

*We are a long echo of each other*  
Evgeny Antufiev  
& Lyubov Nalogina

30 September – 05 November 2022

Emalin is pleased to present *We are a long echo of each other*, an exhibition of new works by Evgeny Antufiev with Lyubov Nalogina. The exhibition comprises a series of marble mosaics and bronze sculptures, alongside historical objects and photographs from the archive of Marshal A. A. Grechko, Minister of Defence of the USSR during the Cold War. The archival materials are imbued with a sinister quality that echoes in the narratives Antufiev's practice seeks to question: the imaginaries of imperial grandeur and power's cruel striving for commemoration against the passing of time.

Marshal Grechko was the USSR's Defence Minister between 1967 and 1976. He rose to power during the Second World War and chaired the editorial commission that produced its official Soviet history. He is remembered for advocating to accelerate the deployment of nuclear weapons across the Cold War's many proxy fronts. In 1968, he led the invasion of Czechoslovakia, which crushed attempts to liberalise the country and reasserted Soviet dominance.

Grechko was also a hunter. Purchased by Antufiev at auction, Grechko's archive prominently features memorabilia from his hunts: armchairs decorated with animal horns, photographs of taxidermy bears, of men chatting over dozens of killed pheasants, deer and boars laid out on the forest ground. Slotted into the folder containing the hunt souvenirs was also a photograph of the Marshal's teenage daughters. Underlying any encounter with the objects in the exhibition are photographic wallpapers that reproduce archival images of Grechko's huntsmen and their prey, splitting the gallery into two.

The different archives and eras intertwine across the niches of the central wall: Grechko's porcelain plate is followed by a 2nd century BCE Sarmatian bracelet – both decorated with the motif of a stag, trophy tokens produced by nations of hunters. The stag reemerges in a mosaic diptych made by Antufiev and his partner and collaborator, Lyubov Nalogina. Pieces of marble, malachite, travertine and lapis lazuli are set in cement, a technique drawn simultaneously from Hellenic bathhouses and Soviet party committee headquarters. Each of the mosaics is monumental. Split across a triptych, a flurry of birds of prey depicts another stately hunt.

In the inner gallery, Antufiev's bronze sculpture of a tomblike procession carrying a serpent is positioned next to a glass vase gifted to Grechko by the Czechoslovak military a decade before their capital was invaded under his orders. A copy of a military award letter bestows Grechko's gratitude on a lieutenant for serving in the invasion. A corroding tin tank – a 1960s Soviet toy from Grechko's family archive, is snug in its niche, oversized since it belonged to a child from a family of military privilege.

Archives are stage-setting materials of Antufiev's work: he purchases them at auctions, like gems and minerals from dealers, animal teeth from Siberian hunters, textiles from his grandmother. At times, he inserts his sculptures into displays at archaeological museums, in between genuine historic artifacts produced by bygone civilisations in their eras of splendour or collapse. Material, like history, plays out cyclically.

Antufiev and Nalogina work with mosaic in reference to its historic use in art, where it sought to establish an aesthetic of grandeur, serving empires and states in asserting power by embellishing monumental architecture. Here that role is subverted. The mosaic as form uses materials that are permanent enough to change hands and migrate across history, to be taken apart and reincorporated into constellations of transformed regimes. Interwoven with the historic objects, Antufiev and Nalogina's works could be understood to possess their own archives: in the stones, minerals and metals sourced by the artists through various circuits of exchange.

Beyond using archives as an entry point to his work, Antufiev's exhibition-making also consciously toys with the display methodologies of museums: illuminated behind glass, the objects are accompanied by didactic descriptions, normally edited by interpretation departments at institutions, here written by the artist. Wallpapers, plinths, booths, the neutralising elements of institutional displays and interior design become Antufiev's mythologising tools. Though the artist's material references confuse chronological linearity, his imaginary system of knowledge may be no more artificial than the narratives of monument that empires weave around themselves.

