclaimed exhibition on Kazimir Malevich and Russian Avant-Garde for the Beyeler Foundation, Switzerland.

Besides the Taittinger show’s resounding acclaim, according to Ksenia Semenova, a media consultant to Ponomarev’s pioneering Antartica feats, this NYC exhibition was actually a milepost that appears to serve as a nexus to the artist’s forthcoming truly grandiose project, unprecedented in the international art world - the inaugural Antarctic Biennial.

Since its inception, Alexander Ponomarev has been Commissioner of the Antarctic Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia. With the successful closure of the show in New York City, the first annual Antarctic Biennale – planned for 2017 – appears ready to now take on near-flank speed towards its historical launch.