

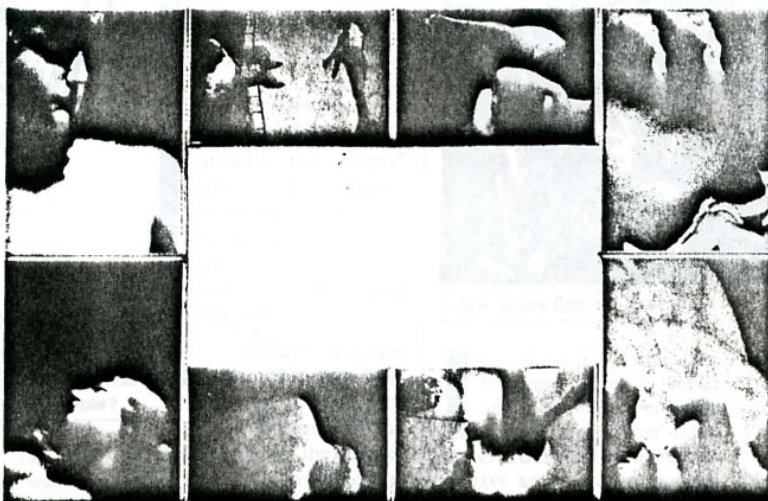
A Tale of Three Cities

Once we're all living in a "global village", will we be stuck with a "global culture"?

If the exhibition "Moscow-Vienna-New York" at Vienna's Messepalast is anything to go by, that monotonous prospect has thankfully not yet materialised.

The organiser and mind behind the exhibition is Viennese gallery owner Hubert Winter. He calls the exhibition "a place for the soul". But it must be for a fairly energetic soul as the viewer is forced to accommodate many different artistic and cultural viewpoints.

Around 90 works by 29 artists are featured. Of particular interest are works by young Soviet artists and the representatives of what might be called a new East European avant-garde. Few people will need reminding that for decades Moscow art has been marked by a division between "official" and



Juergensen: practitioner of "fragmented materiality".

"unofficial" art. With the current changes in Soviet society, that ugly division is disappearing. A new critical energy seems to have been released. Its future direction, however, remains unclear, as Moscow's avant-garde begins

to find links with the international art scene. There is a concern at the moment with the "nature of individuality" in Moscow art. Images reflecting the greyness of everyday life mingle with traditional folklore and mythological symbols.

of wood, plastic, cloth, cardboard, oils and enamel, play with the phenomenon of myth. In the area of photography and film there is a strong emphasis on the documentary style. This perhaps reflects a fascination with stylistic "truthfulness" in a

These are radically different preoccupations from what co-curator Oliver Wasow calls New York's colourful "commodity/image obsession". If thematically the Soviet artists are finding a new freedom, the exhibition shows that they are already highly conversant with a wide variety of styles. Anatolij Schuravlev deals graphically with the phenomenon of language and its decay, manipulating words and sentences into almost sculptural forms. Konstantin Zvedotschotov's objects, created from mixtures



Zvesdotchotov; to the Big Apple?

society where until recently truth in subject matter was so dangerous.

"Buy a Condo or die". The title of the American artist Jessica Diamond's rice paper sketch couldn't more graphically illustrate the differences in approach between the Moscow and New York art scenes. In a city where the power and pull of the art market is all too evident, artists are used to determining international developments simply through their market value. Art

is a consumer product, it seems, in America. And the artists themselves have chosen to play with this idea, many of them incorporating the symbols of American consumerism into their work. Here the work of Ashley Bickerton, with its use of logos and signs, is notable.

And where does Vienna stand in relation to Moscow and New York? Appropriately, somewhere in the middle. Oliver Wasow considers that the Viennese artists are "concerned with the fragmented materiality of signs and objects." Helmut Mark plays with the computerised image in his painting "35544-". Franz Graf uses steel and pencil sketches on tracing paper sandwiched between glass. Ingrid Strobl's "6 Concepts" consists of six separate words on a variety of backgrounds and materials. Another of her works uses the word "Angst".

Perhaps a justifiable comment on the direction of modern art, if the order of the

cities as given in the exhibition title, Moscow-Vienna-New York, has any prophetic quality. ■

Diamond: No money down

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