Vases like the one presented here, exchanged as diplomatic gifts, have been displayed in Soviet museums to create a compelling image of leaders, of nations, of their imagined unity in intention and common interest. Grechko's figure represents the many concurrent planes on which imperialism plays out – not only in the violence of military combat and habitative cruelty, but of diplomacy and its gift economy, of propaganda, of culture and entertainment. The Cold War and its proxies led to the displacement of power to other territories: for decades, the Marshal made official visits to defend Soviet interests across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Alongside the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the invasion of Afghanistan finds direct reference in the exhibition as the origin of lapis lazuli found in many Soviet mosaics. Even though the Soviet-Afghan War (1979 – 1989) took place after Grechko's death, he laid its diplomatic grounds in his decades of travelling to the involved countries. The memory of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan has haunted Russians; and it returns in the discourse of today's war as a reminder of the unforgiving waste of life that expansionist cruelty incurs.

*We are a long echo of each other* refers to the cyclical nature of time and civilisation, and to the long reverberation of the sickness of violence. A narrative that unites and totalises is reflective of a struggle against the inevitability of time – ultimately a struggle against life. Antufiev's storytelling skirts any totalising impulse. Though his practice speaks to the imaginary of empire, the referent is lost: his symbols lead only to signify our need for objects to be metaphors and so to speak for us after our passing. The artist's vocabulary takes up the methods that people have used to cope with passing – of time, of power, of their own. The totalitarian impulse to transcend and control death echoes the violence of the empire's need to expand, to colonise, and to extract beyond life.

## LIST OF WORKS

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|----|---|----|---|
| 1. | Evgeny Antufiev & Lyubov Nalogina<br>Untitled, 2022<br>marble, travertine, lapis lazuli, cement<br>framed, in two parts, each:<br>81 × 160 × 4.6 cm<br>31 7/8 × 63 × 1 3/4 inches | 4. | Evgeny Antufiev & Lyubov Nalogina<br>Untitled, 2022<br>marble, travertine, lapis lazuli, cement<br>framed, in three parts, each:<br>205 × 45 × 4.6 cm<br>80 3/4 × 17 3/4 × 1 3/4 inches |
| 2. | Evgeny Antufiev<br>Untitled, 2022<br>bronze, patina<br>12 × 26 × 11 cm<br>4 3/4 × 10 1/4 × 4 3/8 inches   | 5. | Evgeny Antufiev<br>Untitled, 2022<br>bronze, patina, malachite, enamel<br>54 × 37 × 35 cm<br>21 1/4 × 14 5/8 × 13 3/4 inches  |
| 3. | Evgeny Antufiev & Lyubov Nalogina<br>Untitled, 2022<br>marble, serpentine, malachite, cement<br>framed: 158 × 80.5 × 4.6 cm<br>62 1/4 × 31 3/4 × 1 3/4 inches                     | 6. | Evgeny Antufiev<br>Untitled, 2022<br>bronze, patina, mineral, enamel, steel stand<br>45 × 35 × 32 cm<br>17 3/4 × 13 3/4 × 12 5/8 inches   |

