

## Galerie Iragui

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## Anton Ginzburg / *no echo, no shadow*

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*"I'm amazed by how easily I was able to fight off a lot of complexes.  
I invented a role for myself, as an actress in America, and it started to please me very much."*  
—Natalya Negoda, interview with Playboy, 1989

*No Echo, No Shadow*, Anton Ginzburg's first solo show at Moscow's Galerie Iragui, is an exploration of transition points between the imagined and the actual. The exhibition takes the form of a collector's cabinet, a set of objets d'art with personal and cultural associations that extend beyond their physical shape. The artifacts in the installation include mask, bronzes, works on paper, and text works—mediums that were crucial for the transformation of European art in the early twentieth century in the work of artists like Brancusi and Man Ray. But Ginzburg's objects also allude to American minimalism of the 1960s and '70s, to Richard Tuttle and Richard Serra, thus offering a deliberate misreading of modernism that ignores boundaries of time and place—a mutated, surrogate history of art.

The subjectivity of Ginzburg's gaze is further underscored through direct references to Leningrad during perestroika, the place and time where he came of age, a period of both personal and historical transition. A 1989 Playboy photo shoot of Natalya Negoda—star of *Little Vera*, a film key to the transformation of sexual identity for the last Soviet generation—appears in the installation as a diptych of mirrored copies, which undermines the authenticity of the original allowing it to ascend into the collective consciousness of liberation and desire.

A translucent, plastic-cast mask of Medusa is the exhibition's centerpiece. For Ginzburg image of Medusa, whose petrifying powers are activated by the viewer's gaze, symbolizes reverse perspective, a switch of agency from viewer to object. By inserting a convex mirror in the mask's mouth-hole—an allusion to the famous mirror in Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*, which reveals the presence of the artist/creator—Ginzburg manifests that switch, turning the audience's gaze back onto itself.

The mirror in the mask is one of many reflective surfaces in *No Echo, No Shadow*; others expand the space of the wall through illusory doublings, or make text pieces

written backwards in neon legible. The intersection of multiple, refracted trajectories creates an atmosphere of instability and immediacy—a freeze frame of the artistic process that captures the inevitable failure to realize a vision exactly as it appeared in mind's eye of the artist at the moment of inspiration. Ginzburg's play of smoke and mirrors encompasses turning points ripe with potential in political, personal, and artistic histories, and in each case his cuts and juxtapositions yield soft spots vulnerable to misinterpretation and mistakes. Thus *No Echo, No Shadow* reveals the invisible tension between the intention and the outcome.

Anton Ginzburg was born in Leningrad, where he received a classical art education in preparation for the Soviet academy. He emigrated to the United States in 1990, and received a BFA from the Parsons School of Design in 1997. His works have been shown at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, White Columns, and the first and second Moscow Biennales. His art is represented in the permanent collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Moscow Museum of Modern as well as private collections. He lives and works in New York.

—*Brian Droitcour*