

## **GENIA CHEF**

(Born 1954, Kazakhstan)

Genia Chef (born Evgeny Scheffer 28 January 1954 in Aktjubinsk, Kazakhstan, U.S.S.R.) is a Russian artist living in Berlin, Germany. International Who's Who 2000 notes that before emigrating to the West in 1985 he was a member of Soviet Nonconformist Art circles in Moscow, a group that included, among others, Ilya Kabakov, Viktor Pivovarov, Anatoly Zverev and Semyon Faibisovich. During that period he began to use his artist's name "Genia Chef."

Chef's work is represented in the permanent collection of the State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. His work is also held in the The Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection in the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum; the Kolodzei Art Foundation; the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, Macedonia; the Sigmund Freud's Dreams Museum in St. Petersburg; and Checkpoint Charlie Museum in Berlin, Germany, among others.

Spain's La Vanguardia newspaper has called Chef "An artist of grand culture, whose precise work combines ideas and techniques from both East and West in an effort to portray a new social order that seeks to recapture beauty." Who is Who in der Bundesrepublik.

Genia Chef was a student at Moscow's Polygraphic Institute 1972-77, where he received first prize for his M.A. diploma for his illustrations to Edgar Allan Poe. In 1985 Chef moved to West Germany, where his etchings based on Marquis de Sade earned him attention from the press. In 1988 Chef was accepted to the Master Class of Arik Brauer at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria. In 1993 the Academy awarded Chef its Master of Fine Arts degree, together with its Fueger Gold Prize (Vienna: Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Catalogue of Diploma Works, 1993). Metropolis Magazine (May 1993) noted that during this period Chef shuttled regularly "between Vienna, Berlin, New York, and the Spanish coastal village of Cadaques," describing Chef as "a new type of Russian artist with a peripatetic lifestyle, evoking a newly found freedom of global mobility."

In late 1993 Chef moved to New York City where he exhibited his works with several former members of Soviet nonconformist art circles in a number of group exhibitions. These included Post New World Order: Restructured Myths and Old Symbols / New Icons in Russian Contemporary Art at Stuart Levy Fine Art, Soho; and Monumental Propaganda at the World Trade Center curated by Komar and Melamid. The Wall Street Journal (5 October 1993), describing a series of paintings of shoes from this time, reported that Chef "has a good, warped mind."

Chef's many solo exhibitions have included shows at Stuart Levy Fine Art, NY; House of Latin America in Monte Carlo under the patronage of Louis Prince de Polignac; and the Italian Cultural Institute, Berlin, among others. In 2007, Chef participated in the second Moscow Biennale with his installation My Personal Temple which was again featured in the 2009 group show Born in the U.S.S.R. at Berlin's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2011 Genia Chef showed the exhibition "Glory of a new Century" at the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. A book with the same title followed the exhibition.

In 2013 Genia Chef exhibited at the Venice Biennale, with the work **Personal Structures at Palazzo Bembo**.

Chef has illustrated numerous books, including Prose and Poetry by Edgar Allan Poe and Nothing Lasts Forever Anymore by Michael Lederer. Chef's own book Finger World was published in 1993 in Nuremberg. His other writings include the essay The Manifesto of Degeneratism: with Regulations on the Universal and Compulsory Wearing of Collars by

Degenerates and the Doctrine Concerning the Rectifier (1988: Cadaques). Chef's painting  
Madonna de la Esparanza hangs in the baroque church Iglesia de Santa Maria in  
Cadaques, Spain.