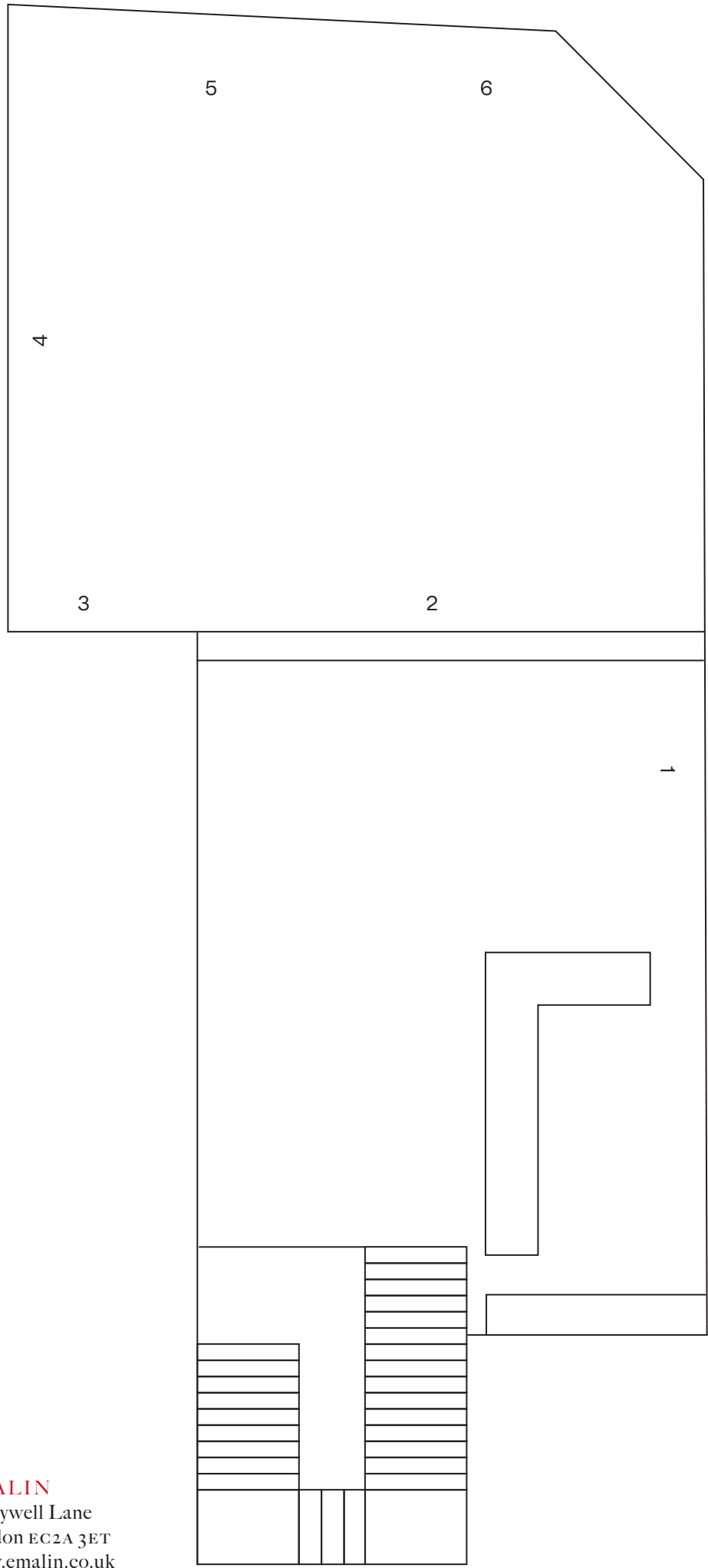
Evgeny Antufiev (b. 1986 in Kyzyl, Russia) lives and works in Moscow, Russia. He graduated with a BA from the Institute of Contemporary Art, Moscow in 2009, winning the Kandinsky Prize for the Young Artist Project of the Year during his studies.

Solo exhibitions include *Malachite King*, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, BE (2021); *Dead Nation: Eternal Version*, Villa Giulia, National Etruscan Museum, Rome, IT (2021); *Dead Nation: Short Version*, Emalin, New York, NY, US (2019); *When art became part of landscape*, Museo Archeologico Regionale Antonio Salinas, Palermo, IT (2018); *Organic resistance: body and knife – crossing the border*, MOSTYN Museum, Llandudno, UK (2017); *Immortality Forever*, M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, BE (2017); and *Twelve, wood, dolphin, knife, bowl, mask, crystal, bones and marble – fusion. Exploring materials*, Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, IT (2013/2019).

Antufiev's work has been included in group exhibitions at Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong, HKG (2022); New Museum, New York, US (2021); M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, BE (2021); Galeria Municipal Porto, Porto, PT (2020); Air De Paris, Paris, FR (2020); Fondation Cartier, Paris, FR (2019); Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin, DE (2019); Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, RU (2017); Manifesta 11, Zurich, CH (2016); and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2012).

His works are included in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, IT; Kiasma Museum, Helsinki, FL; M H KA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, BE; Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Moscow, RU; Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow, RU; and Tate, London, UK.

Lyubov Nalogina (b. Mytishchi, RU) lives and works in Moscow. Her collaborations with Evgeny Antufiev include *Ornament*, Artwin Gallery, RU (2021); *Immortality*, The 5th Ural Industrial Biennial, Ekaterinburg, RU (2019); and *When art became part of landscape: chapter 3*, Multi Media Art Museum, Moscow, RU (2018). Upcoming projects include a children's book published in collaboration with Evgeny Antufiev.



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