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Savchenko Captures Moments With Photos and Text

By Jordan Bryan

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Igor Savchenko spoke about his struggles with the photographic medium. **Vladimir Filonov**

Fans of photography will be happy to hear about the successful launch of "On the New Attitude to Photography," a new exhibition from Belarussian photographer, writer and artist Igor Savchenko at the Lumiere Brothers' Center of Photography. The exhibition, which takes its name from a manifesto written by Savchenko himself in 1997, features a compilation of six photographic series produced by Savchenko from 1989 to 2008, each representing an important milestone in the artist's relationship to his work.

"The world in fact does not wish to be photographed, and its destructive resistance is growing," Savchenko writes in a manifesto at the exhibit. Savchenko has had his share of internal strife when it comes to the art of photography. "Sometime around 1996, I felt that everything had already been done," he said in an interview with The Moscow Times. "There was nothing else that only pictures could say." Shortly thereafter, Savchenko's personal struggle came to a dramatic head when he rejected pure photography in favor of including

text and other creative mediums to his work.

It would be wrong to assume, however, that Savchenko's ambivalence toward photography as an art form came about suddenly: His transition to the written word was a gradual one, as is especially evident in his series "Landscapes Commented," where the titles of his photographs vary in size from a single sentence to full blown paragraphs.

In this series compiled from 1994-95, Savchenko's comments are often darkly comedic, almost Tolstoy-esque in their approach to the triviality of how a moment is captured. One piece in particular, a black-and-white still depicting a deserted road thickly lined with bare trees, is simply called "Something that got into his eye and made him shoot this photograph almost a minute later than he wanted." In his mixed-medium works, Savchenko astutely reveals the helplessness of man against the forces of randomness and accident as he tries to realize his work.

When asked how he chose each of his subjects, Savchenko replied: "How does anyone choose such things? It came to me in the moment." It is this key concept of the 'moment,' with all of its caprices, that seems to drive Savchenko's work. Whether it is a view of the inside of a lens cap from the series "Invisible" or the haunting countenances that populate "Mysteria," Savchenko invites his viewers to take in the grotesquely elegant "now," and do with it what they like.

"On the New Attitude to Photography" runs until Nov. 10th at the Brothers Lumiere Center of Photography, 3 Bolotnaya Naberezhnaya, Bldg. 1. Metro Kropotkinskaya. For more information, check out lumiere.ru*.*

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